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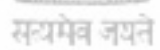
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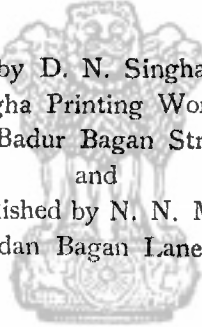
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सत्यमेव जयते

# Chronicle of Events

July 1943

Mr. L. S. Amery, Secretary of State for India, stated in the House of Commons, re : India's food position : "There is no overall shortage of foodgrains.....There is, however, grave maldistribution for which the responsibility is shared by all parties from the cultivator upwards."

The Secretary of State for India, Mr. L. S. Amery and Field Marshal Lord Wavell welcomed in London 34 young officers of the I. A. F. who arrived in England for operational experience under the Empire Training Scheme.

His Excellency the Viceroy addressed the Food Conference in New Delhi and was followed by Sir Azizul Haque, Food Minister. The Conference recorded the views of all provincial and State representatives regarding the food situation in the country.

Mr. A. K. Fazlul Hug, at the opening meeting of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, made a statement re : his resignation as Chief Minister of Bengal. He made some allegations against the Governor and charged him with partisanship and violation of the Instrument of Instructions.

The Government of India's decisions on measures to meet the food situation were announced to the Food Conference by Sir Azizul Haque, Food Member. The decisions inter alia were : Rationing in urban areas to be taken up in a progressively increasing measure and almost immediately. Free Trade not to be considered except as an objective for the return of normal conditions.

In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, the Government of Bengal's handling of the food problem, was severely criticized. Nine special motions were moved by members of the different Opposition parties.

Mr. L. S. Amery, replying to a question in the House of Commons, said that the difficulties of the food situation in India were due to the widespread tendency of cultivators to withhold foodgrains from the market.

In the Bengal Legislative Council, a resolution urging the release of Mahatma Gandhi and members of the Congress Working Committee, "to resolve the Indian deadlock" was passed.

His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir appointed a Commission of Inquiry under the presidentship of Chief Justice Ganganath. The Commission would consist of eight Hindus, eight Muslims, one Sikh and one Buddhist,—the members were selected principally from the Praja Sabha.

The Standing Committee of the Non-Party Leaders' Conference issued a statement from New Delhi, appealing to the Government of India and Mahatma Gandhi to close "the dismal chapter of strife and ill-feeling" in the country.

The Working Committee of the Provincial Hindu Mahasabha, under the presidency of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, adopted a

resolution protesting against the statement of Mr. Amery made in the House of Commons re : Indian food situation, and characterising it as misleading and adding insult to injury.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the All India Muslim League, was attacked with a knife in Bombay, by a Muslim visitor.

The Central Legislative Assembly began its monsoon session. Sir Mohammad Azizul Haque, Sir Asoka Roy and Dr. N. B. Khare, the three new members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, were sworn in.

Mr. V. D. Savarkar, President, All India Hindu Mahasabha, announced his resignation of the presidentship, in Bombay.

1st. Mr. L. S. Amery, Secretary of State for India, gave details of India's food position in the House of Commons in reply to a question whether he had any statement to make about the food shortage in that country.

Mr. Amery said : "The basic facts have not changed. There is no overall shortage of food grains, while India has harvested a bumper crop of wheat this spring. There is, however, grave maldistribution for which the responsibility is shared by all parties, from the cultivator upwards."

Education in India was discussed in the House of Commons when Mr. R. Sorenson (Labour) suggested providing educational facilities for all Indian children within 20 years of the cessation of hostilities. He also wanted drastic reductions in adult illiteracy.

Mr. Amery said that the desire for the educational progress in India was fully shared by the Indian Government and the legislatures in whom the responsibility in this field was vested.

In the House of Commons, Mr. S. S. Silverman (Labour) asked Mr. Amery, Secretary State for India, if he was aware that reports of whipping for offences arising out of or in connexion with political disturbances showed that in three districts of Sind alone 800 such penalties had been inflicted during the past three months.—Mr. Amery said that he had no information, but if Mr. Silverman would communicate the source of his information he would make inquiries.

The Government of Madras passed the Madras Potato (Dealers and Transport) Control Order : the Order to take effect from the 1st July, 1943. Under the Order, no person should carry on business as a wholesale dealer in potatoes or store for sale potatoes in wholesale quantities in the Nilgiri district or in the Kodaikanal taluk of the Madura district under a license issued under the Control Order.

2nd. The first Government food shop in Calcutta was opened by Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, Minister of Civil Supplies at Tiljala.

H. E. Sir Arthur Hope, Governor of Madras, at two public meetings at Penukonda and Anantpur, expressed the view that he personally, and the Government of Madras in conjunction with the Central Government and other Provincial Governments, would spare no pain in improving the food situation in the presidency.

The Secretary of State for India, Mr. L. S. Amery, and Field Marshal Lord Wavell welcomed in London 34 young officers of the I. A. F., the first group to arrive in England for operational experience under the Empire Training Scheme.

3rd. The National Defence Council met at the Viceroy's Council (New Delhi). His Excellency the Viceroy presided. His Excellency the Commander-in-chief reviewed the war situation.

The All-India Yarn and Cloth Merchants' Conference, convened to consider the control measures placed by the Government on the cloth and yarn industry and trade met in Bombay, Seth Govardandas Gokuldas Morarji presided.

4th. The All-India Yarn and Cloth Merchants' Conference discussed the Textile Control Scheme and before concluding its session in Bombay, passed eighteen regulations touching on different aspects of the Control as it affected the wholesale and retail trade, and appointed a Standing Committee "to take all necessary steps to safeguard the interests of cloth and yarn dealers."

5th. The Food Conference which commenced in New Delhi, recorded the views of all Provincial and State representatives regarding the prevailing situation and

their difficulties. His Excellency the Viceroy addressed the Conference, followed by an opening speech by Sir Azizul Haque, Food Member.

At the opening meeting of the Monsoon Session of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, a statement on the circumstances connected with his resignation as Chief Minister of Bengal was made by Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq.—He made some allegations against the Governor and charged him with partisanship and violation of the Instrument of Instructions. Mr. Huq suggested that the Governor might address the House and let the members have his version of the incidents.—Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu, Mr. Pramatha Nath Banerjee and Mr. Shamsuddin Ahmed also made statements.

A statement by Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, Civil Supplies Minister, on the food situation, was placed before the House by the Chief Minister, Khawaja Sir Nazimuddin.

- 6th. In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, a point of order, involving constitutional and legal issues, raised by the opposition, held up consideration of demands for certain Budget grants. The demands were in respect of those items of the Budget estimates for 1943-44 which were not voted upon in March last owing to the resignation of the late Ministry.

General Sir Claude Auchinleck, Commander-in-Chief, addressing his first Press Conference (in New Delhi), since he took over charge, commented on the great improvement he had noticed in the co-operation between the three Services in India and between the U. S. forces and Indian forces.

- 7th. In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, budget demands for the current financial year not disposed of during the last session were ruled out of order by the Speaker.

In the Bengal Legislative Council, a statement on the food situation by Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, Minister of Civil Supplies, was made on the opening day of the Monsoon Session.

- 8th. The Government of India's decisions on measure to meet the food situation were announced to the Conference by Sir Azizul Haque, the Food Member. The decisions, *inter alia* were:—Rationing in urban areas to be taken up in a progressively increasing measure and almost immediately. A merciless attack on the hoarder and the profiteer to be launched immediately throughout India by all Provinces and States. Free Trade not to be considered except as an objective for the return of normal conditions.

- 9th. The Bengal Legislative Assembly was occupied with the discussion of an Opposition resolution on the release of political prisoners.

In the Bengal Legislative Council, a resolution recommending the release of political prisoners was moved by Mr. Bankim Chandra Datta (Congress).

- 10th. F. M. Lord Wavell addressing Indian Bevin trainees in London said: "I have spent some of the best and most pleasant years of my life in India. I have great love for the country and I hope in the new post, with which I have been honoured, to do something to repay the debt, I owe to India. I shall do my best."

- 11th. Under the auspices of the Hindu Muslim Unity Association, speeches emphasising the need for communal unity were made at a meeting at the Town Hall, Calcutta. The Nawab of Murshidabad presided.

Under the auspices of the All India Women's Conference, Calcutta Branch, at a public meeting of the women of Calcutta, a resolution was unanimously adopted strongly supporting the principles of the Rau Committee's Bill relating to Hindu intestate succession.

- 12th. In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, the Government of Bengal's handling of the food situation was severely criticized. Nine special motions were moved by members of the different opposition parties. Some, while condemning the Government's plans, put forward suggestions to tackle the problem.

In the Sind Legislative Assembly, Sir Ghulam Husain Hidayatullah's Ministry sustained its first defeat when a counter-motion from Mir Bunde Ali, Khan Talpur (ex-Premier and a supporter of the present Ministry) that the consideration of the proposed revised Land Revenue Assessment be adjourned till the next session was carried by 24 to 12 votes.

- 13th. In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, about 25 members took part in the debate on the food problem in the Province.

14th. Mr. L. S. Amery, Secretary of State for India, replying to a question in the House of Commons, said that the prevailing difficult food situation in India was due to the widespread tendency of cultivators to withhold foodgrains from the market, to larger consumption per head as a result of increased family income, to hoarding by consumers and others, and in many parts of India to the fact that methods whereby surplus supplies of foodgrains had in normal times moved from areas of production to areas of consumption had ceased to function or been seriously weakened.

The Bengal Legislative Assembly, after a three day debate defeated, by 134 votes to 88, a special motion by Rai H. N. Chowdhury, of the non-official Congress Party, which aimed at censuring the Ministry, and their handling of the food situation.—A similar motion by Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal (official Congress) was defeated by 133 votes to 82. The Assembly was prorogued.

15th. Sir Sultan Ahmed, Information Member, Government of India, addressing the members of the Standing Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference, in Bombay, stated that he wished to see the country maintain a free Press even in wartime. He added that while he would be a watchful advocate of its privileges, he expected the Editors to be equally watchful in discharging their duties.

In the Bengal Legislative Council, the food debate on a special motion proposed by Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutt was continued.

Mr. L. S. Amery, Secretary of State for India, told a London meeting of the Institute of Export that the British traders "have got to face the fact that most of the world is going to be able to make for itself old staple goods on which we relied in the past and that we must concentrate more and more on newer types of production and on our special experience in production and the installation of capital plant, on salesmanship, on reliability and promptitude of delivery, in fact on Co-operative Service to the needs of individual countries with which we have to deal. This applies in a special degree to India."

16th. In the Bengal Legislative Council, a resolution urging the immediate release of Mahatma Gandhi and members of the Congress Working Committee "to resolve the Indian deadlock" was passed.

17th. The Standing Finance Committee for Railways met in New Delhi to consider the question of the lower gazetted service. No decision was reached and the consideration of the question was postponed.

In a discussion with representatives of Indian public bodies at Durban, Mr. G. Heaton Nicholls visualized an Indian township with all amenities and also an Indian Mayor and Councillors who would be elected by the residents. In the township Indians could develop along their own lines.

At a meeting of the Sind Muslim League Assembly Party at Karachi, a resolution was passed recording its sense of complete solidarity and loyalty to the Muslim League both within and without the Legislature,

18th. The view that Mahatma Gandhi, in committee, could alone modify the policy of the Congress was expressed at an informal meeting (in Bombay) of some Congressmen and women released from jail.—Undiminished confidence in Mahatma Gandhi's leadership was also expressed and all moves by other parties to rescind the August Resolution while Congress Leaders were in prison were deprecated as ill-conceived.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah, replying to the address of welcome, presented to him by the Anjuman Islamia, Quetta, said: "Nothing gives me greater pleasure than to hear your grievances, difficulties and demands again and again. It shows that now there is a wide awakening amongst you, and that you feel and realise the position in which you are placed. You have begun to understand what you lack and what you need."

19th. The Bengal Legislative Council rejected without a division a special motion by Mr. Kamini Kumar Dutt (Official Congress Party) which charged the government with having failed to tackle the province's food problem.

Sir P. Ramaswami Aiyar, the Dewan President, made a vigorous plea for systematic industrialisation, self-sufficiency in the matter of food and educating the people on right lines, while addressing the joint session of the Travancore Assembly.

The Indo-European Council met at Durban to discuss the possibility of

forming a public utility housing company to promote Indian housing at Durban. No decision was reached.

- 20th. The position of the handloom under the Cotton and Yarn Control Order was explained by the Textile Commissioner to the Government of India in a communique received in Calcutta.

His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir appointed a Commission of Inquiry under the presidency of Chief Justice Ganganath. The Commission would consist of eight Muslims, eight Hindus, one Sikh and one Buddhist, the members were selected principally from the Praja Sabha.

- 21st. The Madras Rationing Order, 1943, embodying regulations for the rationing of articles, issued by the Government under the Defence of India Rules, was published in the Fort St. George Gazette. The order extended to the whole of the Province.

Pandit Godavaris Misra, Finance Minister of Orissa, addressing a public meeting at Angul organized by the National War Front, observed : "Independence must be won and that too within the shortest possible time, but it must be won and not obtained by logical argument, however intelligently put. In the present world struggle, India must herself be a valiant unit by making sacrifices of her men. Then alone can she obtain and retain independence."

- 22nd. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Dr. M. R. Jayakar and Sir Jagadish Prasad arrived in New Delhi to attend the meeting of the Standing Committee of the All-Parties Leaders' Conference.

Mr. L. S. Amery stated in the House of Commons that he was communicating with the Indian Government regarding a suggestion by Mr. Sorenson (labour) that arrangements should be made for representative Indian editors or journalists to visit Britain. He added that he would consider the matter as soon as he had received the Indian Government's views.

- 23rd. The Standing Committee of the Non-Party Leaders' Conference met in Delhi and had preliminary discussions.

In the Travancore Sir Mulam Assembly, the Dewan-President referred to the important question of inflation and deflation and the steps taken by both the Central and Travancore Governments to deal with them.

- 24th. The Standing Committee of the Non-Party Leaders' Conference issued a statement appealing to the Government of India and Mahatma Gandhi to close the "dismal chapter of strife and ill-feeling" in the country.

The statement expressed the opinion : "Mr. Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other Congress leaders should be released and given an opportunity of reconsidering their Resolution of August, 1942, and of making out the effort to bring a settlement between the conflicting elements in Indian national life. Alternatively, they should be put on their trial before an impartial Tribunal and given every reasonable facility to meet such charges as may be brought against them."

In response to an order from the Government of India, Allama Mashriqi, Khaksar leader, instructed his followers all over the country to remove their red armlets.

- 25th. Mr. M. A. Jinnah, in reply to a communication from Sir Mohammad Nawaz Khan, member of the Punjab Assembly, declared : "There is not the slightest doubt that immediately after the Sikander-Jinnah Pact the Unionist Party in the Punjab was no more."

The Working Committee of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha adopted a resolution protesting against the statement made in the House of Commons by Mr. Amery on the Indian food situation, and characterising it as misleading and adding insult to injury. The meeting was under the presidency of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee in Calcutta.

- 26th. Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League was attacked with a knife by a visitor who came to interview him in Bombay. The visitor, who was a Muslim, was arrested by the police.

The Central Legislative Assembly began its monsoon session with Sir Abdur Rahim, President, in the Chair. Sir Mohammad Azizul Huque, Sir Asoka Roy and Dr. N. B. Khare, the three new Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council were sworn in.

Replying to a question by Mr. A. B. Chattopadhyaya, Mr. N. V. H. Symons,

Civil Defence Secretary, said that between April 2 and June 26, 1943, there were seven enemy air raids on British India and on Indian States. All the raid on British India were directed against military targets in S. E. Bengal.

In the Central Assembly, the War Secretary, Mr. C. M. Trivedi, replying to Mr. Lalchand Navalrai announced that Government would be glad to arrange for the discussion of the war situation at a secret meeting, when a full statement would be made by the Commander in Chief, if the President issued directions similar to those issued in connexion with previous secret sessions.

- 27th. In the Central Legislative Assembly, Sardar Mangal Singh, Congress member for the Punjab, spoke on Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari's resolutions asking for a revision of Government policy with regard to treatment of political prisoners and detenus. He described the treatment of prisoners of the 1942 Civil disobedience movement, which he alleged was worse than that of prisoners of war in India and that of detenus in India before 1942. He supported the resolution.

The Central Assembly rejected by 41 votes to 38, Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari's resolution, with Mr. Deshmukh's amendment.

Raja Sir Maharaja Singh, expressed his desire to relinquish the office of the Prime Minister of the Jammu and Kashmir State. H. H. the Maharaja accepted his resignation with effect for July 27th. 1943.

- 28th. A Press Note stated: "In the publicity recently given to a Circular addressed by the Bengal Government to all registered Trade Unions and Chambers of Commerce on the responsibility of labour leaders in the matter of strikes, much emphasis has been laid on the proposed Government action against leaders advising labour to go on strike without giving the necessary 14 day's notice."

- 29th. Mr. L. S. Amery told in the House of Commons that the Government of India were investigating the proposal that Indian editors, or responsible journalists representing all Parties, should visit Britain.

Mr. Amery gave a negative reply in the House of Commons to a question by Mr. R. Sorenson (Lab) asking whether Mahatma Gandhi had asked permission or made any attempt to write to the Viceroy or the Secretary of State for India.

Mr. Amery added: "Letters have, however, passed from time to time between Mr. Gandhi and the Home Department of the Government of India but I am not prepared to disclose their number or contents."

The Central Legislative Assembly passed the first reading of Dr. Khare's Bill to amend the Reciprocity Act 1943, so as to make it more effective in its application.

- 30th. In the Central Legislative Assembly, a resolution, condemning the cowardly act on Mr. Jinnah and congratulating him on his providential escape, was passed.

The Central Assembly discussed the situation arising out of the Pegging Law passed by the South African Parliament. A motion was carried asking the Government of India to put into force the provisions of the Reciprocity Act and take such other measures as were considered necessary.

- 31st. Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar, Supply Member, Government of India, in an interview on his arrival at Karachi, observed: "The British people are anxious that the Indian constitutional problem should be solved and several M. P.'s have said that nothing would please them more than to hear that an agreed solution by the Indian parties is reported to Parliament."

His Excellency the Governor of Bengal promulgated an Ordinance, called the Bengal Vagrancy Ordinance, to give necessary sanction to the Beggars' Scheme inaugurated by the Government of Bengal.

A manifesto issued by the Muslim Majlis (Calcutta) stated *inter alia*: "It is to foster the cause of unity of India that the Muslim Majlis has come into being on mature deliberation of the Mussalmans who have in their heart of hearts the interest of the Muslim community."

Master Tara Singh, President of the Sri Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee, Punjab, issued a statement from Lahore, in which he said: "The Azad Punjab Scheme was conceived to protect the Sikhs from the communal domination of the Muslims. The Hindus have domination in certain provinces and the

Muslims have in others.....But what about poor Sikhs ; they are in a majority nowhere. They must be protected from the present communal mentality of the various communities."

Mr. V. D. Savarkar, in the course of a statement to the Press in Bombay, announced his resignation of the presidentship of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha.

## August 1943

His Excellency the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, in his farewell address to the Central Legislature, said : "From the very beginning of the war I have done everything a man could do to bring the Indian political parties to their leaders together...It will always be a sharp disappointment to me that these four years of war should, for all that effort, have seen us no nearer our goal."

Homage to the memory of Dr. Rabindra Nath Tagore was paid at a meeting in the Calcutta University Senate Hall, on the occasion of his 2nd. death anniversary.

The Working Committee of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha adopted a resolution requesting Mr. V. D. Savarkar to continue to be the President of the Hindu Mahasabha.

In the Central Legislative Assembly, Sir Edward Benthall, War Transport Member explained the transport of the food problem.

The Punjab Government offered additional surplus rice amounting to 22,500 tons for distribution to deficit areas and the Defence Services.

The Bengal Food Grains ( Movement Control ) Order, 1943, prohibited the export of wheat, rice, paddy grain from the Province except under a permit.

H. H. the Maharaja of Kashmir was unanimously elected Chancellor of the Benares Hindu University.

The Central Legislative Assembly passed the Delhi University Act Amendment Bill without a division, the Muslim League dissenting.

Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, Government of India, met the Bengal Ministers and the leaders of different parties to discuss the food problem of the Province.

Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, the Indian High Commissioner, presiding over the Natal Indian Congress said : "The Natal Indian Congress founded by Mr. Gandhi in 1894...has been recognized by the Government of India."

Appeals for funds to relieve the suffering of the people of Bengal, due to food shortage were made by Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Mr. P. R. Das.

1st. Mr. W. C. Wordsworth presided over a meeting in Calcutta, on the occasion of the "All Bengal Teachers' Day." A resolution was passed making an appeal to the Government of Bengal to help non-government schools and recognize teachers as an essential service by granting them dearness allowances and supplying them with foodstuffs and standard cloth on the same scale as government employees.

2nd. His Excellency the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, in his farewell address to the Central Legislative Assembly in New Delhi, declared : "From the very beginning of the war I have done everything a man could do to bring the Indian political parties and their leaders together, to remove doubts as to the intention of His Majesty's Government regarding India's future, to achieve that sufficiency of common agreement between the parties and the communities of this country and that necessary preliminary acceptance of the legitimate claims of all that must be the pre-condition of any constitutional advance that is worth having, or that can hope for permanence."

The Council of State decided on the suggestion of the President, Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy, to send congratulations to Field Marshal Viscount Wavell, a former member of the Council of State, on his appointment as Viceroy of India.

In the Council of State, the Home Secretary Mr. Conran Smith, replying to Mr. P. N. Saprú said that the Government were not prepared to disclose the nature or contents of communications received from Mr. Gandhi so long as he remained subject to the restrictions of which the public were aware.

- 3rd. In the Central Legislative Assembly, on the third reading of Dr. N. B. Khare's Reciprocity Act Amendment Bill, Sir Yamin Khan and Sardar Sant Singh suggested that South African officers should not be placed in positions in which they would have Indian troops serving under them, and wherever they were already in such positions they should be transferred.

The Council of State rejected by 24 votes to 10, Pundit H. N. Kunzru's resolution urging that Indian Commissioned Officers serving abroad be paid at the same rate as British Officers in the Indian Army and that the Viceroy's Commissioned Officers and Indian soldiers serving abroad be paid at the same rate as persons occupying corresponding positions in the British Army serving alongside the Indian Army.

- 4th. The Central Legislative Assembly continued the debate on Mr. M. A. Ghani's motion for circulation of the Delhi University (Amendment) Bill.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai insisted that there should be statutory safeguards that arbitrary powers regarding withdrawal of recognition of Colleges would not be exercised.

- 5th. The Central Legislative Assembly, continuing the debate on the 2nd. reading of the Delhi University Act Amendment Bill, rejected by 40 votes to 26 an amendment to reduce the term of office of the Vice-chancellor from 4 to 3 years.

The Council of State unanimously adopted Mr. P. N. Saprú's resolution recommending to the Government of India to represent to His Majesty's Government that an Agent of the Indian Government be appointed in British Guiana and Trinidad to watch over Indian interests.

In the House of Commons, rationing and price control in India was discussed. Mr. Amery told a questioner, that general rationing of commodities, other than food, was not contemplated.

Mr. L. S. Amery, replying to Mr. Sorenson (Lab) in the House of Commons, said that the number of persons under imprisonment in India on May 1, for offences in connexion with the Congress movement was 23,286. The number of persons under detention, whether for a short or indefinite period, was 12,704.

- 6th. In the Central Legislative Assembly, Mr. K. C. Neogy's motion for the adjournment of the House to discuss "the failure of the Government of India to make urgent inquiries on the deaths taking place in Bengal owing to starvation", was ruled out of order.

The Council of State discussed Mr. Hossain Imam's resolution urging the import of meat from the United States of America and Australia for the needs of the Defence Services.

Mr. L. S. Amery told Mr. R. W. Sorenson (Lab) in the House of Commons that he had considered the statement by 25 British missionaries in India, which appealed for an amnesty to political prisoners in India.

- 7th. The two-day food drive in Calcutta, Howrah and Bally was started when house to house and shop to shop visits were paid by officers specially deputed for the purpose to ascertain available foodgrains stocks.

Homage to the memory of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore was paid at a meeting held on the occasion of the 2nd anniversary of his death at the Senate Hall of the Calcutta University.

Nearly a hundred men and women were signatories to an appeal for fresh efforts to secure a settlement in India. Copies of the appeal were sent to the Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, the Secretary of State for India, Mr. Amery, the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow and the Viceroy-designate Lord Wavell.

The Working Committee of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, which met in Bombay, adopted a resolution requesting Mr. V. D. Savarkar to continue to be the President until the question of his resignation was finally considered at the next meeting of the Working Committee.

8th. The policy of the Hindu Mahasabha in regard to the formation of coalition Ministries was laid down in a resolution which the Working Committee of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha adopted.

The Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha adopted a resolution on the food situation, which stated *inter alia*: "The Working Committee notes with concern and alarm the steady deterioration in the food situation throughout the country. It records its opinion that this is due mainly to the thoughtless emphasis laid by Government on military requirements in India and abroad and its failure in properly coordinating its plans and activities so as to protect the legitimate interests of the Indian people at large."

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu said in the course of a statement in Hyderabad: "Following the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and of the members of the Working Committee, there seems to have arisen some confusion of ideas and some conflict of opinion among the Congress workers who were suddenly left without a definite mandate or any recognized leadership. I wish to clear any lingering doubts by stating that no authority was delegated either by the Working Committee or by the All-India Congress Committee to any individual or groups within the Congress to issue manifestoes or evolve new policies in the name of the Congress"

9th. In the Central Legislative Assembly, initiating the food debate, Sir Mohammad Azizul Haque, Food Member, described the difficulties and obstructions the government had to face. He said: "Unabated action has brought no safety through great difficulties in the first six months of the year. We have many difficulties today and we shall probably have more difficulties in the future. I can assure the House that the Department for which I speak will spare no effort to solve these difficulties."

Bombay Congressmen observed the first anniversary of the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and other Congress leaders. The Bombay Municipal School Committee had declared a holiday and therefore all municipal schools remained closed. A large number of high schools and college too were closed.

The Labourite Member of Parliament Mr. Reginald Sorenson, at a meeting organised by the India League (in London) on the anniversary of the imprisonment of Congress leaders, declared. "We should be seeking every means to reopen negotiation with the Indian leaders and change the atmosphere in India."

10th. In the Central Legislative Assembly, Sir Edward Benthall, War Transport Member, explained the transport aspect of the food problem, when the Assembly resumed the debate on the food situation.

Mr. Louis Fischer, the writer, speaking at a rally of the India League of America (in New York) on the anniversary of the arrest of Congress leaders, said that F. M. Wavell's arrival in India in October could be made the occasion of an easy settlement of the Indian problem. Nationalists wanted nothing more than an Indian nationalist government with limited function which would collaborate with the United Nations and help win the war. "Neither Mr. Gandhi nor any other Indian leader is asking the British to quit during the war."

11th. Gen. Smuts declined to receive a deputation from the South African Indian Congress, which desired to submit to him the resolutions adopted at their meeting.

In response to a request from the Bengal Government the Sind Government deputed Mr. K. K. Framji, Executive Engineer, Sind P. W. D. to proceed to Calcutta to advise the Bengal Government regarding the closing of breaches in the Damodar River.

12th. The Council of State discussed the food situation.

In the Council of State, the Commander in-chief, replying to a question, said that the cost of maintaining prisoners of war in India amounted to Rs. 1,512 lakhs in the last three years. The entire expenditure was being borne by His Majesty's Government.

13th. In the Council of State, Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, made an appeal to the public and Provincial Governments for co-operation in solving the food problem.

The Central Legislative Assembly passed the War Injuries (Compensation

Insurance) Bill introduced by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Labour Member of the Government of India.

- 14th. The representation made by the Calcutta University for a grant of Rs. 1,75,000 for paying dearness allowances to University employees was turned down by the Bengal Government.

In the Council of State Sir David Devadoss, who presided in the absence of Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy (President) said that he could not admit Mr. V. V. Kallikar's adjournment motion to discuss "the failure of the government to stop export of a large consignment of rice from Calcutta to South Africa."

Sir Mirza Ismail, in the course of his Convocation Address to the University of Nagpur, gave advice to young men to do all in their power to create a more friendly atmosphere in the country.

- 15th. With a view to implementing the decision of the third All-India Food Conference, the Central Government decided to restore to the Governments of Assam, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa from August 16, 1943 the powers conferred by D. I. Rule 81 on the Regional Food Commissioner, Eastern Region, to prohibit or restrict the movement, transport, distribution, disposal or acquisition of any foodgrains or their products.

Mr. V. D. Savarkar, replying to a question at a Press Conference at Nagpur, said: "For the last 30 years we have been accustomed to the ideology of Geographical Unity of India and the Congress has been the strongest advocate of that unity but suddenly the Muslim minority, which has been asking one concession after another, has, after the Communal Award, come forward with the claim that it is a separate nation. I have no quarrel with Mr. Jinnah's two nation theory. We, Hindus, are a nation by ourselves and it is a historical fact that Hindus and Muslims are two nations."

Mr. Savarkar added that the Hindu Mahasabha was always willing to extend its hand of co-operation to all who accept the four principles, namely, territorial integrity of India, majority rule in provinces and the Centre, residuary powers in the Centre and recruitment to public services on merit alone.

- 16th. Additional Surplus rice amounting to 22,500 tons was offered by the Punjab Government for distribution to deficit areas and the Defence Services. Bengal, Bombay, Madras, Travancore and Cochin, among other areas, were to benefit by the assistance.

- 17th. The Central Legislative Assembly continued discussion on the Delhi University Bill.

Dr. N. B. Khare said that the Indian Reciprocity Act would automatically come into force on September 1, 1943.

Sir John Colville, Governor of Bombay, in his convocation address to the graduates of the Bombay University, emphasised that India was certain to be in the full stream and current of what was happening beyond its frontiers. He said that it was right that young men and women should ponder on what the future of India demanded.

Sir Edward Benthall, Member for the War Transport, Government of India, had discussions with the Governor, Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy and representatives of war transport and railway administrations about the transport of food, coal and other important commodities into Bengal.

- 18th. His Excellency the Viceroy and Her Excellency Marchioness of Linlithgow arrived in Madras on a farewell visit to the city.

Mr. Sardar Bahadur Khan (Muslim League) was elected Speaker of the Frontier Assembly when the Budget Session opened.

The Frontier Assembly passed all the six Official Bills including the N. W. F. P. War Services (Exemption from Qualification) Bill, the Ministers' Salaries (Second Amendment) Bill and the Speaker's and the Deputy Speaker's Salaries (Amendment) Bill.

In the Central Legislative Assembly, Muslim and minority representation in the University Services was discussed during the second reading of the Delhi University Bill.

- 19th. The Central Legislative Assembly continued discussion on the second reading of the Delhi University Bill and disposed of 13 amendments before it rose for the day. Two of these amendments were accepted by the government.

- 20th. The Government of Bengal decided to control from August 28, the prices

of rice and paddy throughout the Province, and to buy stocks in selected areas where a surplus was available with the harvesting of "aus" crop. All exports of rice and paddy from the Province were prohibited.

In the Central Legislative Assembly, thirteen more amendments to the Schedules of the Delhi University Bill were disposed of.

A statement from Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, bitterly criticizing the India Government and Mr. Amery for refusal to disclose Gandhiji's correspondence with the Home Department, was published in the *Manchester Guardian*. Sir Tej Bahadur asked: "How can Mr. Amery be responsible to the House of Commons and treat Parliament with such scant courtesy. Is the Commons going to abdicate its ultimate constitutional responsibility."

- 21st. The Central Legislative Assembly disposed of 10 more amendments to the Schedules of the Delhi University Bill. Two of the amendments were withdrawn and the remaining eight were rejected.

The Calcutta branch of the All-India Women's Conference in an appeal, said: "Anxiety is increasing regarding the fate of people particularly women and children who are to-day homeless and destitute due to famine conditions in Bengal."

The Bengal Foodgrains (Movement Control) Order, 1943, prohibited the export of wheat, rice, paddy, jowar, bajra, gram, barley, maize, rahar and masur from the Province except under a permit.

H. H. the Maharaja of Kashmir was unanimously elected Chancellor of the Benares Hindu University at a special meeting of the University Court in Benares.

- 22nd. A Press Note from New Delhi, said: "Since statements are still appearing in the Press that heavy exports of foodgrains from India, and from Bengal in particular, are continuing, the Government of India wish to state categorically that there is no foundation whatever for such statements."

References to the measures adopted by the Bengal Ministry to solve the food problem was made by Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, the Premier, replying to an address of welcome by the Uttarpara Municipality.

- 23rd. The Bengal Ministry of Civil Supplies in a Press Note, said: "The Government of India has by a Gazette notification dated Aug. 16, repealed all orders of the Regional Commissioners, E. Region, under the D. I. Rules provided this does not affect any penalty, forfeiture or punishment incurred for any contravention of order made by the Regional Commissioner or any investigation or legal proceeding in respect of such contravention."

H. E. the Viceroy accompanied by His Excellency the Marchioness of Linlithgow and the Countess of Hopetown and party, arrived in Kottayam from Cochin.

- 24th. The Central Legislative Assembly passed the second reading of the Delhi University Bill, when the remaining 19 amendments were discussed, three being accepted and the others rejected.

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, who returned to Calcutta after a tour of the Burdwan and Nadia districts affected by floods and food shortage, in a statement said that the Government relief operations were "utterly meagre and in some respects unplanned and unsatisfactory." He stressed the need for a coordinated scheme of relief.

The death occurred at his residence in Madras of Diwan Bahadur M. C. Raja, at the age of 60. He was a wellknown leader of the Depressed Classes.

In the Central Legislative Assembly, the Chair ruled out of order an adjournment motion tabled by Maulavi Abdul Ghani, after the War Transport Minister, Sir Edward Benthall, had explained that the Government of India had no Trade Agent to make purchases of foodgrains and that no purchases of foodgrains were made in Bihar on behalf of the Government of India.

- 25th. The Central Legislative Assembly passed the Delhi University Act Amendment Bill without a division, the Muslim League dissenting.

The Council of State held a brief sitting, when the Secretary laid on the table the Delhi University Act Amendment Bill as passed by the Assembly.

His Excellency Sir Arthur Hope inaugurated the Silver Jubilee Celebrations of the Government Muhammadan College at the premises of the College (in Madras) and declared open the Islamic History and Culture Exhibition organised in that connexion.

26th. Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, Government of India, met Sir K. Nazimuddin, Premier and other member of the Bengal Cabinet (in Calcutta) and discussed the food problem of the Province.

The circumstances under which Nawab Bahadur Yar Jung was externed from the Kashmir State were explained in a communique issued by His Highness' Government.

27th. In the Council of State, the Chair ruled out of order Mr. Hossain Imam's adjournment motion to discuss the failure of the Government of India to obtain gold from H. M. G. and to discuss the sale of gold on behalf of H. M. G. by the Reserve Bank.

28th. The Central Government's accounts for June, 1943 showed that excluding periodical adjournments and the transactions of railways and posts and telegraphs expenditure in the first three months of the financial year 1943-44 exceed revenue by Rs. 33- $\frac{1}{2}$  crores against Rs. 29- $\frac{3}{4}$  crores in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Eleven relief camps with accommodation for a total of 9,000 people, have been set up in the districts 24-Parganas, Hooghly, Howrah and Midnapore to accommodate destitute people who were repatriated to their home districts from Calcutta in accordance with the decision taken at a conference of Ministers, Secretaries and heads of departments.

Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, Government of India, met the Bengal Ministers and the leaders of different parties in the legislature in the Assembly House, Calcutta. Mr. H. S. Subrawardy, Civil Supplies Minister, explained the steps Government were taking to relieve distress in the Province. He appealed to the Food Member to arrange every possible help for Bengal from outside.

29th. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru made an appeal to the people of the U. P. to come to the rescue of their countrymen in Bengal in a letter addressed to the Editor of the "Leader" Allahabad.

The Maharaja of Parlakimedi, Premier of Orissa at a Press Conference in Cuttack, said: "The Government were rushing supplies to Balasore and Ganjam districts at the rate of one wagon of rice or paddy a day from Koraput to relieve these two districts."

The Executive Committee of the Medical Council of India at its meeting in New Delhi under the presidentship of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy considered the question of further facilities to practitioners, registered with provincial medical Councils for obtaining qualifications recognized by the M. C. I.

30th. Sir Shafaat Ahmed Khan, the Indian High Commissioner, presiding at the inaugural meeting of the Natal Indian Congress, in Durban, announced: "The Natal Indian Congress founded by Mr. Gandhi in 1894 and resuscitated today, has been recognized by the Government of India which will discourage any attempt to create a rural organization."

In the Council of State, 38 out of 44 amendments to the Delhi University Act Amendment Bill tabled by the opposition, were disposed of. The main discussion centred on the question of communal representation on the University bodies and services.

31st. Appeals for funds to relieve the suffering of the people of Bengal, due to food shortage, were made by Mr. M. A. Jinnah from Bombay, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya from Benares and Mr. P. R. Das, Rai Bahadur S. Sahay and Dr. S. Sinha from Patna.

The difference of opinion that had existed between the Governments of Bengal and Orissa regarding the supply of foodstuffs from Orissa was removed and an understanding reached when Mr. H. S. Subrawardy, Minister for Civil Supplies, Bengal, met the Maharaja of Parlakimedi, Premier of Orissa at the Calcutta Secretariat.

## September 1943

H. M. the King was graciously pleased to approve the appointment of Sir Thomas Rutherford, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., Governor of Bihar to act as Governor of Bengal, in view of the serious illness of H. E. Sir John Herbert, G.C.I.E., Governor of Bengal.

The Orissa Government agreed to supply 4 lakh maunds of paddy to Bengal, to help the distressed in the Province.

Nawab Yar Jung Bahadur, President, A. I. States' Muslim League, at a Press Conference in Lahore contradicted the facts set forth in the Kashmir Government Press Notes, on his exentment from Kashmir.

Lord Wavell, speaking at a reception in London, said: "I know from personal experience how very great the contribution of India to the war effort has been. We should not have held the Middle East but for India."

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee sent an open letter to Sir Thomas Rutherford, Governor of Bengal, which said *inter alia*: "Government must accept full responsibility for producing foodgrains and other essential commodities. Arrangements must be made to obtain a steady supply from other parts of India."

For the relief of distress in Bengal, the Government of India asked all provincial and State Governments in areas where exportable surpluses existed to consign supplies offered by private persons or charitable organizations, to the Bengal Government.

H. E. the Governor of Bengal received a cheque for one lakh of Rupees as a contribution from the United Provinces War Committee towards the relief of distress in Bengal. Further donations from the Central Provinces, His Highness the Maharaja of Nepal and the H. H. the Maharaja of Jind were also received.

In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, the food policy of the Bengal Government was strongly criticized during a debate on the province's food situation.

In the Bengal Legislative Council, the food situation occupied a prominent place in the general discussion of the Budget.

The Mysore Government ordered the constitution of a Central Food Council at Bangalore, to secure the effective advice and co-operation of non-officials.

Mr. L. S. Amery, Secretary of State for India, in an official statement as to the nature and causes of the failure of food supplies in certain parts of India, said *inter alia*: "Among those causes have been poor rice crops in Bengal, the loss of Burma imports, the withholding of some portion of their crops from sale.....and doubtlessly hoarding by merchants."

Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, Government of India, said in Bombay: The Government of India are making strenuous efforts to bring to this country as early as possible considerable quantities of foodgrains from foreign countries and they have every intention of implementing, as far as it is in their power, the recommendations of the Long-Term Planning Committee, to set up Central foodgrains reserve."

Mr. J. W. Scully, Minister of Commerce and Agriculture (Australia) stated that Australia could supply all the wheat needed for starving India, provided the U. K. could provide ships. Wheat was practically sitting for loading on boats...Australia was ready and waiting.

Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, Supply Member, Government of India, speaking at a dinner party in Madras, said he was convinced that at the end of the war India would be made a self-governing country. Referring to the food

situation he suggested, that import of foodstuffs should come from the U. S. A. and Australia.

The Reciprocity Act, as amended, came into force on the 1st. September 1943, but being an enabling measure, it would be of practical effect only when a notification was issued, bringing it into operation against any particular country.

- 2nd. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, vice-president, Bengal Relief Committee, in a statement said that he received a telegram from Mr. S. K. Mookerjee, director, Scindia Steam Navigation Co., Bombay, informing him that the company was prepared to provide a special steamer for carrying foodgrains to Bengal from Karachi without charging freight.

- 3rd. A communique from New Delhi said: "In view of the serious illness of H. E. Sir John Herbert, G.C.I.E., Governor of Bengal, H. M. the King has been graciously pleased to approve the appointment of H. E. Sir Thomas Rutherford, K.C.S.I., C.I.E., Governor of Bihar, to act as Governor of Bengal.

H. M. has also been graciously pleased to approve the appointment of Mr. R. F. Mudie C.S.I., C.I.E., O.B.E., at present Chief Secretary to the Government of U. P. to act as Governor of Bihar during Sir Thomas Rutherford's absence in Bengal.

A review of the events of the past four years was given by Sir Sultan Ahmed, Information Member, in a war anniversary broadcast.

- 4th. The Bengal Premier, Sir Nazimuddin issued an appeal to his countrymen all over India, for contributions to the Central Relief Fund, inaugurated by the Civil Supplies Minister of Bengal.

- 5th. In order to help the distressed in Bengal, and particularly the destitute in Calcutta as a result of food shortage, the Orissa Government agreed to supply four lakh maunds of paddy to the province while the Punjab Government decided to hold a conference in Lahore on September 8 to consider steps for securing and forwarding food grain stocks.—His Excellency the Viceroy and Lady Linlithgow jointly donated Rs. 5,000 towards the cause, while Her Excellency in a special broadcast from New Delhi appealed for aid on behalf of the Province.

In the course of a joint memorandum to Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, Sir N. N. Sircar and Sir Jagadish Prasad, ex-Members, Viceroy's Executive Council, stated *inter alia*: "We are presenting this memorandum to the food Member in the hope that it may be of some use to him in dealing with a great calamity....." "Government should immediately provide shelters where medical aid and food can be given to people found on the streets or wandering about in search of food, as also children who have lost their parents. Timely assistance will save many lives.

Sardar Baldev Singh, Development Minister, Punjab, in a Press Statement, appealed to the Punjab growers to spare maximum quantities of food grains for those in need in other parts of India.

- 6th. The facts set forth in the Kashmir Government Press Note on his exterment from Kashmir were contradicted by Nawab Yar Jung Bahadur, President A. I. States' Muslim League, at a Press Conference in Hyderabad.

A "Calcutta Gazette Extraordinary" stated: "Every holder of a license under the food grains control order shall, on or before September 15, register with the officer issuing the license the addresses of all godowns used or proposed to be used for the storage of food grains in respect of which the license has been issued, and shall whenever any change in such address takes place, intimate the officer issuing the license about it within seven days.

Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, Civil Supplies Minister, Bengal, in an interview in New Delhi, said: "Our discussions with the Premiers of the Punjab and Orissa have been hopeful, the more so as I feel that the rest of India has at least awakened to the realization that conditions in Bengal need the utmost help possible."

His Excellency Sir Thomas Rutherford, assumed the office of Governor of Bengal.

- 7th. Lord Wavell speaking at a reception by the Welcome Committee of the Overseas League (London) said: "I know from personal experience how very great the contribution of India to the war effort has been. We should not have held the Middle East but for India."

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee sent an open letter to Sir Thomas Rutherford, Governor of Bengal which said, *inter alia* : "Government must accept full responsibility for providing foodgrains and other essential commodities. Arrangement must be made to obtain a steady supply from other parts of India and the quota allotted to Bengal by the Government of India, recently reduced, must be increased. The manner in which rice was sought to be purchased by the Bengal Government from the neighbouring provinces during the period of full trade was highly defective."

At the plenary session of the Labour Conference in New Delhi, a resolution to set up machinery to investigate question of wages earnings and collect material on which to plan a policy of social security for labour, was adopted. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Member for Labour, Government of India, presided.

8th. "There is a very acute shortage of foodstuffs in Bengal and the next three months are to be crucial. The only way to tide over the situation is to get whatever grain one can have either by seizing, borrowing or stealing from other parts of India. This is the only method to save the starving millions of Bengal," observed Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member of the Government of India at a Press Conference in Lahore.

9th. To facilitate the movement of foodgrains for the relief of distress in Bengal, the Government of India asked all Provincial and State Governments in areas where exportable surpluses existed to consign supplies, offered by private persons or charitable organizations, to the Bengal Government with instructions if intended for any particular organization.

10th. Sir Jagadish Prasad, ex-Member, Viceroy's Executive Council, in a memorandum on the situation in Bengal, issued in Calcutta and submitted to the Bengal Premier, urged H. E. the Viceroy and members of his Executive Council to visit Bengal and see how acute was the distress in the province.

The Orissa Merchants' Relief Committee, with the Maharaja of Parlakimedi, Orissa Premier, as the President, appealed for funds to relieve food scarcity in the Province.

11th. Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, Government of India, before his departure for Delhi from Lahore, said that he was shortly visiting Simla to meet the Punjab Governor and his Ministers to discuss steps to be taken to bring out stocks of foodgrains from Punjab villages.

A Press Communique from New Delhi, said : "The Government of India have had under consideration for sanction the need for special legislation to cope with the large increase of fraud, bribery and corruption in connexion with government contracts and stores and the provision of railway transport."

12th. H. E. the Governor of Bengal received a cheque for one lakh of rupees as a contribution from the United Provinces War Committee towards the relief of distress in Bengal. Further donation of Rs. 25,000 from the Central Provinces War Committee, Rs. 15,000 from His Highness the Maharaja of Nepal and a twenty ton wagon of rice from Highness the Maharaja of Sind were also received.

H. E. Sir Thomas Rutherford accompanied by Mr. C. E. S. Fairweather, Commissioner of Police, made an informal tour of Relief Centres in Calcutta.

13th. The Bengal Government's decision to levy a tax on agricultural income was criticized at a Landholders' Conference at the British Indian Association Hall, Calcutta, the Maharajahadhiraja of Darbhanga presided.

The Madras Provincial Food Conference concluded its deliberations at Trichinopoly, after passing a number of resolutions, Dr. A. Krishnaswami presided.

14th. The Bengal Government's Budget Estimates for 1943-44, were presented by Mr. T. C. Goswami, Finance Minister, on the opening day of the extraordinary session of the Bengal Assembly. The Budget showed a deficit of 7 crores 36 lakhs.

The Minister said : "This huge deficit is due entirely to the burden laid on our revenues by measures for the relief of distress in our present misfortunes."

15th. In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, Food Minister, in a statement on the food situation in Bengal declared : "I claim that we have

done the best that we could with the resources at our disposal and I believe that although dark and dismal days are still ahead, we are in a position to face the future with more hope and assurance."

- 16th. In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, the Agricultural Income-Tax Bill introduced by Mr. T. C. Goswami was referred to a Select Committee. The purpose of the Bill was to levy a tax on agricultural income from lands.

By 111 votes to 66, the Bengal Legislative Assembly rejected the official Congress Party's adjournment motion to discuss "the failure of the Government of Bengal to set at liberty persons purported to have been detained under Rule 28 of the Defence of India Rules in spite of the decision of the Calcutta High Court and the recent decision of the Federal Court of India declaring the procedure adopted by the Bengal Government regarding detention as contrary to law and improper."

- 17th. In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, the food policy of the Bengal Government was strongly criticized during a debate on the province's food situation. Twelve members took part in the discussion in which reference was made to the mounting death-roll in Calcutta and elsewhere in the province due to starvation and the misery caused by food shortage—Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, leader of the Nationalist Party, led the attack.

A Press Note from New Delhi said: "The Hon. Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member to the Government of India, held a Conference in New Delhi with the Premier of the Punjab, Lt. Col. Malik Khizar Hyat Khan Tiwana, Sir Chhotu Ram and Sardar Baldev Singh. He discussed questions affecting the procurement of foodgrains in the Punjab for despatch to Bengal and other deficit areas."

A Gazette Extraordinary published from Cuttack, the Orissa Foodgrains (Control of Movement and Transaction) Order 1943: "Under this order no person can move foodgrains for transport from Orissa except under a permit issued by the Director of Food Supplies."

- 18th. In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, the food situation in Bengal figured prominently in the general discussion of the Budget. All Sections agreed that Bengal had a strong case for large and more substantial financial help from the Government of India.

The Textile Commissioner, Bombay, in a Press Note, said *inter alia*: "It is not possible to keep open indefinitely government's offer to purchase unmarked cloth and yarn in full bales from dealers who were not able to dispose of their goods by August 31, 1943.....the Textile Commissioner, in consultation with the Chairman of Textile Control Board, has, therefore, decided that no application offering goods to the government, which is passed or delivered by hand after September 25 will be entertained."

- 19th. Dr. G. V. Deshmukh, M.L.A. (Central) in a statement in Bombay, suggested that Congress members of the Legislature should meet at Delhi on November 7, to consider the food situation in the country and help in organizing relief.

- 20th. A Press Note was issued by the Ministry of Civil Supplies, Bengal, which stated *inter alia*: "It has now been decided that the rationing is to be on an individual basis, and separate ration cards will be issued to each consumer."

In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, there was an uproar during the concluding phase of a debate on a Government demand for a grant of Rs. 3, 52,00,000 for famine relief measures—the cut motions were rejected and the entire demand was voted.

In the Bengal Legislative Council, the food situation occupied a prominent place in the general discussion of the Budget.

The Mysore Government ordered the constitution of a Central Food Council at Bangalore, to secure the effective advice and co-operation of non-officials.

- 21st. In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, Mr. K. S. Roy, leader of the official Congress Party, referred to the complete disappearance of rice from markets.

The Bengal Legislative Council concluded the general Budget discussion. While the opposition directed its attack against Government's food policy, some of the Ministry's supporters urged that drastic action should be taken to stamp out corruption in the administration.

Lord Wavell spoke on his task in India when he addressed the East India Association at a reception in his honour in London.

**22nd.** Mr. L. S. Amery made the following statement in the House of Commons about famine conditions in India in a written reply:—  
“Besides the measures taken for the improvement of the food position in India as a whole, rationing plans are already in operation in Bombay City and some other large towns. They are to be extended to a total of some 70 such towns, including Calcutta, where rationing is expected to be in operation in November. Relief measures are in operation in Calcutta and other parts of Bengal.”

In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, the opposition staged a walk-out as a protest against the decision of the speaker, not to allow Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, leader of the opposition to make a statement on a speech by Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, Civil Supplies Minister on the food situation.

The Bengal Legislative Council decided to take into consideration the Vagrancy Bill as passed by the Assembly.

**23rd.** Mr. L. S. Amery, Secretary of State for India, made the first official statement on Bengal food situation. He said: “My earlier statement as to the nature and cause of the failure of food supplies in certain parts of India holds good. Among those causes have been poor rice crops in Bengal, the loss of Burma imports, the withholding of some portion of their crops from sale by 50,000,000 peasant producers, and doubtlessly by merchants coupled with some clashes of provincial and national interests and some local failures of administration.”

The Viceroy-designate, Lord Wavell, receiving the freedom of the City of Winchester, said: “We have little of which to be ashamed in our dealings with India and very much of which to be proud.”

In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, the working of the Civil Supplies Department and the transactions of Messrs. A. H. Isphani & Co, as sole food-grains purchasing agent for the Bengal Government, formed the main targets of criticism by the opposition.

In the Bengal Legislative Council, the gravity of Bengal's food situation was stressed by members of various parties. The opposition moved a special motion criticizing the government's food policy and urging that the province should be declared a famine area.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League, in an interview to foreign Press Correspondents, said: “Pakistan is an indispensable condition of any settlement in India.”

In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, demands for grants for the Judicial and Irrigation departments came up for consideration.

In the Bengal Legislative Council, by 28 votes to 12, the Opposition's special motion criticizing the Government's food policy, was rejected.

**25th.** Mr. Mrinal Kanti Bose, presiding at the Bengal Provincial Trade Union Congress, in Calcutta said that the forces of capitalism released by war conditions had given a fillip to profit-making by war manufacturers and middlemen of all sorts, but the workers, industrial and agricultural, who should have also benefitted, had little share in the prosperity.

Mr. J. K. Mitter, presiding at the second quarterly General Meeting of the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta, declared that the food problem could be solved satisfactorily only through the co-operation of the public and the commercial community.

In the Bengal Legislative Assembly, consideration of the Budget came to an end with the passing of demands for grants for Agriculture, Education, Excise and some other departments.

**26th.** According to an Official report received at Srinagar, seven persons were killed and nine injured as the result of police firing in Jammu on Sept. 24. Twenty-five police officers and men received injuries.

Messrs. B. R. Reddy, V. Satyanarayana, N. Satyanarayan, and other members of the Touring Committee, appointed by the Working Committee of the Andhra Mahasabha submitted their report on the famine conditions in Rayalaseema.

**27th.** The Bengal Legislative Assembly, by 128 votes to 88, rejected a special motion by Dr. Nalinakshaya Sanyal, (un-official Congress) condemning the Nazimuddin Ministry's handling of the food situation.

Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, Government of India when he met the Committee of the Indian Merchants' Chamber in Bombay, said: “The Govern-

ment of India are making strenuous efforts to bring to this country as early as possible considerable quantities of food grains from foreign countries and they have every intention of implementing, as far as it lies in their power, the recommendations of the Long-Term Planning Committee, to set up Central foodgrains reserve.

28th. Mr. W. J. Scully, Minister of Commerce and Agriculture stated from Canberra, that Australia could supply all the wheat needed for starving India provided the U. K. could provide ships. Wheat was practically waiting for loading on boats. There was no indication yet from the U. K. whether ships could be made available. Australia was ready and waiting.

The Bengal Legislative Council was prorogued after passing the Vagrants Bill.

A Press Note said: "An agreement was reached recently with the Orissa Government under which that Government, in view of the serious food difficulties in Bengal, agreed to release large quantities of rice amounting to several thousand tons."

30th. The death occurred in Calcutta of Mr. Ramananda Chatterjee, Editor, "*Modern Review*" and "*Prabasi*."

Dasara celebrations commenced amidst general rejoicings in Mysore. H. H. Sir Jaya Chamaraja Wadiyar Bahadur, Maharaja of Mysore, held a special durbar in the morning at 'Sajjee' in this connection.

## October 1943

Mahatma Gandhi's 75th birthday was celebrated in Bombay—khadi was mainly sold.

The Punjab exported 265,100 tons of foodgrains and foodproducts to Bengal from the beginning of May to September 27.

The Dasara Session of the Mysore Representative Assembly commenced in Mysore. The Dewan President was in the Chair.

Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, ex-Premier, Bengal, in a statement denied responsibility for the famine in the Province and demanded a Royal Commission to inquire into its causes.

H. E. Sir Thomas Rutherford, Acting Governor of Bengal, made a call to the people of Bengal to cease all party controversy and offer "whole-hearted co-operation in the urgent task of setting Bengal on her feet again."

The Chinese Community celebrated the 32nd. anniversary of the Republic of China, in Calcutta.

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Mr. L. S. Amery, Secretary of State for India, in a statement in the House of Commons on the Bengal food crisis, said *inter alia* : "We have made every effort to provide shipping and considerable quantities of foodgrains are now arriving or are due to arrive before the end of the year."

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The Chamber of Princes passed a resolution pledging the determination

tion of the Princes and the Ruling Chiefs of India to continue to help in the achievement of the final Allied Victory.

Mr. Sargent, Educational Adviser to the Government of India, drew up a scheme for a national system of education to provide all children in India with basic education.

Viscount Wavell was sworn in as Viceroy in New Delhi.

In the House of Lords, during the debate on the famine in India, Lord Cato spoke on the plight of the Bengal peasants.

Mr. N. M. Khan, purchasing agent to the Bengal Government, purchased in the Punjab Since September 6, forty two thousand tons of wheat products.

The Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri, in an open letter addressed to the Secretary of State, the Viceroy and Mahatma Gandhi, made an appeal for ending the deadlock in India.

His Excellency the Viceroy accompanied by Lady Wavell and Sir Thomas Rutherford, Governor of Bengal visited some of the areas in Calcutta where the shelterless refugees were lying about.

Mr. L. S. Amery stated in the House of Commons: "It is estimated that between August 15 and October 16, about 8000 persons died in Calcutta, from causes directly or indirectly due to malnutrition. I have no reliable figures for the whole of India."

1st. Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League, in an Id message (from Bombay) to Muslims said: "We have gone through and faced another year of our political struggle with no small credit to our national organization--the All-India Muslim League. Recently remarkable results were achieved by the Muslim League organization in the various by-elections in Bengal and the N. W. F. P. It is obvious that today we stand more solid and united and stronger than ever before."

The Punjab exported by rail 265,100 tons of foodgrains and products to Bengal from the beginning of May to September 27 according to the statistics published by the N. W. Ry.

2nd. Celebrations in connexion with Mahatma Gandhi's seventy-fifth birthday which commenced in Bombay were confined mainly to the selling of Khadi.

3rd. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, in a statement from Calcutta, said: "Letters and Telegrams are daily pouring in from different parts of Bengal stating that neither rice nor atta is available, and the people are suffering from starvation. The price of rice in some places specially in East Bengal varies between 3 to 4 times the controlled price of Rs. 20. The reports of distress amongst all classes of people are of an appalling character. The immediate problem is to supply foodgrains to the rural areas of the Province. If this is not done during the next week or fortnight nothing can save Bengal."

4th. The Dasara Session of the Mysore Representative Assembly commenced in Mysore in the Jagan Mohan Palace with the Dewan President, Prodhana Shiromani N. Madhava Rao, in the chair.

Bombay contributed nearly Rs. 12 lakhs for famine relief in Bengal.

5th. The Hot Spring Conference's (New Delhi) recommendation was criticised as merely academic at a meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Health. What was required at present in India was sufficient food and a higher standard of life, urged a number of speakers including Maj-General Candy, Mr. P. N. Sapru and Col. Chopra. Sir Jogendra Singh presided.

6th. Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, ex-Premier and Leader of the Opposition in the Bengal Assembly, in a statement denied responsibility for the famine in the Province and demanded a Royal Commission to inquire into its causes.

7th. Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, S. E. Asia Command, accompanied by a small staff arrived in New Delhi.

Pandit Godavaris Misra, Finance Minister, Orissa, who visited the rural areas in Puri district, in an interview in Cuttack, said: "The people have been reduced to bags of bones for want of food. Cholera, dysentery and fever are claiming many victims. I saw emaciated people falling down speechless when

trying to ask for food. People were seen carrying small loads of wild roots from neighbouring forests for their meals."

The Mysore Representative Assembly discussed and passed four official bills—Bill for Prohibition of Beggary, the Trade Marks Bill, the Motor Vehicles Bill and the Electricity Bill.

- 8th. H. E. Sir Thomas Rutherford, in a broadcast on the food situation from Calcutta, made a call to the people of Bengal to cease all party controversy and offer "whole-hearted co-operation in the urgent task of setting Bengal on her feet again".

According to a notification published from Cuttack, Mr. Biswanath Das, ex-Premier and Leader of the Orissa Assembly Congress Party was disqualified from being chosen as and from being member of the Orissa Legislative Assembly for a period of 6 years from August 28, 1943.

The Maharaja of Parlakimedi, Orissa Premier, in a statement quoted the opinion of Mr. C. C. Ingles, Director of the Civil Irrigation and Hydro-Research Station at Kharakhavalasa (near Poona) to the effect that "it is quite possible to rid Orissa of its floods for ever by making the Mahanadi carry more water into the seas than what she now does and also by rendering parts of Chilka Lake quite dry".

- 9th. Mr. William Dobie, the Trade Union Leader, declared that the people of Britain wanted action to bring about a big change in India. "This famine sweeping India is man made".

- 10th. At a meeting of the Chinese Community in Calcutta, confidence in the ultimate defeat of Japan and the victory of the Allies was expressed, on the occasion of the celebration of the 32nd anniversary of the Republic of China.

Mr. P. R. Das, in his presidential address at the fifth annual session of the Bengali Association at Monghyr observed: "The foreign foe beyond our boundaries lack of food in the country, mutual discord, clash of interest, individual greed and dishonesty have brought misery and destitution to the people of a fair and fertile province. Bengal feels the pangs of a new birth that pervades the whole earth to-day."

- 11th. Sir Thomas Rutherford, Acting Governor of Bengal, arrived in New Delhi. He had a series of conferences with the Viceroy and members of the Viceroy's Council and officials on the food situation in Bengal.

Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarkar in a Press statement commenting on the Governor of Bengal's broadcast on the food crisis in Bengal welcomed H. E.'s appeal for whole-hearted co-operation with the Government in their attempt to deal with the problem, which he said had assumed such grave proportions that "only by keeping it severely aloof from all party considerations can we hope to be able to get at the real solution".

The Maharaja of Parlakimedi, Chief Minister, Orissa stated that the despatch of 400,000 mds. of rice promised by the Orissa Government for Bengal, would start from October 13. The delay was unavoidable due to transport difficulties and the fixing of the price per bag to be delivered in Calcutta.

At the Representative Assembly, Mysore, a unanimous demand for the introduction of rationing was made by almost every speaker, when the food problem came up for discussion. The Dewan-President was in the chair.

The Bengal Government's Home Department in an order dated 8th October under Rule 41 of the D. I. R. notified, "that any matter relating to the economic condition in Bengal, the food supply situation, relief and distress and civil defence services or organizations shall before being published in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* newspaper, till further order, be submitted for scrutiny to the special Press Adviser, Calcutta".

- 12th. Mr. L. S. Amery, in the second statement on the Bengal food crisis, said *inter alia*: "Since the recrudescence of shortage in an acute form we have made every effort to provide shipping and considerable quantities of foodgrains are now arriving or are due to arrive before the end of the year. We have also been able to help in the supply of milk food for children. The problem, so far as help from here is concerned is entirely of shipping, and has to be judged in the light of all other urgent news of the United Nations. The Central Government of India has been actively concerned from the first signs of possible dangers in the food situation."

Under the joint auspices of the Journalist Association of India and the Provincial Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference, a resolution

condemning the action of the Central Provinces Government in serving an order under the Defence of India rules on the Editor of the *Hitavada*, requiring him to reveal the source of information regarding the report of resignation of Mr. Blair, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, published in that paper was passed at a meeting in Bombay, Mr. B. G. Horniman presided.

- 13th. Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member of the Government of India, opening the All-India Food Conference in New Delhi, announced his intention to set up a Central Committee to advise the Government on the country's food problem. The Committee would be representative of all important elements in India and be appealed to the public to co-operate with the Government in feeding the hungry and in securing full and equitable distribution of the country's food resources.

The session of the Food Conference was occupied with a brief statement by various representatives giving the general reactions of their Governments to the report of the Foodgrains Policy Committee. Some of the representatives prefaced their remarks by a brief indication of their domestic food position.

- 14th. H. E. Lord Linnithgow, addressing the Chamber of Princes for the last time, re-affirmed his faith and confidence in the Federal ideal and in the contribution which the realisation of that ideal, with whatever adjustments might prove necessary in regard to particular aspects of it, would make to Indian unity and to the constitutional future of India.

The Food Conference in New Delhi discussed the recommendation of the Foodgrains Policy Committee relating to the basic plan for 1943-44, procurement operations and rationing.

The Secretary of State for India, Mr. L. S. Amery, made a number of written replies in the House of Commons to questions about India, chiefly on the food situation.

Madras City experienced one of its worst floods, causing great havoc and damage to property.

- 15th. The Food Conference discussed the recommendation of the Foodgrains Policy Committee relating to price control, and expressed itself in favour of such control.

Mr. L. S. Amery, speaking at Birmingham, stated that the Indian situation was being anxiously watched and that every measure necessary would be taken if, by the end of the year, the immediate difficulties had not been overcome.

The determination of the Ruling Princes and Chiefs of India to continue to help in the achievement of the final Allied Victory was pledged in a resolution passed by the Chamber of Princes on the Chancellor's motion.

- 16th. Mr. R. H. Hutchings, Secretary, Food Department, made an important statement on the Government of India's policy at the Food Conference. "Government accepted the conference's recommendation that statutory price control should be instituted for all major foodgrains in all provinces and similar control in increasing the number of non-agricultural commodities particularly those necessary to the cultivator".

- 17th. At the concluding session of the Food Conference, statutory control of major foodgrains in all provinces, urban rationing and procurement to be undertaken by the provinces were the Government of India's three decisions.

Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, announced that the first ship with foodgrains from abroad was already unloading at an Indian port and the second was expected to arrive at any moment.

Mr. A. K. Fazlul Hug, ex-Premier, Bengal, in a Press statement, regarding Mr. Suhrawardy's utterances at Delhi, said: "When millions are suffering from starvation and misery in Bengal, Mr. Suhrawardy, Bengal's Civil Supplies Minister, with amazing disregard for truth, announced before the Food Conference that the price of rice had gone down in Bengal, and that rice had not disappeared from the markets."

Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, in a statement in Madras, deplored the political deadlock in India and urged the release of political prisoners and the establishment of National Government at the Centre and in the Provinces.

A scheme for a national system of education to provide all children in India with basic education and to enable promising children to pass on to high schools, universities, technical, commercial and art institutions, was outlined in a memorandum prepared by Mr. Sargent, Educational Adviser to the Government of India, as part of the Government of India's Post-War Reconstruction plans, and discussed by the Central Advisory Board of Education.

The Viceroy-designate and Lady Wavell arrived in New Delhi.

18th. His Excellency the Viceroy, in a message sent to the Central Board of Education which met at Dehra Dun, said: "I shall always be sorry that owing to circumstances outside my control I was unable during my Viceroyalty to inaugurate that broad advance towards the establishment of a national system of education which I had in mind before war broke out."

19th. A request to the Council of the A. I. Muslim League to call upon all members of the League organization to dissociate themselves from the Khaksar movement was contained in a resolution adopted by the Working Committee of the Bombay Provincial Muslim League.

Mr. K. M. Munshi said, in an interview at Lahore: "At a time when the war against Japan is the immediate problem of India, British statesmen would be unwise if they do not revise their policy which has produced the gulf of bitterness between India and Britain during the last year."

Senator Clarkson, Minister of the Interior, addressing the Durban City Council, said: "Indians are national citizens of the Union and as such are deserving all rights enjoyed by the European population."

20th. Viscount Wavell was sworn in as Viceroy in New Delhi.

Sardar Baldev Singh, Minister of Development and Food, Punjab, on his return from Delhi after attending the Food Conference, said that the decisions announced by the Government of India met the Punjab's point of view in a large measure. He thought that the grower need have no apprehension that the prices of foodgrains would be controlled to their disadvantage as the Government of India had agreed that if the price were fixed they would take into account the cost of agricultural production.

The House of Lords held a debate on the food situation in India.—The Earl of Huntingdon (Labour) opened the debate by asking Government whether they had any further statement to make regarding the famine conditions in certain provinces in India and what steps would be taken to relieve the situation.

21st. Mr. Churchill announced in the House of Commons that the House would debate the food situation in India in the next series of sittings but one.

A communique issued in New Delhi, *inter alia*: "Certain sections of the Press have recently condemned the action of the Government in asking the editor of a newspaper to disclose the source of his information about a particular article and in using the powers provided by law for enforcing such a request."

Mr. Amery, replying to a question by Sir John Wardlaw Milne (Congress) about hoarding in Bengal, said that the Foodgrains Control Order, which provided for effective penalties for profiteering and hoarding, was operative throughout India including Bengal.

22nd. During the debate in the House of Lords on the famine in India, Lord Cato spoke on the plight of the Bengal peasants and the danger of disease.

Forty-two thousand tons of wheat products were purchased in the Punjab since Sept. 5, by Mr. N. M. Khan, purchasing agent to the Bengal Government.

A Press communique from New Delhi said: "Ten research students have been selected by a Committee appointed by the Government of India under the chairmanship of Sir Maurice Gwyer, for the award of research scholarships offered by the Government of China as part of a scheme for strengthening cultural contacts between India and China."

23rd. Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru, who returned to Calcutta from a town of E. Bengal, said: "There is incredible misery everywhere. Starvation is the lot of the people both in towns and villages, but rural areas are more seriously affected than the urban ones. The suffering of the villagers particularly of women and children bring tears to one's eyes. Smaller cultivators and landless labourers are selling their lands and houses in order to have a few rupees to buy food with. This seems to me to disprove effectively the charge of hoarding, which has often been brought against the cultivator. It is cruel to charge starving villagers with deliberately withholding rice from the markets."

The Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri made an appeal for ending the deadlock in India in an open letter addressed to the Secretary of State for India Mr. Amery, His Excellency the Viceroy Lord Wavell and Mahatma Gandhi.

24th. A programme of despatch of food from Calcutta to the deficit districts of Bengal, and of direct booking to such districts from surplus areas was drawn up by the Bengal Government in consultation with transport authorities. This

was expected to relieve food distress in districts, and prevent congestion of food supplies in Calcutta.

- 25th. Mrs. Vijaylakshmi Pandit, President, All-India Women's Conference, giving her impressions of her tour of the flood and famine affected areas in Midnapore district, said, "On returning to Bengal after two weeks I find the situation has badly deteriorated. Any statement about existing conditions involves a contradiction of everything which has been said by Mr. Amery regarding the Bengal food crisis during the past weeks."

The possible partition of India was discussed by the Indian representative in the War Council, Sir A. R. Mudaliar in an introductory discussion on "India and the Four Freedoms, in a broadcast by the B. B. C. from London.

- 26th. His Excellency the Viceroy accompanied by Lady Wavell and the Bengal Governor, Sir Thomas Rutherford, went round the streets of Calcutta, visiting some of the areas where the shelterless refugees were lying about.

A statement was issued by the Committee of the Calcutta Branch of the European Association urging inquiry into the food situation in Bengal.

- 27th. The following announcement was issued from 10, Downing street, London, which stated *inter alia* : "War needs have led to the establishment in India of branches and agencies of certain departments of the U. K. Government and H. Q. of the S. E. Asia Command. The Viceroy of India has been invited by the War Cabinet to undertake on their behalf certain administrative and co-ordinating functions which arise from these developments and which fall outside the responsibilities of the Government of India and of himself as Governor-General."

- 28th. The food situation in India was again raised in the House of Commons. Mr. Amery in reply to Mr. Sorenson said : "The Government of India has been in the closest consultation with Indian representatives of various political points of view.....I have no doubt that this policy of full discussion with representative Indians will continue." He added : "It is estimated that between Aug. 15 and Oct. 16, about 8000 persons died in Calcutta from causes directly or indirectly due to malnutrition. I have no reliable figures for the whole of India."

- 29th. In White Paper published in London, the Bengal famine was attributed to the fall of Burma, the Cyclone of Oct. 1942, the hoarding resulting from the fall of Burma and the air raids on Calcutta and the floods which breached the main railway lines to the Presidency.

Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru, President of the Servants of India Society, in a statement to the Press in Calcutta, welcomed the decision taken at the food conference, H. E. the Viceroy presiding, to place the services of a Major-General at the disposal of the Bengal Government to assist them in moving food grains from Calcutta to the districts affected by the emergency.

- 30th. Sardar Baldev Singh, Development Minister, Punjab, issued a statement in regard to wheat prices and in respect of the disposal of the surplus foodgrains.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Secretary, All-India Muslim League and Nawab Md. Ismail Khan, Chairman, All-India Muslim League Defence Committee, in a statement to the Press described their impressions of the distress in Bengal.

- 31st. Interviewed on the Bengal famine situation, Mr. Jinnah said : "At this grave moment of terrible plight and suffering in Bengal and the appalling death roll that is daily issued, I would not like to say anything as to who is really responsible for allowing this tragic situation to develop."

In pursuance of the Government plan to repatriate destitutes from Calcutta, about 3,000 of them were collected from the streets and sent to initial reception centres in the City.

## November 1943

H. M. the King, in his speech proroguing the Parliament, referred to India and said *inter alia* : "The perseverance and industry of my People in the United Kingdom have been emulated by my peoples in the Dominions and Colonial territories and in India. I trust that the special hardships which the war has lately brought on many among my Indian subjects will be relieved and that the steps my Government

have already taken will assist the Government in India in relieving the grave shortage of food in certain areas in India."

The Corporation of Calcutta passed a resolution demanding the appointment of a royal commission to inquire into the causes of the famine in Bengal.

His Majesty the King approved the appointment of Lt. Gen. A. G. O. M. Mayne, C.B., D.O.C., to be G. O. C.-in-C. Eastern Command, India.

Mr. L. S. Amery, Secretary of State for India, observed in the House of Commons, re : food crisis in India : "In the last three months every effort has been made to get food through to Bengal from the rest of India. The efforts to control prices in India are showing some signs of success."

In the House of Lords, Lord Strabolgi wanted to introduce a Bill to apply the Statute of Westminster to India.

The Central Legislative Assembly began its autumn session in New Delhi. The President, Sir Abdur Rahim read a message from the Viceroy.

Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, Government of India announced in the Central Assembly that six shiploads of foodgrains had arrived in India.

Mr. L. S. Amery, replying to questions in the House of Commons on the Indian famine, said that encouraging results had been achieved in Bengal. He also said that the troops were being allocated to the worst affected districts in Bengal to assist the civil authorities in the movement of grain to the villages, military transport being used when possible.

The All-India Muslim League Council re-elected Mr. M. A. Jinnah as President of the League for the next year.

The Council of the All-India Muslim League concluded its session in New Delhi after passing a resolution on the food situation in India.

In the Central Legislative Assembly, Government accepted a resolution asking that the Army should be thrown open to members of the scheduled castes and that military service should not be the monopoly of a few privileged classes.

Mr. John Sargent, Education Commissioner with the Government of India, explained the scheme of educational reconstruction in a teachers' meeting in New Delhi. Mr. Sargent said that the scheme sought to provide free, compulsory and universal education in India.

Sir J. P. Srivastava announced in the Council of State that the Government of India had decided to become responsible for the feeding of greater Calcutta.

H. H. the Maharaja of Nepal, as a mark of his sympathetic concern for Bengal's plight, spontaneously offered to release stocks of rice and paddy in Nepal which were surplus to his country's requirements for export to the Province.

The Government of India decided to reinstate the Maharaja of Rewa, subject to certain conditions which had been accepted by His Highness.

1st. A resolution demanding the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the causes of the famine in Bengal was passed by the Calcutta Corporation.

Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru, President, Servants of India Society, who visited certain parts of the coastal districts of Orissa, said in Cuttack : "My impression is that while the area in districts in Orissa is smaller than in Bengal, the distress in the affected areas is nearly as acute as in any of the districts of Bengal that I have visited".

The twelfth session of the National Defence Council opened at the Viceroy's House, New Delhi, H. E. the Viceroy presided.

2nd. Madame Chiang-Kai-Shek was elected honorary Chairman of the India famine Relief Association inaugurated in Chungking at a meeting organised by the Sino-Indian Cultural Association.

A demand for action to release famine distress in India was made by M. P's, religious leaders and others at a London meeting arranged by the India Relief Committee.

The Hon. Major Khizar Hyat Khan Tiwana, Premier, in the course of a statement in the Punjab Assembly, said that more than half of the total of civil disobedience detenus, who were arrested since August 1942, had already been released.

Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, in the course of his talk in the B. B. C. Round Table discussion on "India and the four freedoms" (London), said: "India would be willing to join an 'international community' on a global organisation of the future in which she would have a position of independence as well as inter-dependence".

Major General A. V. T. Wakely, who was deputed by the Army authorities at the instance of the Viceroy to take charge of the control of movement of food-grains in the province (Bengal) met Mr. H. S. Surhawardy, Minister for Civil Supplies, Mr. H. E. S. Stevens, Food Commissioner and Mr. N. M. Ayyar, Director of Civil Supplies at the directorate of Civil Supplies (Calcutta), when the transport position in respect of the movement of food-grains was discussed. A plan for the improvement of the arrangements for despatching food-grains to the mofussil was also considered at the meeting.

3rd. His Majesty the King approved the appointment of Lt. Gen. A. G. O. M. Mayne, C. B., D. S. O. to be G. O. C.-in-C. Eastern Command, India.

The provisions of the Bengal Rationing order were published in the Calcutta Gazette, which would apply to the whole of Bengal.

Under the order, rationed articles would be distributed in rationed areas through wholesale and retail dealers and proprietors of establishments appointed by Government for the purpose.

The National Defence Council met again at the Viceroy's House in New Delhi. H. E. the Viceroy presided.

4th. Mr. L. S. Amery, Secretary of State for India, during the debate in the House of Commons on the food crisis in India, ordered: "In the last three months every effort has been made to get food through to Bengal from the rest of India. The efforts to control prices in India are showing some signs of success." He also declared "The Government of India has made great efforts to cope with the situation. Their chief problem has been high prices and local shortage, both essentially due to maldistribution."

5th. In the House of Lords, Lord Strabolgi sought leave, on his own initiative, to introduce a Bill to apply the Statute of Westminster to India.

The Government of India appointed a Committee to satisfy themselves that there was no excessive profits in the prices charged for wheat products at subsequent stages in Bengal.

Sir Sultan Ahmed, Information and Broadcasting Member, Government of India, addressing the first meeting of the publicity Advisory Committee, explained the working of the Government of India's publicity organisation.

6th. The Standing Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference in New Delhi, passed among others the following resolution: "The Committee records its emphatic protest against the action of the C. P. Government in demanding from the Editor of the *Hitavada* the source of his information in regard to the publication of a news item concerning the resignation of the Chief Secretary to the Bengal Government as unwarranted interference with the well-established convention governing the relation between an editor and his correspondents."

The Maharaja of Parlakimedi, Premier of Orissa, in a statement on the food situation in Orissa, made it clear that there was no attempt on his part to draw a curtain over the sufferings that existed among the people of N. Balasore, parts of Puri district and the coastal areas of Ganjam.

7th. General Sir Claude Auchinleck, at a press conference in New Delhi, gave details of how the army was helping to cope with the Bengal famine. His Excellency revealed that several thousand troops were being employed on this work including a number of motorised units. He said: "Troops already in Bengal have started work, and other troops are on the move, some of them

from long distances. Nine hundred tons of food daily have been sent, since they started from Calcutta to some 23 distribution centres in the mofussil."

Sir H. P. Mody and Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker, former members of the Viceroy's Council, in a statement jointly issued from Calcutta, said: "Lord Wavell has begun well. He has inaugurated his regime with a determined attack on the food muddle, which has aroused the attention of the world. There is every reason to hope that, from the point of view of administration, his tenure of office will be characterised by vigour and direction of action. Has not India, however, a right to expect something from a Viceroy of such outstanding qualities and such a close and up-to-date acquaintance with Indian problems?"

- 8th. The Central Legislative Assembly began its autumn session in New Delhi, when the President, Sir Abdur Rahim, read a message from the Viceroy. The Viceroy's message read, "It is customary for a new Viceroy to address both houses of the Indian Legislature at the first opportunity. I have decided to depart from the precedent and shall deliver no address during the November session.....for the time being my energy must be very largely devoted to the study and treatment of the food problem—a matter upon which I do not feel that I could make a comprehensive statement in the immediate future. It is my intention to address both chambers at an early stage of the Budget session of 1944."

In the Central Legislative Assembly, Sir Edward Benthall, War Transport Member, replying to Mr. K. C. Neogy, announced that the coal rationing scheme had now been put into operation. He stated that a total of 25.61 million tons a year had been adopted as a reasonable figure which could be made available for distribution. Rations had been fixed on the basis of actual supplies made during the 12 months period from August 1942 to July 1943 and took into account estimated increases in the consumption of essential services.

Mr. Govind Deshmukh moved his adjournment motion in the Assembly to censure Government on its "unwise decision to send non-official gentlemen selected by it to undertake a tour abroad and to speak on India's war effort."

The demand for a full enquiry into the food situation was supported by three parties in the Assembly.

His Excellency Sir Arthur Hope, Governor of Madras addressing a meeting at Cuddapah, observed: "It has been my concern and the concern of my government to see that food is within the reach of every one. We have spent the worst days. Now with the prospect of getting good harvest which is in sight, we hope to solve the problem most satisfactorily."

- 9th. In the Central Legislative Assembly, Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, stated that six shiploads of foodgrains had arrived in India and although he did not know the actual tonnage he thought it was about 30,000 and more was coming. He said that the price at which wheat was landed in India was substantially low.

Sir Jeremy Raisman, Finance Member, in accepting a resolution of the Muslim League Party, urging stabilisation of prices, said: "We have reached a stage at which in order to maintain the war effort it is necessary to cater for civilian requirements."

- 10th. General Sir Claude Auchinleck, C.-in-C., India, issued an appeal on the Poppy Day for funds to help all ex-servicemen.

The Punjab Assembly Muslim League Party at a meeting in Lahore, passed an amendment to its constitution subjecting its members to the control and discipline of the All-India Muslim League Parliamentary Board.

- 11th. Mr. L. S. Amery, replying to a number of questions in the House of Commons on the Indian famine, told a questioner that encouraging results had been achieved on Budget. He was answering questions by Mr. Nicholson (Conser), whom he told that troops were being allocated to the worst affected districts in Bengal to assist the Civil authorities in the movement of grain to villages, military transport being used where possible. The military would also assist in providing temporary shelters for the people. Arrangements for close liaison with the civil authorities had been made and medical appliances and personnel were being made available.

In the Dail, (Ireland) an estimate for £200,000, was introduced for alleviation of distress due to war and famine in Europe and India.

A resolution in the name of Mr. G. S. Motilal seeking "to convey to His Majesty's government that the people of India do not want Mr. Amery to hold the office of the Secretary of State for India any longer," secured the first place

in the ballot of for non-official resolutions for November 24 in the Council of State.

- 12th. In the Central Legislative Assembly, initiating the debate on the food situation, Sir J. P. Srivastava, food member, said that as against the Bengal Governor's estimate of Bengal's requirements for the three months, October to December, of 250,000 tons, 82,000 were sent during October. "We hope," he said, "that our arrangements will secure that figure given by the Governor will be substantially exceeded."

At the adjourned meeting of the Working Committee of Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha held in Calcutta, a resolution demanding the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the causes of the Bengal famine was passed.

The food crisis in Bengal was one of the subjects considered by the council of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League at its meeting in Calcutta.—The Council was of opinion that the crisis was "due to the policy of the bureaucracy" and condemned Mr. L. S. Amery and the party who had tried to shirk their own responsibility and foist it on provincial autonomy.

A Communique stated that the Bihar Provincial Government decided to increase certain fees and duties which did not form an essential element in the cost of living with a view to checking the growing inflationary tendency in the Province.

In the Central Legislative Assembly, Mr. Govind Deshmukh asked for information about the disabilities and restriction imposed on Indians in the United State and the proposal to exempt the Chinese from similar restrictions. Sir Sultan Ahmed said that the Government of India were not in possession of exact details but they understood that the common object of the legislation before the United States Congress in this connexion was to lift existing restrictions on Chinese immigration and the acquisition of American citizenship by resident Chinese. The Agent General for India lost no time in approaching the State Department as to the possibility of parity of treatment for Indian nationals and his final report was awaited.

- 13th. A Press Note from New Delhi said : "The flow of foodgrains to Calcutta continues and grains are moved as fast as they are available."

In the Central Legislative Assembly, Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, replying to Mr. K. C. Neogy, made a statement on charges and counter-charges of Provincial Governments against each other in regard to alleged profiteering in respect of food supplies to Bengal.

The Central Assembly dealt with five official Bills.—One of them was Dr. Ambedkar's Bill further to amend the Indian Trade Unions mainly for compulsory recognition of Trade Unions under certain conditions and defining what recognition would imply. The House agreed to circulate the Bill for eliciting public opinion.

- 14th. The All-India Muslim League Council re-elected Mr. M. A. Jinnah as President of the League for the next year. The Secretary's announcement that no other name had been suggested by any Provincial League was greeted with loud applause.

In the meeting of the Council of A. I. Muslim League (in New Delhi) a ban was imposed on the members of the League joining the Khaksar movement.

Dr. H. N. Kunzru, who toured Bengal and Orissa, studying famine conditions there, said in a statement that Orissa was a poor province hence it should have received special consideration at the hands of the Central authorities. But instead of showing any sympathy "they have accentuated its misfortunes by their policy."

Under the auspices of the National Council of Women in India, the legal status of women was the subject of a conference which commenced in Bombay.—In the absence of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, the Rt. Hon. Mr. M. R. Jayakar, delivered the presidential Address and inaugurated the conference.

- 15th. The Council of State met in New Delhi with Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy in the chair. Malik Sir Firoz Khan Noon, Defence Member, H. E. Prior, Secretary, Labour Department, Sir N. Gopalswami Iyengar, ex-Prime Minister, Kashmir, Mr. B. Das and Mr. B. R. Sen, Director General of Food were the five new members who were sworn in. The President read H. E. the Viceroy's message to the Legislature. The members of the Progressive and Muslim League parties remained seated.

The Council of the All-India Muslim League concluded its session in New-Delhi passing a resolution on the food situation in India.

The C.-in-C. in India, General Sir Claude Auchinleck, reviewed the war situation in reply to a question in the Council of State.

The Central Legislative Assembly continued the debate on the food situation, Sir Chhotu Ram, Punjab Minister, sat in the visitors' gallery.

The Government of Madras decided to re-open toddy and foreign liquor shops in Salem and three other prohibition districts in the province with effect from January 1 and to suspend the operation of certain provisions of the Prohibition Act for the purpose.

- 16th. In the Central Legislative Assembly, the President Sir Abdur Rahim ruled out of order Sir A. H. Ghuznavi's adjournment motion to discuss "the failure of the Government of India to persuade H. M. G. to implement their guarantee of independence to the Lebanon and to restrain the French Committee from acting in a tyrannical and oppressive manner which is so prejudicial to the progress of the war and the solidarity of the United Nations".

The food debate in the Central Assembly entered its 3rd day.

- 17th. The Central Legislative Assembly disposed of the five remaining official Bills and devoted the rest of the sitting to discussing food crisis.

The House passed Sir Azizul Haque's two Bills, one to amend the Tea Control Act and the other to amend the Indian Companies Act.

The Council of State discussed non-official resolutions. Mr. Hossain Imam moved a resolution urging the grant of Rs. 7,00,00,000 or more to Bengal, to meet the emergency of food shortage. He was supported by Mr. S. M. Padshah, Kumar Shankar Roy Chowdhury and Rai Bahadur Srinarain Mahatha.

During the fortnight ending 13th November, 1,113 bodies of destitutes were picked up by the police from the streets in the city of Calcutta while the number of such persons dying in the various hospitals totalled 1,014. Deaths from all causes recorded by the Calcutta Corporation during the period numbered 3,835 as against 1,290 in the corresponding fortnight of the previous year.

- 18th. The Central Legislative Assembly concluded the debate on the food crisis in India when all amendments to the Food Member's proposal, that the food situation be taken into consideration by the House, were rejected.

The Muslim League's amendment asking for the appointment of a Royal Commission was rejected by 41 votes to 26, the Congress Party, the Nationalists and some unattached members not voting. The other amendments were all rejected without a division.

Sir J. P. Srivastava, (Food Member) replying on the debate said he was not prepared to accept any of the amendments. This, he declared, was not the time for an inquiry. He was not, however, baulking or avoiding an inquiry undertaken at the proper time, and he would place before H. M. G. a full report of the debate in the House.

- 19th. The functions of the Army in relation to famine relief work in Bengal were explained by Lt.-Gen. A. G. O. M. Mayne, G. O. C.-in-C, Eastern Command at a Press Conference in Calcutta.

The Bengal Government's scheme regarding aman (winter) rice crop was placed before leaders of various parties in the Bengal Legislature at a Conference held in Calcutta.

In the Central Legislative Assembly, Government accepted a resolution asking that the Army should be thrown open to members of the scheduled castes and that military service should not be the monopoly of a few privileged classes.

The Council of State began a three day debate on the food situation in the country.

- 20th. In the Council of State three amendments were moved to the food motion of Mr. B. R. Sen, Director General of Food. Two amendments by Mr. H. R. Parker and Mr. Hossain Imam, each demanded a Royal Commission, while Mr. P. N. Saprú wanted a Judicial Committee to hold an inquiry into the food condition.

The death occurred in Calcutta of Mr. Durga Prasad Khaitan. He was the senior Vice-President of the Indian Chamber of Commerce.

- 21st. The inaugural meeting of the Indian Council of World Affairs was held in New Delhi—Sir Tej Bahadur Saprú presided.

- 22nd. The High Commissioner for India, Sir Samuel Runganadhan, gave his views on how he thought India would regard the question of freedom of expression when she achieved full political freedom.

Mr. John Sargent, Educational Commissioner with the Government of India addressing a teachers' meeting in New Delhi explained the scheme of educational reconstruction. The scheme, Mr. Sargent said, sought to provide free, compulsory and universal education in India.

Dr. B. S. Moonje, opening the Barrackpore Hindu Mahasabha Conference, gave a picture of the misery which he saw in the course of his tour in some of the famine affected areas in Bengal. Dr. Moonje made a number of suggestions for relieving distress and rehabilitating people in their own villages.—Mr. N. C. Chatterjee presided. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji was among those who addressed the conference.

23rd. Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, Government of India, announced in the Council of State that the Government of India had decided to become responsible for the feeding of greater Calcutta.

In the Council of State, Mr. B. R. Sen, Director General Food, made a statement in reply to the allegation that the Government of India had made a profit out of the food situation.

The formation was announced in New York, of an Emergency Committee for Indian Famine Relief to co-operate with the British, Chinese and others in meeting the food crisis in India.—The Committee consisted exclusively of American citizens and its members included Mrs. Clare Book Luce, Member of Congress and Miss Pearl Buck, author of 'Good Earth.'

24th. H. M. the King in his speech proroguing the Parliament, referred to India and said : "The perseverance and industry of my people in the United Kingdom have been emulated by my peoples in my Dominions and Colonial territories and in India. I trust that the special hardships which the war has lately brought on many among my Indian subjects will be relieved and that the steps my Government have already taken will assist the Government in India in relieving the grave shortage of food in certain areas in India."

Sardar Baldev Singh, Food Minister, Punjab, commented on the Food Member's statement in the Central Assembly on the purchase of foodgrains from surplus provinces, when he spoke at a conference in Lahore.

The Council of State rejected without a division Pandit Kunzru's resolution urging government to remove all restrictions on the publication of news not relating to the war and, in particular, news relating to internal political conditions and economic well-being of the people and to persuade Provincial Governments to adopt the same policy.

25th. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy Minister for Civil Supplies, Bengal, in a statement said :—"It must be a great relief to the people of Bengal that the responsibility of supplying greater Calcutta, with a population now approximating 4,500,000, and with a consumption of 60,000 tons of foodgrains per month, has been undertaken by the Government of India with supplies from outside. This is bound to give the necessary confidence to the people of Bengal regarding supplies and the return to normal conditions."

Mr. V. D. Savarkar, in a statement from Bombay, said : "I call upon every Hindu organization and individual to follow the lead given by the Bombay provincial and some other Hindu Sabhas and send all help to feed, clothe and shelter Hindu sufferers in Bengal."

26th. H. H. the Maharaja of Nepal, as a mark of his sympathetic concern for Bengal's plight, spontaneously offered to release stocks of rice and paddy in Nepal which were surplus to his country's requirements for export to the province.

Dr. M. R. Jayakar, in his convocation address at the Patna University, mooted a plan emphasising how best Indian universities could help promote measures of national education.

H. E. the Governor of Madras addressing a public meeting at Devakottah made an emphatic refutation that anyone died of starvation in the Ceded Districts. His Excellency added that the Madras Government would not be deterred by financial considerations from carrying out its foremost duty to see that everyone in the presidency was properly fed and clothed.

27th. It was understood that the Government of India would make arrangements to import into Bengal 546,000 tons of foodgrains during 1944, for the purpose of implementing their decision to relieve the Bengal Government of the responsibility of feeding greater Calcutta.

28th. A Press note issued by the Assistant Director of Public Relations, E. Command, stated : More than 50,000 tons of foodstuffs have so far been taken

by the Army on behalf of the Bengal Government from Calcutta to distribution centres in the province. From November 6 to 26, the average daily quantity sent out from Calcutta to selected places in the distressed areas was approximately 2,000 tons."

Mr. Mahommed Ahmed Iadwat and Swami Bhawani Dayal, representatives of the South African Indian Congress in India, in a joint statement from Bombay pointed out the need for the Government of India to be represented on the proposed Commission to inquire into the Natal Indian question, which the South African Government was expected to appoint.

29th. The Government of India decided to reinstate the Maharaja of Rewa, subject to certain conditions which had been accepted by His Highness.

Mr. W. G. Cove, Labour M. P., addressing the Indian Famine Committee (in London) of which he was the Chairman, said: "There is only one principal way of solving the Indian problem, and that is by recognizing now in practice the right of India to self-government, self-determination and independence."

Kumar Gangnanand Sinha, President of the Bihar Provincial Hindu Sabha Conference at Chapra, declared: The acuteness of the food problem in the country has brought into prominent relief the hollowness of the Pakistan theory and we have seen that one province cannot pull on without the help and sympathy of the other, provided that India is and must remain one and undivided."

30th. Maulana Md. Ruhlul Amin announced (from Calcutta) the resignation of his membership and vice-presidency of the Provincial Muslim League.—In a statement, he said: "In my absence and without my consent the Bengal Provincial Muslim League at the annual meeting held at the Muslim Institute on November 6, co-opted me as a member and elected me as one of the vice-presidents. I do hereby with all my sincerity and firmness, decline the said membership and vice-presidency of the League".

## December 1943

The Government of Bengal decided to prohibit all exports of rice and paddy from Bengal and to proceed with the rationing of the more important urban areas in the province in addition to the rationing of Calcutta.

The Federal Court unanimously upheld the validity of the Ordinance validating sentences passed by the Special Criminal Courts and decided that the provision in Sec. 3 of the Validating Ordinance was not *ultra vires* of the Governor General.

Mr. L. S. Amery, replying to a question in the House of Commons, re: food situation in India said: "Military assistance in Bengal is getting into its stride and outlying centres as well as Calcutta are now receiving adequate supplies."

There was an air aid in Calcutta by the Japanese, in broad daylight.

Mr. Amery once again assured the House of Commons, re: Indian food situation, that every possible step was taken to meet the emergency.

The Secretary of State for India paid a tribute to the Indian Princes, speaking at a dinner in London.

His Excellency the Viceroy granted one lakh of Rupees to Orissa for the establishment of an orphanage.

Mr. V. D. Savarkar asked the Working Committee of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha to request Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee to continue to act as President.

Lord Linlithgow, speaking at London, said that India had made a magnificent contribution towards Allied Victory.

H. M. the King approved the appointment of Hon. R. G. Casey to be the Governor of Bengal.

The 31st Session of the All-India Muslim League was held at Karachi, Mr. M. A. Jinnah presided. He was willing to come to terms with the British Government or the Hindus "on honourable terms and no other terms".

A resolution was passed in the Session of the All-India Muslim League, appointing a Committee of Action to prepare and organize the Muslims of the whole of India for the achievement of Pakistan.

The 25th Session of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha was held at Amritsar, Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee presided. In his speech he laid stress on the invulnerability of Indian culture and the remarkable spirit of assimilation.

The All-India Hindu Mahasabha passed a resolution reiterating its firm faith in the integrity of India and its determination to resist all attempts made in any quarter for its vivisection. The Mahasabha also demanded the release of political prisoners and the immediate declaration of India's independence.

The 24th Session of the National Liberal Federation of India was held in Bombay, Sir Maharaj Singh presided. He suggested the release of Mahatma Gandhi. A resolution was passed urging the Government of India to release Congress Leaders and asking the Congress to treat the August Resolution of 1942 as a dead letter.

1st. The Government of Bengal, in Press Note announced: "The Bengal Government have decided to prohibit all exports of rice and paddy from Bengal, and to proceed with the rationing of the more important urban areas in the province in addition to the rationing of Calcutta and the neighbouring industrial area."

The federal court unanimously upheld the validity of the ordinance validating sentences passed by the special Criminal Courts and decided that the provision in Sec. 3 of the Validating Ordinance was not ultra vires of the Governor General.

The judgment was delivered in a series of 19 cases, arising from the 1942 disturbances in Bihar, U.P., C.P., and Madras.

Sir Azizul Haque, Commerce Member, Government of India reiterated at Bangalore, the determination of the Government of India not to extend the time-limit beyond December 31, 1943, for the disposal of unstamped cotton goods by dealers.

2nd. Mr. L. S. Amery, replying to a question about the food situation in India, said in the House of Commons: "The most important development in the Indian food situation in the last few weeks is that the main rice crop, which is just coming to harvest, is reported to be excellent, particularly in Bengal. Military assistance in Bengal is getting into its stride and outlying centres as well as Calcutta are now receiving adequate supplies, though distribution from these centres to more remote villages still present a problem. Plans for rationing in urban areas are proceeding and should be in operation in Calcutta by the middle of this month."

3rd. Mr. C. C. Desai, Controller General of Civil Supplies said in an interview in Bombay: "Prices of consumer goods are still at pre-ordinance level and the campaign against profiteering will be intensified during the next two weeks when shopping generally is brisk owing to Christmas."

4th. Maj. General D. Stuart, O.C., Military Forces, Famine Relief, Bengal, in a broadcast talk from Calcutta, surveyed how the military was assisting the Bengal Government in relief operation in the outlying districts.

The two Indian unofficial lecturers, Dr. Gbiasuddin and Mr. Bhole, who came to tell British audiences about India's war efforts opened their programme in London with a Press Conference at the Ministry of Information.

Tributes to the qualities of Dr. Rajendra Prasad both as a politician and as a man were paid at a public meeting in Patna to celebrate his 59th. birthday.

5th. The Secretary of State for India, Mr. Amery, received a deputation in Cambridge on the Indian famine question.

Mr. R. F. Mudie, Governor of Bihar, addressing the Provincial War Committee in Patna, said: "If our morale is good and our administration capable of standing the strain, we can trust our Army to win. If we break down, the Army can do little or nothing."

Japanese aircraft raided the Calcutta area. It was the enemy's first daylight attack on the City.

6th. At the annual general meeting of the Indian freedom campaign committee, (in London) under the Chairmanship of Miss Ethel Mannin, a demand for the inalienable right for trial by jury of political prisoners was made by Mr. Reginald Reynolds.

7th. At a Press Conference in Calcutta, Malik Sir Feroz Khan Noon, Defence Member of the Government of India, explained certain civil defence aspects arising from the Japanese raid on the Calcutta area.

8th. The Punjab Government decided to introduce wheat rationing in Lahore, Amritsar and Rawalpindi from March, 1944, announced Mr. F. B. Wae, Secretary, Supplies and Transport Department at a press conference in Lahore.

9th. Mr. L. S. Amery gave written replies to several questions about India in the House of Commons. He said: "The nearest territories providing normal food reserves of India are in enemy occupation and most of the other countries in the Indian Ocean area are affected at least much as India by the loss of these potential imports."

Mr. Amery declared, in an exclusive interview, Britain's policy in India, in the past, present and the future, is guided by the principles of the Atlantic Charter."

10th. Mr. L. S. Amery, speaking in Birmingham said: "I think I can say with some confidence that so far as actual supply of food to Bengal is concerned, we are turning the corner. There will still be anxiety about getting supplies out to some of the more outlying villages and there is now serious anxiety about the increase of malaria, cholera and other diseases among the population weakened by malnutrition. Every possible measure is being taken to meet the emergency."

11th. A communique issued from Government House, Calcutta, stated: It is announced with profound regret that Sir John Arthur Herbert, G.C.I.E., lately Governor of Bengal, passed away at 8-50 p.m. on Saturday December 11."

12th. Sir Sultan Ahmed, Information Member, Government of India in a broadcast speech from Calcutta, re: food and civil defence in Bengal said that the problem which had "darkened the fair face of Bengal" was now yielding to combined effort, thanks to the energetic action taken by the Provincial Government, the help given by the Army, the generous supply of foodgrains by the Government of India and to the provision of medicine and foodstuff by Britain and the Empire.

A communique issued by the Punjab Government announced its decision to introduce price control and rationing in the Province in accordance with the general food policy of the Government of India.

Their Excellencies the Viceroy and Lady Wavell completed their visit to public institutions in Outback.

Sir S. Radha Krishnan, Vice-Chancellor of the Benares Hindu University, in his presidential address to the meeting of the Inter-University Board at the Osmania University, declared: "Education is the root of the whole problem of future reconstruction and if India is to find its proper place in the new order, the education of its people will have to be taken up in great earnestness."

13th. In a "Calcutta Gazette Extraordinary," the Bengal Government notified that from December 20 rice and paddy should not be moved by any person, except under a permit, outside the following 12 districts: Midnapore, Bankura, Birbhum, Burdwan, Malda, Dinajpore, Jalpaiguri, Rajsahi, Bogra, Mymensingh, Bakarganj and Khulna.

14th. Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, Government of India arrived in Calcutta.

The Government of India announced: "With effect from the 15th January 1944 and until further notice, the Government of India will issue 5 years interest free prize bonds, 1949. The bonds will be repaid at par in 1949."

15th. Sir S. Radhakrishnan, President of the Fifth Session of the uninquennial Conference of Universities in India which opened at Hyderabad (Dn.), said: "If the sequel to victory is not to be frustration, the urge to return to

prewar habits and procedures in relations among nations, requires to be checked. We need re-education of human nature and reorganization of our political and economic institutions."

- 16th. Reports from various Bengal districts showed that while famine relief work under official and non-official auspices was continuing, the price of new rice was going up almost every where and the incidence of malaria and other diseases showed no sign of abatement.
- 17th. Mr. V. D. Savarkar informed the working committee of the All India Hindu Mahasabha that, owing to ill-health, he would be unable to attend or preside over the annual session of the Mahasabha or the working committee meeting at Amritsar. He asked that in accordance with the constitution, the working President, Dr. Shyamaprasad Mukerjee should be requested to continue to act as President.
- 18th. Sir C. V. Raman presiding, the second anniversary of the Vellore Cultural League was celebrated in the Government Mahamedan High School, Vellore. He observed : "There was no great difference between the spirit of a great painter, a great sculptor, a great man of letter, a great musician, a great scientist &c. Essentially, they are all engaged in creative work, which essentially added to the sum total of human culture. In India, they had an age old culture, sense of values, appreciation of the things of the spirit, and reverence and respect for the lives of great thinkers and the past. If they understood the culture of the country aright, which had been many sided, they could not afford to neglect the lessons of science. Let them not imagine that all the discoveries of science should be misused."
- 19th. The Sind Ministry's attitude to the direction given by the Government of India to the Provincial Government not to raise the prices of foodgrains without their consent was embodied in a statement issued by the Ministry.  
Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, Government of India, expressed the opinion in Calcutta that normal trade channels should be utilized as far as possible in both the procurement and distribution of foodstuffs by the Government.
- 20th. His Excellency the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, addressing the annual general meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce, Calcutta, emphasized that he was prepared to take drastic action to ensure support for the Central Government's famine relief policy for Bengal.—This policy entailed measures for the strict enforcement of the Foodgrains Control Order, prevention of speculation and the regulation and control of prices. In this task public co-operation was essential.  
Lord Wavell sounded a note of warning that the general assistance accorded to Bengal by the Central Government could not continue indefinitely.  
Lord Wavell, referring to the political deadlock in India, said that although he had the fullest sympathy with the aspirations of India towards self-Government, the future of India depended today on the winning of the war, the organization of the economic home front, and the preparations for peace.
- 21st. Sir Hugh Dow, Governor of Snd, addressing a district war committee meeting at Sehwan, said : "I hope you will not listen to those who tell you through greed that you should clamour for still higher prices which will cause distress to your own poor, and will keep those in other Indian Provinces on the verge of starvation."  
Sir Homi Modi, in his presidential address at the annual general meeting of the Employers' Federation of India held in Calcutta, said the employer, who was out of tune with the humanitarian spirit of the age or who refused to adjust himself to the fast-changing conditions of the industrial world, was happily disappearing. At any rate, like other anachronisms, he had a poor chance of survival.  
At the 18th. annual session of the Indian Philosophy Congress which met in Lahore, Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari, President, gave a call to Indian philosophers to reestablish faith in the moral values of life and the dignity of human personality.
- 22nd. Mr. M. L. Shah in his presidential address at the quarterly general meeting of the Indian Chamber of Commerce in Calcutta, referred to Calcutta's food rationing scheme.

**23rd.** A Communique from New Delhi stated: "H. M. the King has approved the appointment of the Rt. Hon. Richard Gardiner Casey, D. S. O., M. C., at present Minister of State in the Middle East to be Governor of Bengal."

Mr. M. H. Gazdar, Minister of Information, Sind, in an interview at Karachi, said: "The recent anti-hoarding order for wheat, making it an offence for anybody to keep more than a certain amount of wheat after January 15, 1944, was issued by the Governor under his special responsibility without the concurrence of his Ministers."

Mr. M. A. Jinnah, President-elect of the All-India Muslim League session at Karachi, was taken in procession to Haroonabad to unfurl the League Flag.

**24th.** Mr. M. A. Jinnah, in his speech before the 31st session of the All-India Muslim League at Karachi said: "If they want to come to terms with us, we are always ready and willing to come to terms with the British Government or the Hindus on honourable terms and on no other terms."

**25th.** The Subjects Committee of the All-India Muslim League adopted three main resolutions: Appointment of a Committee of Action to prepare and organize the Muslims of the whole of India for the achievement of Pakistan, formulation of a five year plan for the economic and social uplift of the Muslim nation and demand for a comprehensive price control policy together with procurement and rationing of foodstuffs.

**26th.** Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, delivering his presidential address at the 25th Session of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha held at Anritsar, said: "Though political freedom has been denied to India for the last 200 years and her original inhabitants were for many centuries deprived of their supreme hold upon their own country, Indian Culture has remained unconquered from generation to generation. The invader came and went; kings, emperors and generals appeared and disappeared but the soul of India remains unconquered. It is her remarkable spirit of assimilation which turned generation of conquerors and invaders into ultimate contributors to the growth of the mighty civilization."

The session of the Muslim League terminated after all the six resolutions adopted by the Subjects Committee were passed unanimously without a single amendment being moved.

**27th.** The open session of the Hindu Mahasabha passed a resolution emphasizing that the Sabha "alone is competent to carry on negotiations on behalf of the Hindus, and any situation without the Sabha's approval will not be binding on the Hindus and the Mahasabha."

The subjects committee of the Hindu Mahasabha passed a resolution reiterating its firm faith in the integrity of India and its determination to resist all attempts made in any quarter for its vivisection.

The Mahasabha by a third resolution called upon Government to release without any delay all Congress prisoners who have been confined or detained without any judicial trial.

**28th.** The demand for the immediate declaration of India's independence and for the immediate formation of a National Government was made in a resolution adopted by the subjects committee of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha.

**29th.** Sir Maharaj Singh in his presidential address at the 4th session of the National Liberal Federation of India, held in Bombay, made the suggestion that the Viceroy and the Government of India should allow an approach to be made to Mahatma Gandhi as soon as possible with a view to ending a solution of the political tangle, if necessary, enabling him to consult the members of the Congress Working Committee.

Dr. Khan Sahib of the N. W. F. Province in an interview at Lahore, observed: "Pakistan has been a phantom in the imagination of certain people and it will always remain an illusion to them in their dreams until they wake up to the hard realities of life".

**30th.** The Subjects Committee of the All-India National Liberal Federation, passed a resolution urging the Government of India to release Congress leaders and asking the Congress to treat the August 1942 Resolution as a dead letter.

# India in Home Polity

## Introduction

In the last volume of the "Indian Annual Register" (January—June, 1943) we made an attempt to understand the many factors that co-operated to create the famine in Bengal which reached its peak of death and desolation in the last four months of the year. This catastrophe thus forms part of the study made in the present volume. But we anticipated in the last volume discussion of many of the measures taken by the Government of Lord Linlithgow which released over the country forces of corruption and shameless greed that traded in the food-grains of the people and thus traded with their life. Writing after twelve months of that desolate experience, not one amongst the many men and women that have tried to trace the processes of this tragedy can succeed in giving a full picture of these. The Government has appointed an enquiry commission presided over by Sir John Woodhead, a former governor of Bengal, who had passed almost all his career in the province. The enquiry has been conducted behind the *purdah*, for fear of making the proceedings a subject of heated political controversy. So, it can be said that the public has been thinking of this matter and judging it in the absence of full facts. One of the most dispassionate of studies on the 1943 famine that we have come across has been written by Sri Kali Charan Ghosh, Curator of the Commercial Museum maintained by the Corporation of Calcutta. With a passionless accuracy the writer has traced certain of the processes with which the mischief started. The title of his book is—*Famines in Bengal (1170—1943)*. Those two catastrophes separated by a distance in time of one hundred and seventy-three years are marked by similarities that show that human nature has not much changed during these years. Nature was cruel to Bengal—Behar and parts of Orissa were included within this presidency at that time—in refusing to help to raise the food-crops. But men, the rulers and ruled who co-operated with the former in carrying on the administration, were incompetent and corrupt, and by their practices intensified the sufferings of the people. Sir William Hunter in his *Annals of Rural Bengal* has drawn for us a picture of these that is startlingly similar to things that we have seen happen during 1943.

"The inability of the Government to appreciate the true character of the calamity ( 1770 ) is rendered more remarkable by the circumstance that at that period the local administration continued in the hands of the former native officers. A Muslim Minister of State regulated the whole internal government.....These men (native officers) knew the country, its capabilities, its average yield and its average requirements with an accuracy that the most painstaking English official can seldom hope to attain to. They had a strong interest in representing things to be worse than they were ; for the more intense the scarcity, the greater the merit in collecting the land-tax. Every consultation is filled with their apprehensions and highly-coloured accounts of the public distress ; but it does not appear that the conviction entered the minds of the Council during the previous months, that the question was not so much one of revenue as of depopulation. This misconception, strange as it may appear, is susceptible of explanation.....Local officials might

write alarming reports, but their apprehensions seem to be contradicted by the apparent quiet that prevails."

We do not propose to rub in the meaning of these words as it applied to the Ministry during whose time famine took its toll of millions of men, women and children. Mr Fazlul Huq during whose Ministry the first signs of the catastrophe made their appearance has put up a defence that threw back the whole blame on the then Governor of Bengal, the late Sir John Herbert and his official advisers, who ignored the Council of Ministers which by law was his advisers in the administration of the province. Mr. Huq made his charges in the Legislative Assembly of Bengal. They were grave charges. But the Governor did not feel the necessity to meet any of these; neither did the Linlithgow Government nor did the Secretary of State deem it proper for the good name of their administration, if not for any other higher consideration, to ask the Governor to refute these charges in as public a manner as these had been made. We remember to have heard Mr. Amery say that the Governor had submitted an explanation and he, the head of the Indian administration, was satisfied with it. It is useless to try to argue with such a complacent attitude. Mr. Huq further said that his Ministry had wanted to take a census of the amount of food in the Province with a view to undertake measures for relief if the census disclosed that food was dangerously in deficit. But the Governor would have none of this proposal. It is no credit to Mr. Amery and Lord Linlithgow that they allowed a Governor to be thus held before the world as a meddler who by meddling made things worse for the people under his charge. Even when the poor man has gone to settle accounts with his Maker, his earthly superiors have done nothing to justify his ways in handling a situation that threatened death and desolation to millions caught between war and starvation.

We do not know what the Central Government have placed before the Woodhead Commission in defence of the measures taken by them to halt the march of events that betokened widespread scarcity that may develop into famine. Experiences of previous famines, recorded in reports still available in the dove-cots of their Secretariats, ought to have told them that indications of such catastrophes should be carefully noted. Mr. Ghosh has quoted from the report of the Famine Commission of 1878-'79 indicating certain of the danger-signals of famine. One of these is the "wandering" of paupers from rural areas, and their flocking into towns or cities near-by. Mr. Caird asked Sir Richard Temple, Governor of Bombay, the question, and received the reply that throws light on this matter.

"Do you look upon wandering as a symptom of danger? Do you know whether it is possible to prevent it; if so, how?"

"Yes, certainly; perhaps the most imminent symptom of danger that can possibly appear in times of famine. It is always followed by mischief more or less grave; it is often the precursor of mortality; probably more mortality happens in this way than in any other . . . . with all classes (excepting *Sadhus*, habitual wanderers, etc.) the best prevention of wandering is the timely preparation of a frame-work of village relief . . . . If the prevention be early, prompt and efficient, the wandering will be stopped."

This "symptom of danger" appeared during the last months of 1942 in the streets of Calcutta, when hundreds and thousands of village folk from the suburban areas began to queue before shops that dealt with food grains. The majority of them were women who with their children kept nightly vigils, lying on the foot-paths for snatches of sleep that was possible, so that as soon as the shops were opened they could buy rice at the controlled price. These people underwent this trouble and torture because in their villages they could not get the rice at this price, or any rice at all. Mr. Fazlul Huq's Ministry did not either understand the significance of this phenomenon, or could not do anything owing to the obstructive tactics of the Governor and the bunch of officials who guided him. Public men and publicists in Bengal there were who had warned the Government and the people of the meaning of this "wandering". One of the most assiduous was the editor of the Bengali-language daily—*The Basumati* (the World)—who day in and day out quoted from reports of previous famines the signs and portents of famine as these had been recorded in Government reports. He showed how Lord Northbrook had fought a famine in the early seventies of the last century, and the arrangements made then had enabled the men in charge of famine relief to claim the credit that there had hardly been any death owing to scarcity of food. Work and relief had been organised in such a way that men and women were found occupation near their homes, and where relief was given, it was given in the homes of the people; they were not allowed to "wander" into towns and cities, leaving their homes uncared for. Warnings like these were unheeded. And during the last twelve months and more, public men and publicists have been searching for the reasons that had led the Government of Lord Linlithgow to ignore the lessons left by their predecessors in their campaigns during the "22" famines that had visited the country under British rule.

There was another danger signal that should have attracted the attention of the Bengal Government at least. We refer to the transfer of their holdings by agriculturists driven to this step by hunger. In the Bengal Legislative Assembly in reply to a question by Mr. Mirza Abdul Hafiz with regard to the number of registration of sales and mortgages of landed property in a single subdivision of the district of Mymensingh, the most populous district in the Province, the following figures were placed before the House on July 8, 1943 :

## REGISTRATION OF SALE-DEEDS

November	1941	...	...	2,192
December	1942	...	...	1901
January	1943	...	...	2157
February	1943	...	...	726

## MORTGAGES

1941	...	...	158
1942	...	...	451

In reply to a question put by Mr. Abdul Hamid a fuller statement was made as follows :

Nos. of transfer-deeds registered	Nos. relating to occupancy holdings	No. of occupancy holdings sold.	Amount received by the vendors.
1941 ... 855,758	744,854	634,113	8,42,79,051
1942 ... 964,596	849,636	762,346	10,19,09,026
1943 (up to January 31), 134,245	123,379	110,990	1,61,01,531

These figures ought to have told the Government that things were getting worse for the agriculturists who sell or mortgage their lands as the last resource of theirs to keep body and mind together. Sir John Herbert and his official advisers were busy with the war; they had no time to understand the significance of these sales; to them and the leaders of the warring nations civilian life was less valuable than that of an army mule, to paraphrase the elegant language of a Bengal magistrate quoted by Mr. Kshitish Chandra Neogy in the Central Assembly, to acquaint the higher bureaucracy of the mentality that a section of them has developed under the pressure of war. This member representing the worst-affected portion of Bengal, East Bengal proper, made graver charges against the supineness of the Linlithgow administration in course of the "food" debate in the November session of the Assembly.

These facts are uncontestable—the break-down of Bengal's economic arrangements in the latter months of 1942 and the earlier months of 1943, are implicit in the figures quoted above. We do not know why the highly organised bureaucracy would not understand these signs and premonitions of a calamity. We do not know why the ministry set up in Bengal with Sir Khawja Nazimuddin as Chief Minister failed to direct the attention of the permanent officials to the significance of the vast land transfers taking place. The majority of the agriculturists concerned with these transactions were Muslims whose guardian Sir Nazimuddin's party claims itself to be. His supporters among the Muslim members of the Bengal Legislature could not but have told him of the dangerous possibilities of the situation. He must have been aware of the differences of outlook and methods that have developed between the Governor and the Ministry of his predecessor in office. Knowing all these things the leader of the Muslim League party in Bengal accepted the commission from Sir John Herbert to aid and advise him in conducting the administration of the province, one of the pre-occupations of which would be the growing scarcity of food grains. And, as soon as he could manage to beat up an ill-assorted Ministry by the distribution of posts and patronage, he began to repeat the parrot-cry of the bureaucracy, central and provincial, that food grains in Bengal were not in deficit. His Civil Supplies Minister, Mr. Subrawardy, was most vociferous in propagandising this brief. Why they did so, why they felt themselves burdened with the responsibility of upholding the bureaucratic story—the mystery of this loyalty has not been explained yet. This brief was prepared at the Central Secretariat and the Bengal bureaucracy and the Bengal Ministry were found accepting it as their own. The directives issued on the occasion of the Food Conference held at Delhi on May 8, 1943, by Major General Wood give us an inkling of the

Bureaucratic  
brief & Bengal  
Ministry

mind of the Linlithgow administration. The most important of these are the following :

(1) The fact that there was a sufficiency of food for Bengal should be proved statistically and given the widest publicity by advertising and repeating *ad nauseum*.

(2) No price control in Bengal until Government acquire physical control of supplies of rice. Meanwhile, forget prices and concentrate on ensuring free flow of rice into the market and exercise restraining influence on prices through Government Agencies at regulated prices, the quota allotted to each commercial agent and the price at which he is permitted to buy from day to day being kept secret. Buy in the cheapest market and bring down your offer of prices by judicially holding off the market when necessary.

Sir Nazimuddin and his principal colleagues—The Civil Supplies Minister and the Finance Minister—lent their voice in following the

Lack of candour of Linlithgow administration

the first directive, and when during subsequent sittings of the Bengal Legislature members called upon them to justify this propaganda, they could only escape by denying what they had said in the first flush of their elation in gaining the Ministry. It is profitless today to enter into argument with "terminological inexactitudes" which politicians have to utter to save their "face". The personal factors that have played a part in worsening conditions in Bengal during 1943 may not be known today. The Government has gagged the people, and has done their best and worst to hide the truth of the famine. If things were above board, if the mistake made had been honest, the Government need have no occasion to adopt the secrecy. Their apologists have said that the truth would have created "panic." They have not told us how and why the truth told outside India could create "panic" in Britain and U. S. A., and how that "panic" would have hampered war activities in those countries. We know that if the truth had been made known earlier, there was just a chance of help and relief coming from outside the country, as during previous famines. But in their wisdom the Government would not let the truth go out of India. They represented to the world that there was scarcity, but not conditions that would justify the use of the dread word—famine. Otherwise, on the occasion of the Food Conference of the "United Nations" held at Hot Springs in the U. S. A., the complacent mood could not have found expression and come to us through the air on May 29, 1943. "India's rice problem is being considered but experts here are of opinion that little can be done by this Conference or the Relief Conference, which...will be held shortly." In the last volume of the "Annual Register" we have quoted from the *Civil & Military Gazette* of Lahore comments criticising the hush-hush policy of the British Government in this matter. Since then we have come across comments in U. S. A. papers which raise the veil just a little. Elsie Weil writing in the New York monthly—*Asia & Americas* in its February (1944) issue, said :

".....Nothing about the famine was cabled to American newspapers last September when it had reached an acute stage in Bengal. Nothing trickled through to the American Press in October, either. If this seems strange, an announcement prominently displayed in the September 18, 1944, issue of the *Calcutta Municipal Gazette*.....and reprinted from the *Civil & Military Gazette* of Lahore, offers an explanation....

At last in November word of the famine began to come through. It was hardly possible to conceal a situation which had reached such tragic and devastating proportions that American Army men could see starving Indians, while families of them fall and die in the streets of Calcutta.

It is this lack of candour that will stand as the gravest charge against Lord Lidlithgow and Mr. Amery in their handling of a situa-

**Bureaucratic Ignorance ?** tion that had no political significance, that formed no part of the argument between India and Britain in the political arena. Why they should have adopted

this tactics neither of these high dignitaries has cared to explain. It is this lack of candour that imparts meaning to the bitter words uttered in the Indian Legislature in its November (1943) session that the famine was "primarily a State Industry, and in certain of its aspects bore the hall-mark of genuine British manufacture". We have never been able to bring ourselves to subscribe to the idea that the men who were in charge of the administration of India in 1943 could have had any prevision of the consequences of the measures taken by them during the panic days of May-June of 1942 when Japanese hordes were marching to the eastern borders of India, and were poised for an attack on her which would carry everything before them as it had done through Malaya and Burma in our neighbourhood. The more probable cause of the outburst of this famine was the thoughtless policy adopted of removing food-grains from certain of the coastal areas of the province, disturbing the delicate balance of the food situation. The bureaucracy even when it had as at the Centre members of Indian birth to appear before to public as heads of particular departments, and in the provinces where "provincial autonomy" worked with Ministers said to be responsible to the Legislature and through it to the people—the bureaucracy did not know of this perilous balance in the food situation in Bengal. Since the beginning of the present century the province has been showing deficits in the production of food which ran up to the figure of 6 to 7 crore maunds of food-grains a year ; 2 to 3 crore of these were made up by imports from Burma ; the rest were supplied by the people going on short ration. In the last volume of the "Annual Register" we quoted the evidence of representative witnesses from different parts of the province led before the Paddy Enquiry Committee about ten years back to indicate the nature of this deficit. Into such a situation erupted war with all manner of disorganisation that is its companion. This disorganisation was exploited by the agents of the Government sent out to buy for it food for the army and the "essential services." We have traced the malign influence of these purchases in upsetting the arrangements by which the people of the province were fed without any guidance from the bureaucracy.

It could not be ignorant of this difficult position. But it did nothing during these years to retrieve the position. There were minis-

**Maladjustment in Indian society** ters who could be expected to understand the significance of the evidence recorded by this particular Committee. But they also did nothing. Why ? Why have they proved themselves to be incapable of understanding the factors that went to the feeding of their own

people ? There may be many reasons for their failure. One of the most significant of these was their education, the habits of life and thought that had made them foreigners in their own country, that have dis-associated them from their people, the vast majority of whom lived in the villages. Not one amongst these people staked their position in public life on solving this problem. They could find time in orating on the theme that the "nation lived in the cottage"; they could find time in inflaming communal feelings. But they had not the time or the inclination or the capacity to work up a programme that would produce more food-grains and see to their just distribution. We have a feeling that the class from which these ministers were recruited were all of them without distinction of caste or creed members of a separate nation, separate from the majority of their people. A hundred years ago Disraeli had indicated how there were "two nations" in Britain—the rich and the poor. Under the auspices of British rulers the same development has taken place in our country. The joint family system that provided for the widow and the orphan has broken down under the onslaught of the individualism taught by the example and practice of the rulers, and supported by a philosophy of conduct that was wholly alien to our own. It may be that individual human life in India has had a new flowering under the impulse of this new education. But the debit side of the account was startling. The first victims of this maladjustment are those who are left helpless by death or disease, or other stresses and strains of life. In the broader field of social life, in the economic activities of the people, British methods of administration, exploitation and enlightenment have thrown out of gear India's social and economic arrangements, thrown millions of men and women out of the employments that had fed them and earned them the comforts and conveniences of life. Famines like what devastated Bengal in 1943-'44 are a natural culmination of the process of disintegration—the process which no human skill or wisdom appears to be able to control.

With special reference to the famine that we have been discussing we hold the system introduced by Britain as responsible for its ravages. In the last volume of the "Annual Register" we have tried to indicate the many factors that complicated matters. Even after twelve months of this catastrophe

**Mr. Amery's  
uncomfortable  
position**

we cannot say that we have been able to get hold of these

as an explanation of the harrowing experiences through which our people have been passing. The Central Government at Delhi-Simla has by its complacency let the people down; the Provincial Government at Calcutta has been as effete. The two ministries in Bengal which were and are kept as show-windows by the bureaucracy, the Fazlul Huq Ministry giving place to the Nazimuddin Ministry at the dictation of the governor, the late Sir John Herbert, have only served the purpose of misleading the world with regard to the responsibility for the famine. The proof of this misrepresentation was evident in the ways in which the Government of Lord Linlithgow interfered with the transit of famine news out of this country. We have quoted above what a U. S. A. paper has said with regard to this technique of misrepresentation. The Secretary of State for India, Mr. Leopold Amery, has shown himself to be a specialist and an expert in this art. Since writing in the

last volume we have had opportunity of consulting the "Hansard" which publishes reports of the "debates" in the British Parliament. We learn many interesting things, Indian and foreign, through this consultation. On the 5th of August, 1943, Mr. Amery was asked :

"Is he aware that in Bengal thousands of people were coming in from the countryside and living off the garbage heaps of the City of Calcutta? Will he consider telling us what he is doing and what he plans?"

The Secretary of State for India replied :

"I shall be glad to give all the information to the House, but my hon. friend will remember that this matter in Bengal is primarily one for the Ministry of the self-governing Province."

If this is not a suggestion of untruth we do not know what Mr. Amery's words mean. By the time when he was uttering these words

he must have received report of the proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly in course of which the head of one such Ministry in Bengal, Mr. Fazlul

Huq, had told the story that such an innocent measure, and a necessary measure if a proper food plan was to be laid down for the province, as the census of food grains in the province, suggested by the Ministry, the "self-governing" limb of the Bengal Government—how this innocent suggestion was over-ruled by the governor in his discretion or individual responsibility or whatever jugglery of words may be used to indicate the powers and responsibilities of the governor of an Indian Province. We can go on quoting Mr. Amery in this game of misrepresentation. But, with quoting one other piece we will leave him. A question was put to him on 21 October, 1943 :

"Will the right hon. Gentleman make inquiries at once as to the possible spread of this disease (cholera) and also inquire of the Central Government whether medical supplies are required at the present time to supplement whatever supplies they have?"

Mr. Amery replied :

".....the information that I have is that there is no shortage of medical supplies and there is no widespread outbreak of disease....."

In course of reply to another question the Secretary of State for India had pointed out that there was the "Famine Code"

as a guide to the officials to fight conditions of famine. If he had remembered this reply he could not have said in October (1943), that there was "no wide-spread outbreak of disease" in the province. When

he spoke of the "Famine Code" he could not have forgotten what the Government of Lord Northbrook who had to fight a famine and pestilence, and fought it successfully, said in a Resolution dated Calcutta, November 7, 1873 :

"In as much as the prevalence of want may give rise to many forms of epidemic disease, the augmenting and the re-enforcing of the medical staff of all grades in the afflicted districts will be of primary importance."

His office which prepared Mr. Amery's reply did not know what a former governor of Bombay, Sir Bartle Frere, had said in his pamphlet—*On the impending Bengal Famine* (1874). We are enabled to quote this from Sri Hemendra Prasad Ghosh's book—*The Famine of 1770*.

"Men are death-stricken by famine long before they die. The effects of insufficient food long continued may shorten life after a period of some years, or it may be of some months or days. But invariably there is a point which is often reached long before death actually ensues, when not even the tenderest care and

most scientific nursing can restore a sufficiency of vital energy to enable the sufferer to regain even apparent temporary health and strength. Add to this the consequence of famine in death, fevers and epidemics of various kinds that are apt to be quite as fatal as the effects of the famine itself."

These quotations go to show how irresponsible Mr. Amery was even in October, 1943, when famine was claiming its victims by thousands every week. His irresponsibility comes glaringly into view by what Major-General Douglas Stuart, General Officer Commanding Troops in Bengal said in course of a broadcast on Army Medical Relief made on January 11, 1944.

"The quantities of quinine which had been distributed through the Government and Army agencies are now finding their way to the needy persons, but it is not yet available in sufficient quantities. I regret to say that there is still a large amount of illicit traffic, and in some of the out of the way villages, people are even paying as much as /4/- to a rupee per tablet... In other places we found that only two grains of quinine were being given instead of 5 with the result that the patients got no benefit. The remaining 3 grains presumably found their way to the Black Market."

In the last volume of the "Annual Register" we tried to trace the failure of the Delhi-Simla bureaucracy to anticipate the consequences of their own actions—boat removal and food denial in Bengal in 1942—and to take steps to forestal these. In the present volume we have tried to bring out how the London Government was both ignorant and adepts at misrepresentation. Mr. Amery's antics in this line must have consciously or unconsciously inspired the Calcutta Anglo-Indian daily to write: "No Government system which has travestied truth on economic subjects can reasonably expect to retain full confidence." We have now to turn to the Bengal Government and the Nazimuddin Ministry, and try to understand why they failed as ignominiously as their superiors at Delhi-Simla and London. There are secret chambers within secret chamber in which are locked up the rottenness of the system of administration under which we live. Only in times of crisis certain of the doors of these chambers burst, and we come face to face with the reality of incompetence enthroned in India as its Government. Even then the darkness is made visible only. We know how at the dictation of the Central Government the governor of Bengal carried out the boat removal and food denial policies against the advice of the Ministry. We did not know that this government had been warned by non-official Europeans that the war started by Japan would put "a strain upon the railways as would produce a large measure of trade stagnation and shortage of food". The government disregarded this warning. Mr. Noel Barwell who was one of the body of non-official Europeans who presented the memorandum writing to the columns of the Calcutta Anglo-Indian daily on September 9 (1943) gave his interpretation of events in Bengal. He charged that

"the Central and local Governments have between them (a) in large measure made famine conditions in E. India inevitable; (b) created serious fuel shortage, the worst results of which may lie ahead of us; (c) brought about the destruction of very large quantities of consumable goods which the railways have been incapable of moving".

This impeachment should have led to positive action for setting matters right on the part of the non-official Europeans who earn their livelihood in Bengal. Instead, they are found

**The non-official Europeans** to be upholding an incompetent administration in the province. By this supineness of theirs they show themselves to be no better than helpless but anxious spectators of the disintegration of a system of life which was partly the product of their work. A leadership should have come from this community which would challenge the incompetence of Sir John Herbert and of the Ministries which proved themselves unequal to the occasion. We do not know why they failed to rise up to the situation. Their organs in the Press have on more occasions than one given expression to dissatisfaction at the way matters were being allowed to drift in Bengal. This expression was not followed by appropriate action. Why? It may be that this class felt themselves to be unable to do anything that would expose before the world the nature of efficiency that Britain has been able to propagandize over the world as its special contribution to the present order of things in India. It may be that they felt diffident in intruding into matters during a "total war" which "brass hats" and bureaucrats would sneer at as impertinence. It may be that they felt the debacle in Bengal's economic life as none of their concern, as it did not touch them in the every-day concerns of their life in this "land of regrets". Whatever be the true reason, there cannot be any manner of doubt that the Clive Street "Burra Sahibs" failed Bengal as the Government did. That our interpretation is not far wrong would be borne out by what is written by Horace Alexander of the influence of these people in his 'Penguin Special' pamphlet entitled—*India Since Cripps*.

"The European group, representing chiefly Scottish business interests in Calcutta, had a controlling influence in the Legislature, owing to the feud between the various Indian parties.....any Ministry that embarked on a policy strongly at variance with European business interests would probably soon go the way of Fazlul Huq and his colleagues."

The various parties that played their part in helping to precipitate famine conditions in Bengal, apart from the profiteers and exploiters of other people's difficulties, have been discussed

**The I.C.S. at Writers' Building** above, except one. This is the Nazimuddin Ministry that was put into office by a combination of the governor, the European group, and the Muslim League party. Mr. Alexander hinted that "perhaps" there were "some other powerful agencies" at work, without indicating who or what these were. "Perhaps" they belonged to the "I. C. S." element at Writers' Building, against whom members of the Fazlul Huq Ministry had been waging a consistent campaign, exposing their doings in letters addressed to the governor and the governor-general. These letters gave these high officials an idea of the hostility that is entertained against them. When Mr. Fazlul Huq agreed to an enquiry into the doings in Midnapur without consulting the governor, that must have been the last straw on the back of the camel, the last offence that could be tolerated in an Indian Minister. And we would not be surprised if ever the history of politics in Bengal in 1943 comes to be written, that in the story of the fall of the Fazlul Huq

Ministry, a place of honour would be given to this powerful body—members of the "Steel Frame" that upheld Britain's imperial sway over India. We will also know why they preferred the Ministry captained Sir Nazimuddin. Till then we will be groping through controversial literature and have to be satisfied with any crumbs of fact that may come in the way.

And this Ministry will live in the history of Bengal, in the memory of the people, as the one during whose regime there was a

**The  
Nazimuddin  
Ministry**

famine in which men, women and children died because food became unavailable, because it was selling at prices—rupees thirty to forty—which two crores of the people, one-third of the population, could not ever pay.

Of these two crores more than fifty lakhs must have died by the end of 1943. The horror of this development is tragic enough. But its enormity was intensified as we watched the Nazimuddin Ministry accepting their high commission with promises of relief to the people, trying to keep them alive by these promises, trying to put courage into them, and failing to fulfil these, failing to fight the forces of greed and corruption that were twisting life out of the millions of their fellow-countrymen. History, after the dust and heat of the present controversy will have subsided, after the bitterness of conflict for power and pelf has lost its venom, history will tell us why the Nazimuddin Ministry failed in its duty in one of the supreme crises in their Province's life. Till then we can only collect and keep in record the many influences, personal and impersonal, that beat down this Ministry, and disabled it in its frantic fight with famine. We are too near these events to properly judge the failures of the men in charge of high responsibilities. We can try to make a success of this quest for truth by putting promises and their fulfilment or unfulfilment side by side, and allow these to tell their story. The Ministry of Sir Nazimuddin would have to be judged by this standard. They cannot escape it. When they accepted office in the last week of April, 1943, they must have known what the position was, as less than five weeks back their party had drawn a lurid picture of the food situation in Bengal, using it as one of the weapons to discredit the Fazlul Huq Ministry. Their attack failed on that occasion. On the 28th of March, the governor by a clever use of his persuasive powers succeeded in getting from Mr. Fazlul Huq a letter of resignation; and the fall of his Ministry was consummated. For about three weeks and a little more Bengal lived under rule of the governor, unadvised and unassisted by a Council of Ministers. For reasons unexplained, the powers that be felt it uncomfortable that Bengal, the nearest base from which Burma could be invaded, should be ruled by a British governor without the aid and advice of a bunch of Indian Ministers. So came Sir Nazimuddin to be put into his position as "chief minister" in Bengal.

**What people  
think of Sir  
Nazimuddin**

What people thought of him and the party that he leads we will allow a non-Indian, Mr. Horace Alexander, to say,

"The honesty of the Prime Minister, Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin, is generally recognized, but the Hindus look upon him as a tool in the hands of Mr. Jinnah,

and it is doubted whether he can stand up either to Mr. Jinnah or to some of the wealthy Moslem merchants, or—in case of differences of opinion—to the governor."

Sir Nazimuddin accepted office in the last week of April, and soon realized the nature of the task that faced him and his colleagues, the failure or success in tackling which will test their capacity as rulers who were to replace the British. On the 5th May, 1943, he is reported as saying :

"The food problem was of the utmost importance and their success would depend on their successfully solving the question of cheaper rice and cheaper 'atta' for the masses. Practically in the districts of Bengal rice was selling at prices between Rs. 35/- and Rs. 40/- a maund. Can you imagine what this means when you know the average income of a poor middle-class Bengalee family is Rs. 30/- to Rs. 40/- a month, and the labourer's income is Rs. 18/- per month ? For these people to buy rice at such high prices is almost an impossible task. How they are living God alone knows."

As a realistic picture of the food situation of Bengal in the month of May, 1943, it could not be bettered. But Sir Nazimuddin's

**Profession  
& practice**

Ministry with all the good-will in the world could not improve matters, and the Chief Minister as a good man and Muslim, could but fall back on *kismet*, the will of God, as an explanation of the disaster that had overtaken his province during his regime. While making public declarations that things were improving, the Relief Organisation Officer of the Government of Bengal was found addressing District Officers and asking them to raise no hopes that could not be realized in practice. One such Circular, dated August 30, 1943, was quoted in the Bengal Assembly by Rai Harendra Nath Choudhury on September 20, in course of his speech on the motion by the Revenue Minister recommending rupees three crores fifty-two lakhs for expenditure under the head of—"Famine".

"In these circumstances it would be useless to put up fantastic schemes of relief grants in large quantities of foodgrains for sale at cheap rates. Relief and help must be restricted to the absolutely minimum number of persons and families, and the estimates of requirements drawn up accordingly."

This Circular appears to go against the spirit of the announcement made by the Finance Minister in Sir Nazimuddin's Ministry that half-measures were not being adopted, and that

**Mr. Subrawardy's  
acknowledgment**

"no matter what the cost, Government must afford relief, for otherwise that may mean death by starvation" That Government measures for fighting famine were proving inadequate was acknowledged by Mr. Subrawardy, the Civil Supplies Minister of Bengal, in reply to a question put him by Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal: "I agree with Dr. Sanyal that rice is not available in all parts..." If one went through the volumes of the proceedings of the Bengal Legislature during the sessions held during the months of July, 1943 to the earlier months of 1944, acknowledgments such as these can be found in plenty. On the 11th of February he said :

"But I do recognize at the same time that there must be a large section of our people that are not able to buy foodgrains unless the prices fall to a very low level—to such a level as we cannot allow the prices to fall. For them something will have to be done, and we are considering the question of providing cheap grains for them as soon as the grains become available to us..."

This was said in the month when the bumper crop of Aus had been gathered about four months, and the *Aman* rice was more than half gathered. It was about this time that in certain districts of Bengal the price of rice registered a fall to Rs. 10/- per maund. Dinajpur in north Bengal is one of the surplus districts. Mr. Nisith Nath Kundu representing the general constituency of the district brought to the notice of the Assembly the downward trend of the prices of paddy and rice in its different markets. On the 1st of February paddy was sold at the Haripur market at a price between Rs. 4/8/- and Rs. 5/8/- and rice between Rs. 8/12/- and Rs. 10 per maund. On the 5th February at the Bindal *hat* paddy was sold at a price between Rs. 4/8/- and Rs. 5/8/- and rice at a price between Rs. 9/8/- to Rs. 10/8/-. In the Fakirganj *hat* on the 3rd February paddy sold at a price between Rs. 4/- and 5/- and rice at a price between Rs. 8/12/- and Rs. 9/8/-. On the 6th February at the Dinajpur town paddy was sold at Rs. 6/10/- and rice at Rs. 11/14/-. There were reports that the Government were making heavy purchases of rice and paddy taking advantage of this fall in the principal food grains of the province. And they have yet to explain why in "ration" areas people were made to pay almost double the price for their rice. This fact accords ill with the declaration of Bengal's Civil Supplies Minister that "there must be a large section of our people who are not able to buy food grains unless the prices fall to a very low level..." Was there profiteering in these Government transactions as there was in the sale of wheat and wheat products received from the Punjab? This suspicion was very strong in 1943, and during the various debates on food held in the Bengal Legislature and in the Central Legislature many things came out that added force to it.

In this connection certain facts brought out by Mr. Fazlul Huq in course of a discussion in the Bengal Assembly is very pertinent. He was Chief Minister in Bengal for about six years.

**Government agents & price of rice** And it may be expected that he would have personal experience of how things were managed in the procurement of food grains and the nature of profiteering that flourished under the nose of the Government, and with their connivance. In course of a speech made on the 27th September, 1943, in a heated speech, he narrated the story. He challenged the Government to hold an enquiry and he would be able to prove his charges. In the last volume of the "Annual Register", we have described the process by which the agents of the Government charged with the duty of removing the "denial rice" depressed the market by threats and cajolery used in the village markets. In this speech of Mr. Fazlul Huq we find support for this criticism of ours of the methods of purchase followed by the Government agents. Mr. Huq quoted two cases pending one before the High Court and the other before the civil court. We have to make a rather long extract to indicate the way how by "exercising the powers given under the Defence of India Rules, Government gets hold of stocks of rice in certain men's godowns and gives the same to the favourite agents."

"They (the Government agents) went to Khulna and told the people, 'let us have your rice; if you do not sell it to us you will not be able to sell it to any

body else'. The poor village people who were in want of money sold their rice at Rs. 2 or Rs. 3 per maund... Stocks were requisitioned under Rule 75 (a) of the Defence of India Rules, but as soon as the stocks were requisitioned Government without caring to give the affected parties any compensation, handed over the stock to Mirza Ali Akbar. Here is one writ of Mandamus issued by the High Court in the matter of a man named Man Singh of 177 Harrison Road.....The order is dated 17th of June, 1943 purported to have been issued by Mr. B. K. Acharya, Joint Regional Controller of Civil Supplies, requisitioning 150 bags of rice belonging to that firm and he is purported to have acted under Rule 75 (a) of the Defence of India Rules. The said order does not state whether compensation has to be paid for such requisition. This is the manner in which requisitions are made by Government. Mirza Ali Akbar of 35 Ezra Street has been appointed the agent to remove rice unconditionally and when he gets rice he deals in it in any way he likes; he has purchased rice at Rs. 8/- (per maund) from the mufussil and he has sold it to the Government at Rs. 32....."

These are very grave charges. The Civil Supplies Minister, Mr. Suhrawardy, did not make any attempt to meet these in course of his reply. This silence did not enhance the reputation of the Bengal Government for straight dealing in measures where money was concerned. The Ministers did not care, sure of their support of the European group, and what was of more importance of the permanent officialdom enthroned at Writers' Building at Calcutta.

The disclosures made by Mr. Fazlul Huq opened another vein of enquiry into the policies that influenced the Ministry of Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin in their handling of the food crisis. The way in which Sir John Herbert put this Ministry into the little power transferred under "Provincial Autonomy" was a great handicap to it. Its affiliation with the Muslim League, with the rank communalism preached by it, could not recommend it to the large body of liberty-loving people in the Province. It was feared that it would revive the communalism that during 1940 and '41 had disrupted Bengal's social and economic life. From this disgraceful state of things the province was saved by the Ministry under Mr. Fazlul Huq organized with the help and support of Mr. Sarat Chandra Basu. The Muslim League members of the Bengal Legislature became a little more careful in their activities, in their speeches which inflamed communal feelings in the Province. The leaders of the Muslim League, their position in the Ministry lost, curbed something of their powers of mischief. But their emissaries were abroad over the countryside, appealing to the fanaticism of the Muslim masses and organising this against the Ministry of Mr. Fazlul Huq. It would be blindness to deny that these had a powerful appeal to the Muslim masses before whose eyes were held up visions of a restoration of glory as in the days of the Pathans and Moghuls, when Muslim values, pure and undefiled, were thought to have ruled the life of the Muslims of India. The same response would have come from the Hindu masses if some one of the Nationalist leaders could have held before them the plan and programme for the restoration of the days of Mauryas or the Guptas. But to the leadership of the Muslim League these appeals had their uses as a political strategy. Behind these were power and pelf which the use of political power or the power of the State, even as subordinate members of the bureaucracy that upheld State authority, gave,

**Muslim community & communal appeals**

The present war had opened avenues of picking up money that were undreamt of. The leadership of the Muslim League recognised it as an opportunity that does not come very often, if ever, and it determined to exploit its full advantages. In public it maintained an attitude of dissatisfaction with British policy, both as it affected things Indian as well as things in other Muslim countries of Asia and Africa. It could not publicly support Britain's war effort, made declarations to this effect. But it advised its followers to make all the profits out of these war efforts. The Muslim community had fallen back in many of the professions and occupations that served the material interests of society. In agriculture, specially in Bengal, the members of the Muslim community held a dominant position. In trades and industries they were nowhere near the Hindus. The war and the famine in Bengal broke down all these, so far as these could be conducted under private initiative. The supply of food grains was a great business, employing lakhs of people and employing crores of rupees for their financing. In this trade members of the Muslim community had not been able to establish themselves. And when famine disrupted the normal channels of trade in food grains, and the State had to step in to arrange to supply these to the people, the Nazimuddin Ministry found in this catastrophe a great opportunity to establish members of the Muslim community in this trade. They on behalf of the State supplied the capital, and the State met the losses of the trade inevitable in its initial stages. This is the meaning and significance of all the controversy raised by the patronage extended by the Nazimuddin Ministry to the Ispahani Company both in their own name, and under the name of others. These transactions were going on all through the province and outside where Muslim agents were roaming the country to buy food grains for the Government of Bengal. And the most powerful instrument in the hands of the Ministry was that the Muslim community must have the same proportion in this trade as it had in the population of the Province.

This might entail disorganisation; this might delay relief to famine-stricken people. But the Civil Supplies Ministry insisted upon this as a condition precedent to the granting of agencies or contracts to those who did not belong to their faith. In a section of the Bengalee-language Press it was published that one of the Chief Agents for the procurement of rice was taken to task by the Civil Supplies Minister himself for failing to maintain the "communal ratio" in the appointment of their sub-agents or of their subordinate officers concerned with the purchase of food grains. This Chief Agent, one of the premier merchants of the province of Bengal, somehow felt this interference as an impertinence, and resigned his agency, not after he had written to Mr. Casey, the new governor of the province, of the circumstances under which he had been driven to resign a commission which was both a public duty and a profitable business. It appears that the governor has not been able to mend matters. Perhaps, he felt himself constitutionally incompetent to interfere in matters that

fell within the competence of the "self-governing" part of the Bengal administration. Under pressure of Muslim dissatisfaction with their share of posts and preferments under the Government, the Fazlul Ministry No. I. had been led to fix a "communal ratio" in these. The credit or discredit of the Nazimuddin Ministry was that it extended its use in a sphere which but for the war and the famine would not have come within the radius of its jurisdiction.

There is nothing inherently wrong in a Ministry using its patronage for the advancement of its party interests. The "spoils system" is no new invention; people and countries whom we have taken as our examplers are quite familiar with it. And they do not appear to lose anything in world estimation for the pursuit of a system of graft that has become quite respectable today. What is special and particular in Bengal, in India, is that the party membership is confined to members of a particular religious persuasion without reference to ideas and practices that are of this earth, earthy. We know that this is all a pretence—this attempt to boost a party for its belief in certain matters which in the ultimate analysis have nothing to do with mundane affairs of political power and economic grab. This pretence, however, has a great appeal to men and women even in the present rationalistic age. In India the leadership of the Muslim community ever since the country came under British rule has refused to merge its interests and sentiments, its ideas and ideals of social good, with the interests and sentiments, the ideas and ideals of the whole country. For years it nursed its particular dreams, standing separate from the dreams for the freedom and happiness of other sections of the Indian population who constitute the composite life of the country. This feeling of separateness is the seed-plot of the conflict that has been given a new shape by the All-India Muslim League, or to put it in another way and, perhaps, the right way, that has made the organisation an instrument for the realization of its particularist ambitions, for the satisfaction of its particularist conceits.

To revert to the technique employed by the Nazimuddin Ministry to fight the famine in Bengal. We have drawn attention to the difficulty it created for itself by trying to serve two purposes—to fight the famine and at the same time to establish members of the Muslim community in certain of the trades and professions in which they were not represented in as great strength as its proportion in the population figures called for. From a study of the relevant papers, certain of which must have been presented to the Woodhead Famine Enquiry Commission, we are led to believe that the Ministry failed to secure the first object. As for the second, establishing members of the Muslim community, only those that followed the Muslim League policy and programme—this can be proved by the new purchases of the Calcutta Improvement Trust lands made by members of the community in an increasing number, and such other transactions. In this they have been following the example of their Hindu neighbours whom the lure of service under Government, and the professions and occupations that have grown under its auspices,

**Muslim  
separatism—its  
birth**

**Fighting famine  
combined with  
establishing Mus-  
lims in trade**

have drawn away from their village homes, disrupting the rural life of the country. We have heard Muslim League politicians deploring the fact that the Muslim community lacked a middle class which under modern conditions is the spearhead of all revolutionary and progressive movements in the world. We have been taught that this development is a necessary process in the evolution of a modern society in this land of ancient dreams and old-fashioned ideas. It may quite be so; it may be growing out of the "feudal" economy which Europe is said to have outgrown by the middle of the 17th century. It may be difficult today to indicate the consequences of this new class formation in the heart of the Muslim community. But one thing can be said with a certain amount of assurance that the new middle class in Muslim society will not find it easy, after the first flush of prosperity has subsided, to return to the heart of the nation which dwells in the villages. They will find themselves when the real test comes to be as rootless in their own country as the middle class of the Hindu community does today. There is a cruel logic in historic developments which not all the knowledge gathered by men in course of the milleniums of their history has been able to control or modify. Perhaps, these successes and failures are the notes which make the rhythm of human history. With the Sufi poet-philosopher we can only say—the moving hand writes, and having writ moves on.

This analysis of the many factors that stood in the way of the Nazimuddin Ministry making a success of their task of fighting the famine and pestilence during the last eight months of 1943 and the early months of 1944, brings us to the cruel fact that the Ministry sacrificed many lakhs of people among whom must have been lakhs of their own religious persuasion at the altar of participation in the contracts and agencies of which the monopoly was held by the Government. The governor and the bureaucracy might have been anxious to pull out the people from the agony into which they had been thrust by the system of administration existing in the country, by the ignorance and incompetence of the Central bureaucracy headed by Lord Linlithgow. It has not been yet explained why Lord Linlithgow did not feel called upon to take charge of this dangerous situation deepening into a crisis, and why the poor Nazimuddin Ministry was allowed to muddle the arrangements made for meeting it. It is too difficult for us to think that he and his advisers were so simple-minded as to believe that the jumble of truths and half-truths that Mr. Amery was advised to laddle out as the true explanation of the cause or causes of the famine would be acceptable to any intelligent man in any part of the world. One reason of Lord Linlithgow's obstinate refusal to visit Bengal may be the natural pricks of conscience roused at long last to the stupidity of the many measures taken under the advice or pressure of the military during the panic days that followed the fall of Rangoon, disturbing and disrupting the whole economic system of Bengal. These measures could have been taken only under the feeling that Bengal was as good as lost, and in this contingency it was not incumbent on the Govern-

ment to make things easy for the people of a probable "enemy country," a country that would be passing under enemy control. And as the "scorched earth" policy was the fashionable thing to adopt and follow, the Government to prove its capacity to adopt and practise up-to-date ideas and practices, did initiate these destructive and disruptive measures. But when Japan could not make good her threat to the province, and its people remained a charge to be carried, the mischief had passed beyond control. And, as no human Government during the long course of history, has been found to publicly acknowledge its mistakes, the Linlithgow Government was in very good company in trying to convince the world that the famine in Bengal was an "act of God", and this blasphemy being too much even for the sceptical modern world, the blame of the whole thing was passed on Nature, on the Indian agriculturist, on the hoarder, on the profiteer, and ultimately on the war that is being fought to free men and women from want. So, Lord Linlithgow's Government could plead *alibi*, and leave to his successor to find out a better reason.

But before passing on this responsibility to Lord Wavell, one thing was done—the appointment of a whole-time Food Member in the Governor-General's Executive Council. We have seen in the previous volume of the "Annual Register" that the two members who preceded Sir Jwala

Food Members &  
their susceptibility  
to official brief

Prasad Srivastava in charge of this department—

Mr. Nalini Ranjan Sarker and Sir Muhammed Azizul Huq—had consented to give voice to the official brief without at any time showing that they had any ideas of their own to fight the scarcity in food that threatened to develop into a famine. In the case of the latter, his hands were tied by his political affiliations with the people who manned the Nazimuddin Ministry. It was quite natural that he should turn the blind eye on the antics of this Ministry. The former—Mr. Sarker—had no such handicaps. A successful man in the line which had called him to its service in his youth, he, an Insurance magnate, was quite free in his political affiliations. He has a reputation as a student and observer of things, economic and financial. And when it was announced that he had been put in charge of the Food department in the Government of India, much, that much that was possible under the dispensation enthroned at Delhi-Simla, was expected of him. But the pronouncements that he made in course of food debates during the early months of 1943, and on other occasions, showed that his study of Indian economic and financial subjects had not been able to save him from the fatal spell of redtape, of the official brief. Even before this time when he was in charge of another Department, he appeared to have fallen victim to it. In May, 1942, he made a statement which showed the trend of his thought. In course of a speech made on the occasion of a "Grow More Food" function he said:

Coming now to the position of Bengal in respect of the principal food products, you are no doubt aware that Bengal is normally a deficit province. As regards the most important food grains of the province, namely rice, the annual deficit which has to be made up by import from outside in normal times was about 61,000 tons, i.e., about 19½ lakh maunds. Compared to Bengal's total product-

ion of rice which is fairly about the level of 80 lakh tons, this deficit would appear inconsiderable... In respect of the most important foodgrain of the province, i.e., rice, the position of Bengal in the present year is much stronger than it has ever been in the recent past. Normally the cultivation of rice extends over 2 crores 10 lakhs of acres which is the actual average for the period 1927-'28 to 1936-'37. In 1911-'12, however, it was up to about 2 crores 35 lakh acres, as a result of the Government of Bengal's decision to restrict the production of jute. This increased acreage in 1911-'12 gave a surplus yield of 13½ lakh tons, i.e., about 3 crores 54 lakh maunds of rice. If this rate of production could be maintained, the monsoon permitting, not only would Bengal be self-sufficient in respect of rice, but she would also be in a position to give some help in meeting the deficiency which sister provinces would experience owing to the cessation of import from Burma."

We have tried to show with what little wisdom was Bengal governed during 1942 and 1943 to have driven its people to starva-

Complacence &  
suspicion of  
Indian bonafide

tion and death from starvation, and the pestilence that accompanies and follows famines. We have shown how Indian public men, sane and sober, who co-operated with the bureaucracy in carrying on the administration on terms dictated to by the bureaucracy, were misled into complacence. For about 40 years the province has been deficit in the production of its foodgrains; one-third of the population by living on short ration from day to day, from year's end to year's end, allowed a semblance of sufficiency to mislead our students of economics or affairs. And the few that tried to point out to the danger signal of this malnutrition were not heeded to or were treated as cranks. With such inefficiency in the administration, and with such leadership thrown up by the people, the wonder should be that famine came upon us in 1943, and not twenty-five years earlier when another world war had disrupted the world's economy. It may be that on the former occasion the war did not come near India, that Japan did not feel herself strong enough to start on her imperialist adventure, of establishing the "Imperial Way" over east Asia as a stepping-stone to world domination. In the month of July, 1943, the forces of Japan invaded France's empire on the Pacific. Britain and the United States "froze" her assets as reprisal for this attempt to disturb the peace of Asia. From that time Japanese commercial houses in India had begun to wind up their business; and news came that there were huge purchases by Japan of paddy and rice from Burma sending up the prices of these grains. A wide awake administration would have taken note of these intimations of the coming storm. Without making a public display of their wakefulness, they could have taken steps to halt the march of certain of the evils that would follow an attack by Japan. Even when Japan reached the frontiers of India by the month of May, 1942, within six months of the start of her war, the Government of Lord Linlithgow could not think that the economic arrangements in eastern India would break down under the impact of this attack. Rather, they took steps that made sure that these arrangements should break down. Mr. Barwell's letter has been quoted from to show that the Government had fair warnings from their own countrymen of these developments. But they did not care. A Ministry that had the support of the vast majority of the people of Bengal was driven from office, because the bureaucracy somehow felt that it could not be trusted even with the little power entrusted to representatives of the people. An important

member of the Muslim League, Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, tried to rub in this fact into the faces of Mr. Fazlul Huq and the party that supported him. The Ministry was "suspect", said he. Why, he did not explain. But people understood the allusion. Because it had been formed with the help of Mr. Sarat Chandra Basu, elder brother of Subhas Chandra Basu. And the bureaucracy felt that this Ministry could not be tolerated.

"Being suspect, naturally they (the Fazlul Huq Ministry) did not get that support which they expected, because getting such support and then not doing the thing would have worsened the position."

We do not know what the bureaucracy expected of the people of Bengal. Their policy had kept the province militarily unorganized.

Even the defeats suffered in Malaya and Burma did not teach them to retrace this policy, to make an attempt to give training to the people that would enable them to fight for the defence of their homes.

Perhaps, they thought that putting arms into the hands of the people would endanger their irresponsible authority over the life of the country. Mr. Siddiqi's words suggest some such apprehension, that the Fazlul Huq Ministry having at its back the organised physical force of the province may strike on their own account. If Mr. Siddiqi's interpretation be right, the bureaucracy could not have done otherwise. And all the consequences that followed from this mutual suspicion find their place in an ordered process. Repression, starvation, death due to starvation—all these were inevitable. And State policy must bear its share of responsibility for this debacle.

Thus did politics play its part in bringing famine to the homes of Bengal. Death due to famine and pestilence has not yet been recorded in a census. The government in the province must have submitted to the Famine Commission their estimate of the number of men, women and children that had died owing to these causes. We have seen an estimate made by the Anthropology Department of the University of Calcutta. It was made public sometime in February, 1944. They took a "sample survey" of ten of the famine-affected districts of Bengal. This survey covered 816 family units with a total membership of 3,880. The total deaths in these groups have been 10 per cent during the last six months of 1944, the last six months or a little more. We have seen another estimate of the death that has removed about one-third of the population of a single sub-section of the Hindu community of the province, one of the most virile of the "scheduled classes"—a class that has supplied one or two Ministers since 1935. We refer to the Namsudras. The special correspondent of the *Bombay Times of India* writing on November 16, 1943, said :—

One class of labourers, the Namsudras, alone numbers 30,00,000 in Bengal, and it is not impossible that a third of these have died."

The story of the maladjustment of the food situation in Bengal appears to have had no *finis* written to it. Like poison in the blood it erupts into many places of the body politic. We have discussed how the food situation was made worse by the policy followed by the Ministry in its determination to put members of

the Muslim community into the distributing trades of the province, using the powers given them for fighting the famine to compel the observance of the "communal ratio" in trades and contracts. This opened out doors for misuse of these powers, and for the eruption of corruption which the new governor of Bengal felt compelled to notice in a broadcast. Another symptom of the disease was found in the food grains supplied in "ration shops," full of stones, of creeping and dead insects, the grains rotten by exposure to rain and sun. The food grains for the Calcutta area was supplied by the Central Government; the Government of Bengal was in this case mere distributors. The former insist that their business ended as soon as they reached the food grains to the care of the officials of the latter whose business it was to see or test otherwise the nature and quality of these. So, even after twelve months, it is yet a debatable question between the two Governments—who was responsible for mixing stones in the food grains, and under whose care food grains could develop in them fungus and insects? The story of the Botanical Garden Food has by now become world famous or notorious. The members of the Woodhead Commission, some of them at least with the Chairman, had the privilege of watching the hills of food grains stacked in the Garden, and the care that was taken of them. Almost at the same time lorries were seen hurrying away with these food grains and release them somewhere in Howrah to fill up holes and hollows in Municipal lands. A significant fact should be noted in this connection that the chairman of the Howrah Municipality happened to be a member of the Nazimuddin Ministry. All over the province sights like what was noticed at the Botanical Garden affronted the last observant of men and women, giving birth to many to a ribaldry which the future literary collector will find pleasure in. Meanwhile, men and women and children were made to feel that as they had consented to be reduced to beggary, they could not be choosers of the amount and quality of food that the great *Sarkar Bahadur* could dole out to them. This food might introduce into their bodies germs of disease. But there was the department of Health in charge of Mr. Jalaluddin Ahmed to fight the attacks of disease. The success of the fight was brought out in reply to a question about the rate of malaria mortality in Bengal during the first four months of 1944. Government statisticians beginning with village *Chowkidar*, the symbol of law and order in the rural areas of the country, could report the death of about two hundred thousand (2 lakhs) of people. The men, women and children that have died before their time by feeding on diseased food grains, cannot be recalled to life. And it is useless today to continue controversy over the responsibility for the outbreak of diseases in Bengal. Our people have a higher philosophy in dealing with breakdowns of civilized life like what we have passed through during the last 26 months and more. They are convinced that God was in the disease and in the healing, and in the death. They have a homely way of expressing this thought. As the serpent He bites; as the *Ojah*, the healer of serpent bite, He heals. It would be for the Government of Bengal and the Ministry to choose the cap that would fit them.

It is not yet time to take a census of the people that have died, class by class, employment by employment. The Namasudras who have drawn attention were not only labourers, but they were agriculturists also. Another class that has as grievously been affected were the fishermen whom the "boat removal" policy had already robbed of the means of their livelihood. The potters were another class of village artisans whose economic life had been rudely shaken by enamel and aluminium things. One-tenth of the population were landless labourers; many of these had been absorbed by the many employments opened by war activities, the building of air fields, the laying out of new roads or the improvement of old roads making them fitter for the heavy war lorries, the building of camps spread all over the province to accommodate the innumerable personnel of the many departments called into being by the war. But the majority of these people have had their "home-keeping" instincts more developed than in other sections; and except the more youthful amongst them, very few could be persuaded to leave their localities in search of these employments. It is these people and their dependents that were the first victims of the scarcity, finding in their ill-nourished bodies the easiest points of attack. Years and decades of malnutrition made members of this class victims of the least little disturbance to the balance in the province's economic life.

The bureaucracy knew of this dangerous state of things. But they could do nothing, because there was not money enough in the treasury. The war has proved how this talk was a pretence, if not worse. Bernard Shaw during the last world war had posed the question—how does it become possible to find the money for waging it in powder and shot, millions and hundred and thousand millions of it? During twenty-five years of an uneasy peace the world could not find time to reply to this question. During the present war, during the five years of it, more money has been burnt. And leaders of thought have been telling us that the leaders of States will find it difficult to find a satisfactory reply to this question at the end of the present war. They have been telling us that a return to the unemployment of the early thirties would compel people to believe that wars are a better work-getter than all the arts of peace; and if leaders of States cannot make a better use of peace, then it is preferable that wars should become a permanent feature of our social life.

In our own country dangerous thoughts like these may not influence conduct either of individuals or groups who can mould the habits and thoughts of their neighbours. But famine has been to us as destructive of human wealth, of the human capacity to make wealth, as any wars can be. Our people have died, but their death has not enriched life, physically or spiritually; they have died quietly. And the world has looked on this resignation with a pity that is akin to contempt. For the world cannot understand this acceptance of death with so little noise. Rabindra Nath Tagore has des-

cribed the life of the men and women who accept death with such resignation.

".....There they stand, heads bowed,  
Mute ; on their pale faces chronicled the sufferings  
Of many centuries ; on their shoulders they bear burdens  
Which grow, carrying on, slowly, till life holds,  
And then they pass them to the children for generations.  
Fate they do not curse, nor complain, remembering the gods ;  
Men they do not blame, nor cherish any pity of love  
For themselves ; only a few grains of food they glean,  
And their tormented lives, somehow, keep alive,  
When even that meagre food some one robs,  
And hurts their life in blind might's cruel oppression,  
They know not to whose door they will turn for justice ;  
Calling on the God of the Poor, for once in their heaving sighs,  
Silently they die." —(Translated by Dr. Amiya Chakravarty).

This spirit of resignation must be the product of a social experience. Those who desire to pull out the people of this country from their slough of despondence should make their first attempt to understand it. We have quoted from Sir William Hunter's *Annals of Rural Bengal* the reasons why the Court of Directors could not understand the 'quiet' that prevailed in Bengal during the 1770 famine. They could not believe that men and women could die so quietly, and that in their millions. There has not been much of a change during the last 175 years in the people of India. And the present generation of British rulers must have felt as their predecessors had done when men and women and children could be dying in the streets of Calcutta without cursing any body. We have heard American soldiers saying that they could not understand the quiet that prevailed amidst scenes of desolation and death. Men and women in India who try to interpret the life and thought of their people to the world outside have to find answers to questionings like these. Their quest for the key to this mystery will enable them to more successfully work out the programmes of relief and reconstruction that they have been trying to work out to make their people conscious of the value of human life, to rid them of the non-human acceptance of defeat in the struggle for existence.

Critics of Indian civilization have told us that religious beliefs and practices have been responsible for the evolution of this characteristic. Our predecessors had met these attacks in their own way. The present generation will have to find their own weapons to meet this criticism. It may be that a certain section of them would prefer to throw overboard all that make for weakness or instability in social life. It may be that Indian values that could not help people to preserve their political independence, to retain the self-respect of their national life—these do not deserve to live, to influence the life of the millions who constitute the nation in India. These are controversial subjects. And the majority of the men and women whom scenes of death and desolation have roused from their placid life may feel that these subjects may wait, but relief and rehabilitation of the shattered life of their people cannot wait. One can detect in them a sense of urgency, a tenseness of conduct that raise hopes of a more active genera-

How came this  
spirit of resign-  
ation

The new genera-  
tion must find the  
answer

tion of social workers, more in touch with the cruelty of existence, more conscious of the injustices of social arrangements that call for a radical programme of work.

But the famine has not allowed them to think out or work out these radical activities. They have been compelled to act and work within the context of the present order of things. Relief of the stricken, some little solace to men and women gasping for their last breath, is the one step now. The majority of these gently-nurtured people have never had any experience of death under such cruel circumstances. This experience is not easy to stand with ordinary human nerves. The young men and women who have been attracted to the work initiated by relief organisations or have themselves organised relief organisations, those of them who will be able to see the work through, they will have gained a new character and a new strength that will ultimately contribute to the building up of new character and new strength in their people. It is not to a mission of mercy that they were directing their energies. They had a social purpose that embraced all phases of life, that hoped to enrich these with new meanings. This mission of mercy is nothing new in Bengal's recent history. Inspired by the life and ideals of Swami Vivekananda, young Bengal had on every occasion when an act of God had devastated the country's material life run with help to the relief of the afflicted and the needy. On occasions when men and women congregated in places called thereto by religious impulses and sentiments, young Bengal had organised service to them in many forms. Behind these activities was the larger vision of influencing the masses to think of their common motherland, of the shame and degradation of her political subjection, to imbibe inspiration from the few days passed in common for service to their common people.

We still remember the shock of surprise that passed through the congregation of our common people when during the Swadeshi days that synchronized with the agitation against the attempt at the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon, so unused were they to have "gentlemen's sons" serve them, as they did during the "Ardhadoya Day" of 1908, in the early months of that year. With traditions like these, it was easy for Bengalee young men and women to throw themselves into this mission of mercy. A Bengalee poetess, Mrs. Nirupama Devi, who has been conducting a relief and rehabilitation organisation about thirty miles south of Calcutta, gives voice to the pain and anguish of these days of 1943, and of the inspiration that had brought them to this work.

**How famine  
perverts human  
nature**

"Humans die of hunger,  
There is none to sorrow for them.  
Except death there's no other to which they can look forward to ;  
These are the men and women  
Who have no time to sorrow for their children who died untimely  
But must the next moment start roaming from door to door,  
Driven by hunger, driven unsatisfied,  
For, none is there to give them food.

.....  
Quarrel for a morsel of food, fight to divide it,  
Kick and beat (one another) for a morsel of food,

Conduct themselves as beasts do,  
 Parents strangle their children (driven by hunger)  
 Shame has lost all meaning for them,  
 Hunger as wide as the world,  
 Meanness as low :  
 Stricken by living death,  
 Alas ! My Bharata, more dead than alive."

It was this consciousness of the shame and degradation of the country, represented by the helpless famine-stricken people, and the failure of the country to take care of them, to feed and clothe them, that was the driving force of the many activities undertaken by men and women of Indian birth for the relief of their people. These feelings found voice in the poem of Mrs Nirupama Devi. She was in charge of the relief work started by the Brahmo Samaj. This society of Hindus had parted from their parent stock for reviving the ideals and practices free from idolatry, and ridding it of the other crudities and absurdities like the caste system and untouchability, the interdict on sea voyage, on widow remarriage, that had crept into it and disabled it for purposes of self-defence against rival or competing societies. Raja Ram Mohun Roy was the founder of this brotherhood. Since those days, during the more than one hundred years of its existence, the Brahmo Samaj has ever been foremost in running to the help of men and women who had been afflicted by floods or famines, and other causes. It was the pioneer of modern social service activities in the country. Maharshi Devendra Nath Tagore, father of Rabindra Nath Tagore, and Keshab Chandra Sen were elders of the Samaj when these activities took a regular shape and form during the sixties of the last century. The Ram Krishna Mission under the inspired guidance of its founder, Swami Vivekananda, has imparted a new impetus to serving God by serving his created beings. The Arya Samaj, founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati, has ever been in the forefront of activities of relief called forth by the breakdown of normal social life under the impact of natural calamities or social upheavals caused by human wickedness. The Servant of India Society of Poona, founded by Gopal Krishna Gokhale, followed these noble traditions. During the 1943-44 famine in Bengal these organisations took their natural place in relief activities. Other organisations grew up in response to demands for the better organisation of relief. Of these the place of honour should go to the Bengal Relief Committee, organized and conducted by merchants and traders of non-Bengalee origin who have made Bengal their second home. The President of the Committee was Sir Badridas Goenka, its secretary and treasurer was Sri Bhagirath Kanoria ; the majority of the managing committee came from this class. The Committee received a quick response from the country. It received more than twenty-seven and half lakhs of rupees in cash ; and food-grains, clothes etc. valued at rupees ten lakhs.

The other organisation that stepped into the breach was the Bengal Provincial Hindu Mahasabha. Dr. Syamprasad Mukherjee was the guiding spirit of this relief work. He it was whose voice rang throughout the country calling attention to the conditions of famine that threatened to decimate Bengal. For reasons yet unexplained the

Communalism in  
 famine relief

Government did not favour this broad-casting of famine news either in India or outside. The Defence of India Rules were handy in gagging the expression of public feeling in this matter. And it required no little courage to defy this unwritten interdict. And when the history of this peculiar reluctance of the Government came to be written the credit of weakening its rigours will go to Dr. Mukherjee. It is a misfortune that relief activities had to be organised on a communal basis in Bengal during this crisis in her life. The fact that this had to be done reflected no credit on the people or on the Government or on the Ministry. It showed that there was something unhealthy in the atmosphere of the country. The majority of the relief organisations have offered help ignoring credal differences. For, it is difficult to conceive of human nature being able to refuse food to people simply because they differed from the giver of help in respect of belief in certain ultimate problems of approach to God or the Creator. But in Bengal in the year 1943 the Muslim League Ministry found it difficult to control the temptation of their followers in their declarations that they will have a big say in the distribution of relief, and the Muslims need not feel anxiety with regard to the conditions of destitution that had invaded their homes. This assurance must explain why Muslim initiative for organisation for the relief of famine did not come out as prominently as that supplied by other communities. The unfortunate effect of reserving amounts of help to Muslims made in one or two statements of Mr. Jinnah, the permanent president of the All-India Muslim League, was seen in the organisation of relief on communal lines. The bitterness of feeling roused by instances of communal discrimination that characterized certain activities of the Ministry in Bengal and its supporters was reflected in relief organisations. It would be recognising the presence of a poison in our social system to take note of this fact. We have seen statements submitted to the Famine Enquiry Commission wherein instances of communal discrimination in the matter of relief have been cited. It is difficult to judge in matters like these. But the fact that such grievances could be given expression to is symptomatic of a disease in the body politic.

And against the background of such a disruption of natural human relationships, the relief organisations had to carry on their work.

**The women's  
organisations**

Only men and women who were actually in charge of the operations could explain the difficulties of such a state of feeling, of suspicion and irritation. They could only tell us how such feelings placed handicaps in their way, in carrying relief to people, in creating trust among those whom Government incompetence and the greed of traders and manufacturers had thrown on the roadside as objects of pity. The majority of the men and women receiving doles were householders in a small way, possessed of a strong sense of self-respect in the little concerns of their life. It was not an easy job to make these men and women accept charity and not feel humiliated in the process. It was no easy task to create hopes in hearts from where all hopes appeared to have departed, to put courage and self-respect in them. We can only hope that the men and women who had launched the relief operations had been able to approach their unfortunate neighbours

not as benefactors but as partners in a great work of repentance on the part of society for having failed to do its duty by them, for having allowed things to happen that disrupted the peace and the poor little arrangements of their home-keeping existence. The women's organisations that grew up in different parts of the province in response to the situation where women were the worst sufferers, could bring the touch of nature that made the whole world kin. The All-India Women's Conference, guided by Mrs. Vijoy Luxmi Pundit, and the Mahila Atmaraksha Samiti, the Women's Self-Protection League, were the most vivid expressions of this concern. The organisers of the Samiti soon realised that "everything which they (women) held dear—their homes, their children, their families had begun to disintegrate", to quote words from a report issued in the third week of December, 1943. As the crisis deepened this realisation forced itself into the consciousness of increasing numbers of women in what is called the "middle class". And a net-work of women's organisations grew up all over the province.

A Government of Bengal publication entitled—*Famine & the Government*—indicated for us the immensity of the crisis in the following words :—

Of the 91 sub-divisions in the province 29 subdivisions with an area of 21,665 square miles and a population of 29.9 millions were most severely affected by the distress. Seven other subdivisions with an area of 7,264 square miles and a population of 4.5 millions were badly affected, while 18 other subdivisions with 13,193 square miles in area and a population of 12 millions were affected to some extent. The remaining 37 subdivisions with an area of 35,701 square miles and a population of about 21 millions were hit by high prices only and not by real scarcity, as these were more or less self-supporting or surplus areas.

Faced by a situation of irretrievable disaster these non-official organisations could but do little. The whole of the collections made by them could not be more than a crore of rupees, as their published reports show. The State & other relief compared to private charity Government in Bengal did spend rupees ten crores, a little over eight crores as the pamphlet quoted from, shows. A little over four crores were spent in gratuitous relief; about one and half crores of rupees in test relief work; about three crores in agricultural and land improvement loans. This money was spent during 1942-43 and 1943-44. Four crores of people, two-thirds of the population of the province, were affected by conditions of famine. And ten crores of rupees, a hundred million of rupees spent by the State, cannot be regarded as too generous for the needs of the situation. These eleven crores spent by the State and the non-official organisations could not have saved the four crores of men, women and children who had been pushed into famine. We will never know the amount spent by private charity in helping the distressed and the dispossessed. They must have been many times what was spent by the State and the relief organisations. It is this charity that is the core of all relief measures in all countries when "acts of God" or acts of Nature or acts of men, upset society's arrangements for feeding and clothing its members. The record of this charity is not found in any book written by man. The givers of this charity are content with the feeling that in the

Book of Fate this good work is related in characters not of human make.

The six millions of men and women who have fallen victims to famine and pestilence accompanying famine cannot return thanks for what was done to keep them alive. The others who have come out of the cruel test with bodies wrecked and minds weakened, cannot express what they feel with regard to their benefactors. The majority of them cannot understand why they should have been thrown on public charity. On their behalf the awakened section of the Bengalee people, 10 or 12 per cent of the whole population, can express gratefulness that cannot find adequate language to express it. From far and near this help came. The Arya Samaj from the Punjab came with experience and organisation that had fought famine and pestilence in many an area in India during the seventy-five years of its existence. The Servant of India Society came from Poona with identical experience and organisation to succour the people in rural Bengal. The Marwari Relief Society of Calcutta, generous and active in relief activities wherever distress called for them, directed its experience to this work long before the Government had awakened to its responsibilities in the matter. The South Indian Evacuee Relief joined forces with the Navabidhan Relief Mission to form the Calcutta Relief Committee to take part in the fight against famine. The Muslim Chamber of Commerce organised and controlled by non-Bengalee Muslims doing business in Bengal with its headquarters at Calcutta had its relief work for separately looking after the distressed amongst their community. The Communist party of India have made their peace with the Government and was busy organizing relief Committees, sponsored by the Government. The Friends' Ambulance Unit, organised by the Quakers of Britain, whose leader, Mr. Horace Alexander, had for years been a friend of Mahatma Gandhi sharing his beliefs and sympathising with his activities for India's fight for freedom, established a net-work of relief centres that took the members to the most unapproachable parts of the province. The value of help that they rendered to Bengal, it is not for us to evaluate in words. In silent gratefulness the Indian publicist records the fact that such help came from a section of the people in whose name and on whose behalf the ruling classes of their country profess to hold political power over forty crores of men, women and children. The living experiences of the members of the Friends' Unit must have told them what a mess their ruling classes have made of affairs in India. Famine supplied evidence of the bankruptcy of statesmanship that had claimed to act as the "trustees" of a people's fate and fortune. Perhaps, no foreign rule can make good the claims made by Britishers. It would ease the world's conscience if they accepted this verdict of history and retired from an impossible position.

The long argument carried on in the pages above has for its purpose the bringing into a focus all the conditions of desolation that British methods of administration, exploitation and enlightenment have more unconsciously than consciously brought into the life of India. We are prepared to believe that British administrators did the best

The masses of  
Britain do not  
understand

for us according to the light vouchsafed to them by their history. But the time has come to say on behalf of India that the lessons of that history applied to India have gone all wrong. In their own country, the ruling classes of Britain have been able to keep their people quiet by the glory and splendour of an empire over which the sun was represented as never setting; the disruption of Britain's social life during the latter half of the 18th century and first half of the 19th that drove millions of men, women and children to the workhouses or to the factories and the mines—the history of this desolation the masses of Britain have just come to understand. But they have accepted that history, knowing that its steps cannot be retraced. It was a bad dream that had better be forgot. And they had no time, nor the power of understanding to judge of the things that were being done in their name by their ruling classes in a country so far off, beyond seven seas and thirteen rivers, to describe the distance between India and Britain with the help of an Indian idiom. They were misled by signs of wealth flowing into the country through the ports of London and Liverpool in which they had so little share. And since the beginning of the present century, the competition of the United States, Germany, and Japan in the trades and industries of the world, has created head-aches for the ruling classes of Britain, has created conditions of unemployment in the country that leave the masses of that country unconcerned with what happens to the "dependent" countries of the empire. The two world wars have increased this tendency quite naturally. And those who think or say that the masses of Britain have been roused to their responsibilities to the peoples of the "dependent" empire by the big shaking up imparted by the failures and successes of the present war, by bringing them face to face with the issues of peace and war embracing the whole world, these observers appear to be going against ordinary human nature which thinks first of its own interests and of its dependents. And, after the present war the ordinary man and woman of every country will have many headaches of their own to think of. This note of caution may appear to be cynical, unidealistic. But the people of most nations, the broad masses of them, have been made so by their disappointments with what their rulers had said and done.

In India also, apart from the depression caused by food shortage over wide areas of the country, from Bengal to Travancore, Cochin and

Malabar where men and women were said to have had to live on 2—3 ozs. of food grains a day—in our country frustration wide and deep afflicted the people as they closed the year of 1943 With under-nourished

bodies they could not have had vigorous minds to combat the negative policy of the Linlithgow Government. Even when a new Governor-General came in the person of Lord Wavell, who was made the ruler of India from its defence-organiser as the Commander-in-chief, no hope emerged of a political solution that would pull out the people from the slough of despondence into which they had been pushed or into which they had fallen from their own weakness and incapacity. The new Governor-General by his dramatic appearance into the midst of the famine-stricken people of Bengal, by moving army help for the relief of the famine-stricken people, supplied the key-note to his adminis-

**Lord Wavell as  
economic saviour**

tration which is to be economic renewal and re-construction, and not any political advance. In the last volume of the *Annual Register*, we have tried to show the genesis of this programme which may be compared to rear-guard action undertaken by a retreating army. The talk of this economic progress is the last attempt of a bureaucracy to hold on to the reins of power, to prolong their irresponsible authority to as long a time as circumstances allowed.

Writing after about twelve months of the developments that form the subject matter of the study embodied in the present volume, we cannot record any improvement in the political situation in the country. The British authorities have declared more than once that they could not think of doing anything in India till the end of the war.

And, meanwhile, behind the scenes Committees appointed by the Government have been drawing up blue-prints of how India should be organised in the economic field, how the ties that bound her interests to the policies and practices of British capitalism could be tightened. With all the good will in the world, India cannot rid herself of the feeling that these blue-prints framed by foreign experts cannot serve her interests, cannot be to her ultimate good. This suspicion is a product of British policy pursued through the two hundred years of administration and exploitation.

The controversy carried on with regard to the best method of enlightenment of the disposal and use of the more than 1,000 crores of rupees worth of sterling balances accumulated in London in the accounts of India has been exciting attention. This huge amount has grown out of the purchases made by the Government of Britain in India to meet their war-time necessities of raw materials of which our country held some sort of a monopoly. India is being consoled with the declaration that she was now a creditor country, having Britain as her debtor, that this position will be giving her strength to pull her weight in the market place of affairs; that the sterling balances will enable India to buy from western countries, specially from Britain, those capital goods, machine tools, big and small that will enable her to build up her own industries and forge ahead as one of the leading industrial nations of the modern world. These declarations do not appear to be carrying much hope to the Indian industrialists who believe that there was something up the sleeves of their British rivals which cannot be to India's profit. They appear to think that if the sterling balances are allowed to be used in the way that is desired by India, she will have won a power to bargain in the markets of the world for the purchase of capital goods. The insistence by Britain that the sterling balances can be made available to India by Britain selling her goods, whether for the establishment of heavy industries, or for consumption by the people of India, this insistence has been creating suspicion and distrust. It is being felt that it is not just that India should not be allowed to use her own money in the way she thought best, that Britain, her debtor, should be dictating the way in which the debt should be paid, that India should not have the choice of the markets in which she will be making her purchases of capital goods. As we write, this argument does not appear to have

**Sterling balances  
& their  
re-payment**

capital goods. As we write, this argument does not appear to have reached the plane of settlement even with the visit of the Finance Member in the Government of India to Britain. More of bitterness we can apprehend if the controversy is carried on in the shape and form that it has taken. There are hints and suggestions that by some financial jugglery the sterling balances will be made to disappear, as appeared to have been the case during the settlement of accounts after the last great war.

One bright idea that has been featured in this connection is that the defence of India and the expenses in this behalf should be the charge of the people of India; that Britain having borne during two hundred years the burden and responsibility for the defence of this country should now be relieved of these, as India is on the way of attaining her status as a Dominion; that if the people of India were serious with regard to their demands for *Swaraj*, self-rule, they could not expect Britain to arrange and pay for their defence organisations. Even during the present war, the attempted invasion of India by Japan has put a new complexion on the whole question of the division of expenses as between India and Britain in the campaigns in the eastern borders of this country. Japan's war is as much India's as it is Britain's. For, it cannot be contended with reason that Japan would have had no reason to attack India if British and other Allied forces had not been present here; if India had not been made a base of operations directed against Japan. Because, it is well-known that Japan's world strategy of domination embraced within its sweep the country that had given birth to the Buddha whose religion has in various ways influenced life and conduct in the land of the rising sun. It may be yet unascertained what the amount of expenses would be that can be legitimately placed on the Indian exchequer. It may yet be that the sharing of the expenses as between India and Britain for the Burma campaign is a matter of argument. But there is no possibility of doubt that India would bear the major portion of this expense. And, in the accounting of these expenses, the major part of India's sterling balances held in London may be made to diminish or totally evaporate. There are other bright ideas that might play their tricks in the final settlement of this question.

These bright ideas can have their birth and growth in an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion that is unhappily prevalent in the relationship between India and Britain. We have to accept the situation, and put the best face on the matter. The world appears to have done so in the same spirit. No way is visible except two—that India shall win her freedom or Britain shall dragoon India into silence. There cannot be any doubt that Asia and the world cannot reach stability until this unnatural relation between India and Britain is ended. In things small and things great the two countries cannot judge each other with charity, with absence of ill-feeling. This was illustrated in the booklet published by the "authority" of the Government in India entitled—"Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances—1942-'43," and the "Reply" Gandhiji sent to it from his "Detention

Camp", dated the 15th July, 1943. The Government pamphlet was published in the second week of February, 1943; its preface had been written on the 13th February by, or appeared in the name of, Sir Robert Tottenham, Additional Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department, that is, three days after the commencement of Gandhiji's fast. In this letter Gandhiji has charged the writer of the pamphlet with tearing "sentences and phrases from their context" to add plausibility to his interpretation of the sayings and doings of the leaders of the Congress among whom was Gandhiji at their head. By quoting from his writings in the *Harijan* and interviews with foreign correspondents published in the same weekly, Gandhiji has built up a case that challenged the one made in the pamphlet. Sir Robert Tottenham in acknowledging its receipt did not care to meet Gandhiji's charges, but brushed these aside with the remark that the Government was convinced that Congress leadership was defeatist in intent and would have proved so in action if it had been allowed to have its way with the Indian administration. The intolerance of the writer was proved in the following lines quoted from the first para of the Home Department reply dated October 14th, 1943:

"At the outset, I am to remind you that the document in question was published for the information of the public and not for the purpose of convincing you or eliciting your defence. It was supplied to you only at your own request, and in forwarding it Government neither invited nor desired your comments upon it."

The spirit that lay behind the words quoted above has been the spirit of British administration in India, one of arrogance, of impatience with criticism. This spirit sorts ill with the declarations made on behalf of the "United Nations" in appealing to the conscience of the world. This arrogance and impatience cannot smooth the way of reconciliation that both India and Britain must seek if their relation of about two centuries were not to crush into desolation, if they desired to play in the future a part of rich co-operation for the advancement of human good.

The recognition of the seat of evil is widespread both in India and in Britain. During the middle of July, 1943, two statements appeared, the signatories of both of which were leaders of the Christian Churches. The first was addressed by the British Council of Churches to the National Christian Church of India, in course of which they expressed the distress caused by the "long-continued political deadlock and deterioration of relations between the two peoples." This message was sent together with a covering letter from the President of the British Council of Churches, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the highest dignitary of the State Church of Britain. The message recognized and admitted that "...beneath the political difficulties there are soreness and alienation deeply rooted in history whose ultimate causes are moral and spiritual. We admit a share in these for which in spite of the devoted services of many, the British people as a whole must accept responsibility."

The other statement was made by a number of British missionaries resident in India embodying an appeal to all parties in the country to make an entirely new approach to the political problem. The signatories did not make any claim that they had any "authority to

speak on behalf of the whole body of British missionaries" in India, but they had reasons "to believe that the opinion" which they held was "widely shared." But with all their anxiety to help, the signatories could not make any concrete suggestion for "the restoration of good will and the attainment of a settlement acceptable to all classes in India".

Almost in the same order of help was that which could have come from Mr. Phillips, "Personal Representative in India" of the President of the United States who desiring to meet Gandhiji and other leaders of the Congress had applied to the "appropriate authorities", that is, the Government of Lord Linlithgow, for the requisite permission. The latter could not see their way to grant this permission. This refusal was interpreted at the time as part of British policy which could not allow to be raised "unjustified hopes in Indian circles of U. S. intervention in the Indian controversy". Mr. Phillips had sought for permission before he went to his country temporarily, with a view to get the Congress view point which along with others he would have to report on for the information of his chief, the President of the U. S. A. Since then, Mr. Phillips appears to have submitted his interpretation of men and things in India to President Roosevelt. These have somehow found their place in a certain section of the Press of that country. The Indian public have had to be satisfied with extracts from these. It appeared that Mr Phillips had said certain things not quite complimentary to British policy and practice in India. These have moved the Foreign Department of the Government of India to request the Government at London to declare Mr. Phillips as no longer acceptable to the Delhi-Simla Government as a representative of the President of the U. S. A. This interdict may be interpreted as a declaration by the British Government that they desired to be left alone with their Indian argument to be carried on by them in their own way, unaided by any foreign power, however friendly it might be.

The Phillips episode is one other example of the inherent conflict between the self-respect of India and the interests of Britain as an imperialist power. Those amongst us in India who had hoped that the Government of the U. S. A. or its President, would intervene in the settlement of the Indo-British differences knew not the forces that really determined international amity or enmity. In the present case, it could not be expected that one of the leaders of the "United Nations" would be going out of its way to set right relations that had got awry between another leader of the same group of Powers and a "subordinate" administration of the latter. Only, on one condition could the former interfere—in the case where the recalcitrance of the "subordinate" administration was so organized and so violent that it stood in the way of the "United Nations" winning the war. In the case of India, the revolting spirit of the people had not had the support of the Government in India which had succeeded in smothering a wide movement of anti-Government activities in the course of about three months during the latter half

#### The Phillips episode

#### Why Government was in no mood for reconciliation

of 1942. By its success in this campaign of repression the Government had demonstrated that it still commanded physical power to stifle signs of revolt, that a vast majority of the Indian people did not support those activities that had tried to upset the system of administration which had disrupted in so many ways the norms and forms of Indian life, which had disrupted the agricultural-cum-industrial economy of the country—the economy that had made the “wealth of Ind.” The August-September-October disturbances of 1942 might have had a demonstrative value. But the British administration did suppress these quite easily, and thereby proved to the world that its hold over the country was as strong as ever.

The British Government could adopt this attitude because the war in Europe had turned in its favour. Writing in December, 1944, on developments in the war situation that had taken place since July, 1943, it would be unrealistic to confine attention to the last six months of that year. Today Germany is encircled on three sides of her territories; many of the bastions of her “Fortress Europa” have fallen down; many of her allies have got out of the war. It may be that her army corps are still fighting on foreign soil. But the landing of Anglo-American forces in Cherbourg, and the rolling back of German contingents from France, has put a new complexion on the war in Europe. The capture of Rome has demonstrated that Italy has practically gone out of the war, though Signor Mussolini may be living “somewhere” in north Italy almost as a refugee. Air attacks on Germany have increased in number and intensity. We have seen an estimate that gave an idea of the load of bombs that are being dropped on the Reich. In August, 1943, were dropped 3,575 tons; in September 8,190 tons; in October 5,533 tons. This was all daylight bombing in which the U. S. A. Air Force specialises as the British does in night bombing. The following from *Foreign Affairs*, January, 1944, indicated what the purpose of these air attacks was:

“The air attack plainly is envisaged now not as supplying a knock-out blow to Germany but as a means of softening her up for an invasion across the Channel. Since the beginning of the war the majority of American senior officers have felt that a cross-Channel invasion was, all things considered, the best and the most sure way to bring Germany to her knees. They considered the Mediterranean operations and the air offensive as ‘softening’ and diversionary operations preliminary to that one end.

Against that Day Germany has not been idle in preparing. In Russia she has had to make “strategic withdrawal in great depth and on a broad front.” Finland and Rumania and Bulgaria have gone out of the war. Between July and late November 1943, the Russians re-occupied 1,40,000 square miles of their own territory; the battle lines were approaching the pre-1939 frontiers. Most of the credit of this success must belong to Russia alone. The dictator of the Soviet has fashioned the States of the Federation into a mighty machine for war, both defensive and offensive. Though during the last six months of 1943 the “second front” so much desired by the Russians to be opened by the Anglo-American forces did not come into being, the High Command of Germany could not ignore the possibilities of

Germany at  
bay

German  
Strategy

such a danger. Therefore did they shorten their battle lines in Russia. An authority on German strategy writing in the *Picture Post* of October 30, 1943, on the "last chance" of Germany indicated the need of such a tactic.

"Thus from the German standpoint the most pressing problem of all is the formation of new strategic reserves, and this can only be undertaken at the cost of shortening the eastern front.....That is the core of the German military problem."

The same writer has also tried to point out to the cause which was responsible for the failure of Germany to break up Russian resistance even though her forces had penetrated so deep into the Russian soil. He thinks that this penetration became a handicap to the Germans. It is no doubt true that she had forced her way into the Caucasian mountains, had gone as far east as the Volga, but she could not break the military machine that Marshal Stalin had built up.

"...In Russia the German General Staff lost its sense of distance. And while the Panzer divisions chased over the boundless Russian plains as far as Moscow and Stalingrad without forcing a decision, the German Command lost the measure of another element of strategy : Time."

Another authority, the military and naval correspondent of the *New York Herald Tribune*, has also made the same deductions from the study of events happening in Europe.

"...The object of German strategy from this time on must be to gain time—time for the United Nations to sicken of the bloodshed, time for dissensions to arise among them, time for political shifts of power in Germany herself which may make it possible for her to secure better terms. The German 'Heartland', without which Germany cannot go on fighting, may be described as the territory of Germany itself, western and central Poland, Denmark, the Low Countries, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Hungary, northern Yugoslavia, Austria, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands and part of France. This central and vital area must be held. Once it is invaded, the beginning of the end is at hand....."

This interpretation of events has been borne out by the invasion of the continent by Anglo-American forces. And Germany appears to be fighting with her back to the wall. From the west these allied armies are trying to break into Germany. From the east the Soviet forces have been breaking into Hungary. There appears to be a race between these two invading forces as to who shall reach the "heartland" of Germany first. Twelve months have passed by since those words were written, but the leaders of the "United Nations" do not appear to be sickening with bloodshed ; they have managed to keep intact their unity of purpose which is the elimination of Germany's power for mischief from the life of Europe. The foreign secretaries of the U. S. A., of Britain and of the Soviet met at Moscow to straighten out any differences that might be still lingering in the minds of the leading Powers of the world. President Roosevelt, Mr. Churchill and Marshal Stalin met at Teheran to put the coping stone on their structure of alliance. At the end of it they issued a declaration to the peoples whom war has caught in its tentacles. This should have a place in the *Register* :

"We—the President of the U. S., the Prime Minister of Great Britain, and the Premier of the Soviet Union—have shaped and confirmed our common policy. We

express our determination that our nations shall work together in the war and in the peace that will follow.

"We have concerted our plans for the destruction of the German forces. We have reached complete agreement as to the scope and timing of operations which will be undertaken from the east, west and south. The common understanding which we have here reached guarantees that victory will be ours. No power can prevent our destroying the German armies by land, their U-boats by sea, and their air plants from the air. Our attacks will be relentless and increasing.

"We are sure that our concord will make it an enduring peace. We recognize fully the supreme responsibility resting upon us and all the United Nations to make a peace which will command the good will of the world and banish war for many generations. We have surveyed the problems of the future. We shall seek the co-operation of all nations, large and small, whose people are dedicated to the elimination of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance. We will welcome them as they choose to come into a world family of democratic nations. We look to the day when all peoples of the world may live free lives untouched by tyranny, and according to their varying desires and their own consciences. We came here with hope and determination. We leave here friends in fact, in spirit and in purpose.

This declaration had reference primarily to affairs in Europe disturbed by German ambitions. But the "United Nations," their leaders, had another enemy to take account of. In fighting this enemy the help of Russia could not be had. Therefore, there was a meeting of President Roosevelt, Mr. Churchill, and Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, held at Cairo. The decisions of this conference were made known to the world in the following declaration.

"The military missions have agreed on future operations against Japan. The three great Allies are fighting this war to restrain and punish the aggression of Japan. They covet no gain and have no thought of territorial expansion.

"It is their purpose that Japan shall be stripped of all the islands in the Pacific which she has seized or occupied since 1941, and that all territories stolen from China shall be restored. Japan will be expelled from all other territories taken by violence and greed. In due course Korea shall become free and independent.

"With these objects in view, the three Allies, in harmony with those of the United Nations at war with Japan, will persevere in the serious and prolonged operations necessary to procure the unconditional surrender of Japan."

The promises made and the hopes expressed at Cairo cannot be said to have taken shape since the next twelve months. It is

**Fight against Japan** true that an invasion of India by Japan has been beaten back in course of which places in the Naga hills and in the little State of Manipur have found mention in modern world history. Fifty years back

there was an attempt made by the ruling classes of Manipur to throw off the trammels of British authority; and Manipur through Tikendrajit, general of the army, showed to the world that heroism still lingered in the hills of the State that had in times beyond memory, during the Mahabharatan age, flit through Indian history. Seven hundred miles south in the Arrakan area, British attempts to drive the Japanese were abortive, and remain so even in December, 1944. This part of the battle front being a British responsibility, the failure to make good can be explained by the fact that Britain was so engaged in Europe to be able to divert any major forces to the Indian Ocean area. It is true that the U. S. commander, Major-General Stillwell, was making things hum in a part of Indo-Burma frontiers with the help of his Chinese troops, aided by U. S. 10th Air Force. But the main credit for the fight against Japan must go to the combined forces of U. S. marines, Australian and New Zealand divisions commanded by General MacArthur. The New Guinea and New Georgia positions of Japan had

been all but liquidated. Rabaul, the key Japanese base in this area, still held. But it appears to have been rendered inoffensive. For, we have not heard that from this stronghold Japanese forces have issued to halt any of the offensives that under General MacArthur's direction were approaching the Marianas and the Marshal Islands where since 1919 Japan had been building various nests of offense and defense. But the main American efforts were directed by Admiral Nimitz with his headquarters at Pearl Harbour against Japanese positions in the mid-Pacific. Carrier task forces hammered at Japan's "unsinkable aircraft carriers"—the islands of Micronesia." In the heart of these stood Truk, as "impregnable" as Nature and man could make it. It is a group of eleven hilly, defensible islands set in a 30-mile wide lagoon and encircled by a coral reef. These islands can be shelled by capital ships standing off the reef, can be bombed down from the air. There have been one or two attacks on Truk reported in the Press. But it appears that this Japanese base has been neutralized or made useless to the Japanese. For, we have to record that from Australia General MacArthur has been able to mount an attack on the Philippine islands, on the island of Leyte, without being troubled by Rabaul or Truk. We can now regard Japan's 1942 thrust at Australia as part of a delaying action only. Japanese bases in the heart of the mid-Pacific have not been able to halt the destructive activities directed by Admiral Nimitz from his 5,000 miles distant headquarters at Pearl Harbour.

From this study it becomes possible to say that both in Europe and in Asia, the Axis Powers, Germany and Japan, appear to be fighting on the defensive. How long they will be able to prolong the war, only the future can say. It is only in China that Japan appears to be making some headway. On the 7th of July, 1943, China celebrated a memorable anniversary: *San Ch' i*—"Triple Seven", or the seventh day of the seven month of the seventh year of resistance to Japan. She had fought almost alone for these years; her strategy of "selling space for time" was not yet vindicated. Two terrible famines had swept Honan and Kwantung. The price level was 87 times the pre-war level; there was the "hunger of vast armies for medicines and munitions", as there was the growing paralysis of transport. During the last twelve months since the declaration of Cairo, things have worsened in China. The recall of General Stillwell, the U. S.-born Chief of Staff of the Generalissimo, drew attention to this. The world's Press was plastered with news that the Chiang Kai-shek regime was mediaeval, effete and reactionary; that instead of fighting the Japanese it has been conserving its forces and resources for the final brush-up with the Chinese communists; that an influential sector of the ruling class in China was in league with the Japanese and their Chinese supporters. From Moscow issued the voice of impatience with Chinese ways of doing things, with the failure of the Chiang Kai-shek regime to make it up with the Chinese communists at this supreme hour of crisis in the modern life of the country. In October-November, 1943, China was one of the great Powers of the world, one of the "Big Four"—the United States, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and China. As we write, this position seems to have

Sorrows & suffer-  
ings of China

been lost by her ; at least we do not hear it from the lips of British public men and publicists. And at the eighth year of her war with Japan, China appears to have lost caste with the moulders of public opinion in the modern world. We in India can be observers only of these developments in international politics, in the making and re-making of Great Powers.

As we close the survey of things Indian, and things extra-Indian, in our attempt to understand and explain these, we cannot shake off the influence

**Hopeless hope  
in India**

of the air of frustration that hovers over the world. The system of administration that prevails in India has done nothing to enlist the heart and mind of the Indian people on the side of the "United Nations"; the enthusiasm and spirit of adventure that inform the life and conduct of the leading nations of the world are absent from India. Dissatisfaction with this order of things is becoming unhealthy, because it cannot find an outlet of expression. With a sense of fatality the masses of the people appear to be watching the shape of things, without hope and without any elation. Famine, pestilence, under-nourishment, these do not generate hope and elation. The classes who have been fighting for a better and more self-respecting life for their people appear to have accepted defeat at the hands of the bureaucracy. But all hope is not lost as long as there are men amongst us who dare walk alone, braving the thunder and the rain. The generation of them who since the beginning of this century have been witnesses to the lashing of the waves of national feeling and their retirement into the troughs of depression, they do not lose hope. And the men and women who have followed them into paths of danger and sacrifice, they do not lose hope. And in the inspiration of that memory, drawn by the vision of a renovated life for their people, they hope and work.—(*Specially contributed by Sri Suresh Chandra Deb* ).

सत्यमेव जयते

# The Council of State

Monsoon Session—New Delhi—2nd to 31st August 1943

CONGRATULATIONS TO LORD WAVELL

The Council of State, which began its monsoon session at New Delhi on the 2nd. August 1943 decided, on the suggestion of the President, *Sir Manekji Dadabhai*, to send congratulations to Field Marshall Viscount Wavell, a former member of the Council of State on his appointment as Viceroy of India. *Pandit Kunzru* thought the Council's congratulations might have other implications, and to him, the course suggested by the President, seemed to be rather unusual. *Pandit Kunzru* further said it was not an unimportant matter as some members had tried to make it. Such an action should only be taken if there was unanimity. If the Chair had consulted Party leaders before, it would have been better. They could not look at the matter from a purely personal point of view. They had to take the political aspect into consideration. Some of them had criticised his appointment. It would be unfair to those members, if a message was sent, purporting to be from all sides of the House. They could only join in sending a message if they were satisfied on the political side. He was sure if the President asked the Council to drop the message, the Council would agree to do so. As regards Viscount Wavell, he said, it was the earnest wish that he might succeed where others had failed. *Mr. P. N. Saprú* said that they knew nothing about Viscount Wavell's politics. He might prove to be a good statesman, or equally, he might prove to be a bad one. A question of principle was involved and they could not pre-judge him and offer him congratulations. They were not concerned with personalities but with politics. The President reminded the House that he had not mentioned a word about politics in his original motion. He had forty years of experience of the work of the Council and was not going to introduce any politics in the message which was to be cabled. Thereupon, *Pandit Kunzru* and his party withdrew their opposition and the motion was adopted against great applause.

## DIFFERENCE IN PAY OF ARMY OFFICERS

**3rd. AUGUST:—**The Council of State to-day rejected by 24 votes to 10, *Pt. H. N. Kunzru's* resolution urging that Indian-commissioned officers serving abroad be paid at the same rate as British officers in the Indian Army and that the Viceroy's commissioned officers and Indian soldiers serving abroad should be paid at the same rates as persons occupying corresponding positions in the British Army serving alongside the Indian Army. Moving his resolution, *Pandit Kunzru* said that his recent visit to the Middle East had made him realise the urgency of the question. The Indian officers there had strong feelings on this matter. Their salaries should not be compared with those of the British service officers, but with regular British officers belonging to the Indian army. Although their pay was smaller, their expenses in messes and otherwise were just the same as those of British officers. Even the special allowances given to them were not sufficient to make up the difference. As regards V.C.O.'s, he pointed out, that there was a great disparity between their pay and the pay of sergeants and warrant officers in the British army. The pay of a V.C.O. should be commensurate with the responsibility placed on him. The Pandit asked why there should be any difference in the remuneration of two persons serving together. The Indian officers in the Middle East had complained to him that they got less than even the Sudanese and the Singhalese. *Sir Bata Singh*, *Mr. Kalikar*, *Sir A. P. Patro*, *R. B. Lala Ram Saran Dass* and *Mr. Padshah* supported the resolution.

Declaring that no one was more concerned with the welfare and contentment of the Indian army than he was, *His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief* explained the factors which governed the pay of an army, and which were bound up with the economic situation in no small degree, and observed that the pay of an army could not be separated from the general conditions of economy in the country from which the soldiers came and from conditions of pay in civil life. Hasty generosity might defeat its own object and might bring in the end more discontentment. There was the financial aspect to consider, but he was not basing his argument on that. The matter of pay of Indian officers and soldiers would remain his constant care so long as he remained C-in-C. in India. It would be

his constant endeavour to reward Indian troops for their great deeds of gallantry. So far as the motive of the resolution was concerned, he was in entire sympathy, but the proposals it contained were only one part of the proposals that he was examining for the whole Indian army. It was well-known, he said, that discrepancies existed and had existed for some time, as a result of which—it was also common knowledge—some officers must have felt a certain amount of dissatisfaction. The mover did not urge the same rates of pay everywhere, but only in the Middle East command. After referring to the claims of those serving in Burma, Ceylon and Aden, who were also carrying the same burden as British soldiers, he said if larger scales were introduced for those serving overseas, it might create a difficult situation and those in India would naturally clamour. Proceeding, the C-in-C. said that without reasonable contentment, an army could not be efficient. But this contentment must be reached by means which were within bounds of reason. It might be difficult to gainsay the theory that men serving in the same field, doing the same kind of work, should receive the same remuneration. If the mover thought that the prestige of an army suffered because of lower pay, he was wrong. He asked the mover to withdraw the resolution in view of his assurance that he would constantly endeavour to improve the welfare and contentment of the Indian army. Replying to the debate, *Pandit Kunzru* said he could not regard the assurance as sufficient. He was, therefore, unable to withdraw the resolution. The resolution was lost by 24 vote to 10.

#### SOUTH AFRICAN PEGGING LEGISLATION

4th. AUGUST:—The Council of State discussed the South African Pegging legislation to day. Mr. G. S. *Buzman*, Secretary, Indian Overseas Department, initiating the discussion, said that the Government considered the legislation as repugnant, unnecessary and inopportune. He read short extracts from some of the speeches made on the Bill in the South African Parliament to indicate that at least some of the members of the Union Parliament also regarded the Bill as inopportune and repugnant. He claimed that people in South Africa were already aware of the keen resentment aroused in India by all shades of political thought and of the identity of views between the Government and the people in that respect. Mr. P. N. *Sapru*, Sir A. P. *Patel*, *Pandit Kunzru*, Mr. *Parkar*, Rai Bahadur *Srinarain Mahta*, Mr. *Padshah*, Rai Bahadur *Ram Saran Das*, Mr. *Kalika* and Sir *Charanjit Singh* participated in the debate.

Mr. *Sapru* who spoke with considerable feeling, charged the South African Government with definite breach of the Cape Town Agreement. He claimed that the living space in South Africa was very much less for Indians as compared to Europeans. Mr. *Sapru* was totally opposed to statutory segregation and wanted economic sanctions to be applied immediately against South Africa. He did not want any South African to command an Indian army and urged that the Government should impose all the social, political and economic disabilities on South Africans at present resident in India as those imposed on Indian settlers in South Africa. *Pandit Kunzru* wanted the Council to judge the issue against the background of India's war effort, testimony to which was paid by the Viceroy on Monday last. Indian soldiers, he said, were responsible for saving Africa and yet the attitude of the South African Government had remained unaltered. *Pandit Kunzru* said that the Cape Town Agreement had remained a dead letter and new devices were being discovered to drive Indians out of Africa. The Pegging Act closed further avenues for Indians to invest their savings. Pegging legislation, he claimed, would inflict serious economic injuries on Indians in South Africa. He urged that all South Africans in service should be sent away at once and economic sanctions should be enforced against South Africa forthwith.

Mr. *Mahta* was opposed to the withdrawal of the High Commissioner and regretted that the Government had not consulted the Standing Emigration Committee on the subject. Mr. *Padshah* supported economic sanctions on behalf of the Muslim League Party. He wanted the withdrawal of the Indian Army from Africa.

Rai Bahadur *Lala Ram Saran Das* said whenever two Governments fell out, the natural conclusion would be the breaking off of diplomatic relations. It might be said the Government of India in this case had put as much pressure as they could and presumably they could do no more, but they should recall their High Commissioner, as there should be complete severance of diplomatic and trade relations with South Africa. Mr. *Kalika* asked what the British Government had done to prevent the passage of the Pegging Bill and to see that Indians were not maltreated.

He said unless there were economic sanctions behind the action which the Government of India contemplated taking against South Africa, the white races could not be made to appreciate that Indians were also human beings. Winding up the discussion, Mr. *Bozman* said the result of the debate was highly satisfactory and Government felt that the purpose they had in mind in initiating this debate had been well-served by the discussion. Mr. *Bozman* did not like to express his or the Government of India's opinion on those suggestions at that stage, as he wished to avoid all appearance of supporting the Union Government. But, he said, all these suggestions would be carefully considered.

#### RECONSTITUTION OF HINDU LAW

5th. AUGUST :—Discussing non-official resolutions to-day, the Council of State adopted *R. B. Srinarain Mahtha's* resolution, recommending the reconstitution of the Hindu Law Committee for the purpose of suitably amending and codifying the Hindu law in all its branches. *R. B. Mahtha* referred to the Rau Committee's monumental work, which Government had also recognised. He asked why Government had not fulfilled their promises. Was it due to the addition of more reactionary members in the Executive Council, he asked. The Hindu society, Mr. *Mahtha* claimed, had held progressive views and had always adjusted itself to the changing needs of the times, assimilating certain things and eliminating others. Mr. *Mahtha* said that it was imperative that the entire law should be amended and codified in the light of modern needs. He maintained that the Hindu India was behind his resolution and Government would have the utmost backing in this task. Mr. *P. A. Supra* characterised the present social system to be responsible for having brought about the ruin of the country. He wanted the Hindu society to be based on modern democratic concepts and the ugly caste system done away with. He felt that the Hindu members in the Executive Council represented the most reactionary element not only in politics but in religious matters. He was, therefore, apprehensive of the fate of the report of a committee of the kind suggested in the resolution. Modern Hindu mind, he said, was for progress and modern Hindu mind would carry the whole country with it. *Sardar Sobha Singh* also urged on the Government to reappoint the committee. He maintained that interpretations and decisions of the High Courts and the Privy Council on various matters pertaining to the Hindu law, were so different and confusing that there was a radical need of the codification of the entire law and the completion of the work of the Rau Committee. Mr. *Kalihar* conceded that codification of the Hindu law might be necessary, but he entertained doubts if it would be practicable or even possible to have the whole law codified by a committee, working in normal manner, within three or even five years. He wanted the committee to be representative of all shades of Hindu opinion. As for amending the Hindu law, he was doubtful if a committee, holding particular views, could amend the law in a form that would be acceptable to the whole of India. He repudiated the claim that the modern Hindu mind had been able to change the mind of the masses. *Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das*, said that it was only when reformers in the legislature could carry the masses with them that their utterances would have any effect. He asked what the position would be if a majority community in a legislature decided to pull down all churches and carried their decision into effect. Just as there were safeguards in constitutions on the Continent against this type of action, he wanted the Indian constitution also to have similar safeguards for the interests of the minority communities and those who belonged to orthodox classes. He would not at that stage object to the formation of the committee, but desired that the committee should consist of all shades of opinion, including the orthodox. Mr. *Hossain Inam* said that it was not a resolution on which there could be any violent difference of opinion. It would be putting the cart before the horse, if the resolution was opposed on the assumption that some of the amendments suggested by the committee would not be acceptable to the Hindu society. Replying on behalf of the Government, Mr. *S. A. Lal*, Deputy Secretary, Legislative Department, said, the recommendation embodied in the resolution was one with which, in principle, he had the fullest sympathy. But Government would have to consider, whether a comprehensive codification of the Hindu law was a task to which it would be appropriate to devote time and labour during the war period. Government would, of course, pay due regard to the attitude of the House. In the circumstances, he believed, that the mover would perhaps seek leave of the House to withdraw the resolution. If the resolution was pressed to a division, Government would remain neutral, concluded

Mr. Lal, Pandit Kunzru held that the Government's reply indicated a departure in the attitude of the Government towards the question of the codification of the Hindu law in successive stages, to which it had committed itself in the preamble to the bill relating to Hindu Intestate Succession. Government had now chosen to be neutral, but he apprehended that they would soon go further and jettison the Hindu Intestate Succession Bill. Winding up the debate, Mr. Mahtha objected to the absence of the Law Member from the House on such an important occasion and expressed surprise at the change in the attitude of the Government. Nobody shouted 'no', when votes were taken, and the resolution was passed. The Council accepted the resolution of Mr. P. N. Saprú, recommending to the Government to represent to His Majesty's Government that an Agent to the Government of India be appointed in British Guiana and Trinidad to watch the Indian interests. The resolution was unanimously passed.

#### ALARMING POSITION OF HINDU CATTLE

6th. AUGUST :—The Council of State discussed Mr. Hossain Imam's resolution urging the import of meat from U. S. A. and Australia for the requirements of the defence services and also recommending the import of livestock from nearby countries for supply to the agriculturists at reduced prices to encourage the grow-more-food campaign. Sir Jogendra Singh, in the course of his speech, gave the assurance that his Department were anxiously watching the cattle position and that there was at present no real cause for alarm. As regards the recommendations made by the mover, Sir Jogendra pointed out, the need for such action had not arisen, but if it did, he was sure that the Food Member would give the recommendation every consideration. Upon this assurance the mover withdrew his resolution. In the course of the debate before the resolution was withdrawn, Mr. Hossain Imam said that the main background of the resolution was the large consumption of meat by foreign troops and prisoners of war in India. The number of cattle slaughtered now had risen by five times the peace-time number. Moreover in peacetime it was only the surplus cattle that was slaughtered, but now attractive prices were offered and the best cattle taken away for meat purposes. Not only were the agriculturists affected, but ghee and milk had also become scarce throughout India. He said 2,76,000 head of cattle were slaughtered in this country during the last year. He alleged that orders of the Central Government regarding protected cattle were not being carried out by the slaughterers notwithstanding the fact the slaughter of cattle was looked down upon by a large majority of the people of India. They could not carry out the grow-more-food campaign side by side with this slaughter. He, therefore, urged that in order to relieve the situation dehydrated meat should be imported from U. S. A. and Australia as also milk for the use of the troops and livestock be imported from neighbouring countries. R. B. Mahtha related conditions in the province of Bihar and said that the price of a pair of bullocks had gone up five times. It was useless to have campaigns like 'grow more food,' because any agriculturist, if he had land, cattle and money to purchase seed, would do his utmost for the crop. He did not know the shipping position, but he hoped the Government would do their best in the matter. R. B. Lala Ram Saran Das said that slaughter of cattle had begun in districts where there used to be no slaughter. Pure ghee was so scarce that it was not available even for religious ceremonies. Mr. P. N. Saprú apprehended that when the attack on Burma would be launched and more Allied forces came to India, the number of cattle slaughtered would increase. He criticised the non-publication of the health report during the last two years on the excuse of paper economy. Pandit Kunzru said that so far as he was aware Government had done nothing practical to increase livestock of the right kind as would increase the supply of ghee and milk in the country. As U. S. A. and Australia had flourishing meat trade, he felt, it would put on them a smaller strain than on this country to supply the meat requirements of the Government of India. The resolution was further supported by Mr. Padshah, Mr. Mahd. Hossain and Sir Bula Singh and Sir Hissam-ud-Din while Sir A. P. Patro did not approve of the proposal to import cattle from abroad as foreign bulls would not thrive in India. He urged that cattle breeding should be intensively developed with the material available in India. Sir Jogendra Singh, Member, Education, Health and Lands, expressed sympathy with the object of the resolution. Sir Jogendra laid stress on the need of proper nutrition for all the Indian people and said in a country like India, milk was the most important part of diet and the problem therefore was to increase India's milk supply. He announced that he was appointing a committee

to consider the public health in India and he was glad that Sir Joseph Bhore had agreed to preside over the committee. The mover withdrew the resolution and the Council adjourned till the 10th.

#### RECIPROCITY ACT AMEND BILL

10th. AUGUST :—The Council of State to-day passed, without amendment, the Reciprocity Act Amendment Bill as passed by the Legislative Assembly. Messrs. *Bozman, Kunzru, Padshah, Kalikar, Ramsurandas, Hossain Imam* and Doctor *Khare* participated in the discussion. Mr. *Bozman*, moving the consideration of the bill, explained that the Government had originally felt that they would be able to deal with the problem, such as had arisen from the South African Pegging Legislation, by the rule-making powers given to them by the original Act. He said that the bill was of general applicability and the Council would be well advised to deal with the bill without discussing the South African situation, which the House had already discussed. Pandit *Kunzru* was doubtful of the effectiveness of the legislation. He said that the crux of the problem lay whether they in India, could deprive any South African of his franchise. He maintained that they could not under the Government of India Act, 1935. The same thing applied to South Africans holding office in India. Under the Government of India Act, Indian legislatures were powerless to dismiss them, even if they wanted to do so. He urged that the Government should approach His Majesty's Government for amendment of the Government of India Act. This demand of Pandit *Kunzru* was supported by other speakers, all of whom urged that the Government of India Act should be amended forthwith to make retaliation against South Africa effective. Mr. *Bozman*, replying to the debate, pointed out that the bill was of general application and was not specifically directed against South Africa. He wanted the House to realise the likely repercussions of such a statutory provision in other parts of the Empire. He admitted the correctness of the position stated by Pandit *Kunzru* in regard to franchise and holding office under the Government of India Act and said that the Government had taken note of the views expressed in the House to day, particularly in regard to their approaching His Majesty's Government for an amendment of the Government of India Act. Dr. *Khare* said that the bill will be enforced at once. He admitted that it did not go a long way to deal with the problem facing them, but he wanted the Council to realise that India was a dependency, while South Africa was an independent dominion. There were all the disabilities resulting from the political status of India to which they must not shut their eyes. The Council passed the bill and adjourned till August 12.

#### DEBATE ON THE FOOD SITUATION

12th. AUGUST :—The Council of State discussed the food situation to-day. Major-General *Wood*, initiating the discussion, made a comprehensive survey of the food problem and examined the reasons for an insufficient degree of success of Government's policy in the last six months. General *Wood* postulated that whatever the food policy might be in the country, there was but one instrument and one machinery for the execution of that policy, namely, the administrative organisations of the provinces and States. He added :—"I wish to make it clear that not only have the Central Government no executive instrument on machinery for the execution of food administration, but that it would be improper for the Centre to attempt to build up such an instrument and impossible to do so, even were it deemed desirable to do so. He held that, while the Centre could plan, co-ordinate assist and direct, it was dependent for execution on the administrations of the provinces and States. It meant that the measure of success of food administration in India depended, in the aggregate and in the ultimate resort, on the efficiency or otherwise of food administration by the provinces and States. Side by side, General *Wood* stressed the importance of physical control as a basis for all other forms of control.

The first problem to be faced, he said, was how to secure an adequate flow of foodgrains. He would not grudge the cultivator the little extra that circumstances now permitted him to eat. There, however, remained the extremely difficult problem of ensuring that the cultivator did not withhold more than he required. In this connection General *Wood* felt that the big zamindars and landowners of this country had not appreciated the extent to which it had been put in their power to assist India in her food difficulties to-day. He added : "If the bigger man hoards his stock for a higher price it will not be without its effects on the smaller man. In this first stage of physical control, the big landowners and zamindars have a

responsibility. I am speaking in my personal capacity and I hope the future will show a better leadership than has been apparent in the last six months." Proceeding, General Wood said that the Central Government had the prime responsibility that must rest on the Centre alone of distributing the surplus of the provinces and States. He, however, explained that the portion that was handed over by the Central Government to a deficient province was but a small fraction of the totality of its requirements. Arguing from this, General Wood maintained that the salvation of a province or a State did not lie in a species of charity handed out by the Centre. The major portion of their salvation lay within their own boundaries. Dealing with Bengal, General Wood said that in addition to the assistance brought to Bengal by free trade, the Government of India had delivered to that province over one train a day of foodgrains from January 1 to July 31. To turn to the future, "Aus" crop was beginning to be harvested and would progressively come into the market during September. This rice crop, if shared at one pound per head per day, will provide fully for the requirements of the sixty million people of Bengal for upwards of ninety days if the domestic resources of the province were brought under some form of controlled distribution.

*Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Dass* condemned the present system of purchases by the Government and suggested that the whole crop should be purchased by the Government and then distribution made, in accordance with the advice of a committee of officials and publicmen, which should be constituted for the purpose. Lala Ram Saran also referred to a responsible Minister of the Punjab having lectured to Zamindars to hoard stocks and not to bring them to market, and asked what the Government of India had done to meet this open challenge to the Central Government. He wondered why no action had been taken.

*Mr. M. N. Datta* said the food situation in the country was very serious. Food riots once they started, he warned, might become a greater menace to India than even Japanese aggression. Mr. Datta asked the Government of India to give up all considerations of provincial autonomy, when the question of the life and death of so many people was before them, and also to lay aside excuses of lack of shipping space. Government should import foodgrains and also import more agricultural machinery.

*Sir Buta Singh* stated that in the Punjab agents coming from deficit provinces had been buying wheat freely at an average rate of about Rs. 10 per annum. The overhead charges of taking the same to distances of 1,000 miles came to about Rs. 2-8 per maund. He understood that flour in Calcutta was selling at Rs. 35 or above per maund. He, therefore, liked to ask the Government as to who pocketed the enormous difference between the buying price in the Punjab and the selling price in Calcutta. Proceeding, Sir Buta Singh said the Punjab would not like to sell cheaply to traders and so enable them to make enormous profits at the cost of the cultivator. If they could be assured that prices in deficit areas would be controlled and that dying people would get their food at actual purchase prices plus freight and essential minimum overhead charges, then this province would be happy to be selling at prices far below those prevailing in Bengal. He strongly refuted the charge that cultivators in the Punjab were hoarding wheat with a view to profiteering.

*Mr. S. K. Roy Chaudhury* said Bengal had fallen on very evil days. They had cyclones and floods and the crops were affected. He urged that famine should be declared in the province.

*Col. Sir Hissamuddin* asked the Government to consider the feasibility of gradually introducing free trade throughout India as the means of ensuring steady supply, thereby bringing down the general price level.

*Sir David Devadoss* complained that Government had been all along under the impression that food was no problem for India. Even the Rationing Expert, recently brought from England before he literally landed in the country, expressed his opinion that there was no shortage, but the country suffered from hoarding. Where are the hoarded stocks, asked Sir David. Had Government discovered them and had they punished the hoarders? He referred to the serious outbreak of cholera in Malabar and other parts of the Madras presidency and said owing to malnutrition, the people had no stamina to resist the disease. He said it was time that Government stopped thinking of prestige and rules and regulations. They should rush food to the distress areas, and import foodstuffs from outside to meet the shortage in the country.

*Sir A. P. Patro* regretted that while both the urban and rural population were suffering, a certain class of people were taking advantage of the situation and exploiting it to their own ends. He failed to find a proper appreciation of the condition in the rural areas in the speeches of the Food Member in the Assembly and the Food Secretary in the Council this morning. He urged the Central Government to strongly advise the provinces to move in the matter and relieve distress in the rural areas.

*Sir Jogendra Singh*, Member, Education, Health and Lands, said: We complain of high prices of foodstuffs. The fact is that we, the educated classes, have done little to improve rural conditions and to modernise production. We have been caught by the war with the result that normal channels of trade have ceased to flow. *Sir Jogendra* announced that his department were preparing material for committees which would plan a programme of rural reconstruction. The Educational Adviser was engaged in collecting material for a programme of education, both literary and technical. An agricultural committee would be at work from about November 1, this year.

*Mr. Hossain Imam* deplored that the Food Department which was essentially responsible for maintaining the home front had been made a shuttle cock. He felt that they could not get a fair deal when there was no security of tenure for the members holding the portfolio. Referring to the present crisis, *Mr. Hossain Imam* asserted that as much as Rs. 3.15 lakhs worth of foodgrains had been expected during March on private account, the figures for April, being Rs. 3.54 lakhs. The export of foodgrains during 1942-43 were worth Rs. 47 crores.

*The Maharajkumar of Nashipur* claimed that export of rice from India and storage of food for the defence services had contributed to the present situation. In his opinion purchase of the whole stock by the Government and distribution to the entire population of the province by a system of control and rationing was the only remedy to meet the situation in Bengal.

*Messrs. Kumar Shankar Ray Chowdhury, Ali Ashgar and N. K. Das* also participated in the debate. *Mr. Das* complained that Orissa had suffered by sudden introduction of free trade. Large number of people from the neighbouring province of Bengal invaded his province and bought up stock at high prices. He disputed the claim that Orissa was a surplus province.

13th. AUGUST :—*Mr. N. K. Das*, continuing his speech from yesterday, said there were visible signs of scarcity in Orissa also. He considered that the situation in Bengal had arisen on account of natural calamities, exports to Ceylon and huge military purchases. He stressed the need of a vigorous policy in respect of the grow-more-food campaign. *Sir Ramani Menon* said that while he thought that the Central Government could not be held solely responsible for past mistakes, no useful purpose would be served in trying to apportion blame. The immediate task was to direct all efforts to solve the problem.

*Mr. B. S. K. Das* said that it was due to lack of foresight on the part of the Government that Bengal had been placed in its present position. He had seen people in Calcutta going through the contents of the dustbins in search of a few pieces of food. He admitted that the military had to be properly fed, but they should make purchases in excess of their needs, especially in these days of distress. He wanted the Government of India to declare famine in Bengal and institute control over stocks and prices.

*Pandit Hirdaynath Kunzru* asserted that it was the want of a food policy by the Government of India which was responsible for the present food crisis in the country. Referring to the constitutional issue, the Pandit said that the Government of India were not so helpless as they made the people believe. He said surely if the Government were all powerful to keep *Mr. Gandhi* in detention and prevent all contacts with him, they could also compel the Provincial Governments to follow their central food policy. He referred to the amendments of the Government of India Act and declaration of emergency by the Governor-General after the outbreak of the war. The powers given to the Governor-General, he said, were intended to be used in a crisis like that of food and he failed to understand why they were not being used. The Pandit urged for a radical change in the Government of India's policy to secure better co-operation with the people and provinces of India. The establishment of National Government would solve the problem, he said. He wanted a central purchasing agency with a businessman at its head and urged that the Government should set aside legal difficulties and stand up as the Government of the country and not merely as the servant of provincial Governments.

An earnest appeal for co-operation and help was made by the new Food Member, *Sir Jawala Prosad Srivastava*. He said : "In the name of our country, I appeal, may I demand co-operation and help ? In this task, without the help of my colleagues, without the fullest co-operation of the public and their leaders and their Government, nothing can be accomplished. I will not spare myself or my department, in seeking the job through.. He continued : "I wish to democratize the department in the sense that it must work in accordance with the wishes of the people, for whose benefit it exists. At the same time, it will not hesitate to reinforce ruthlessly any measure which may be necessary and to crush any individual or corporation who seek to profit from the sufferings of the many. I will not hesitate to enforce an all-India policy in a vital matter of this kind. I am determined not to give in to complacency or defeatism. With God's help I promise that nothing will be left undone to get the results that the country demands. And I am sure that I have your support and co-operation in this tremendous task (cheers). As for importing foodgrains into India, he said that he entirely agreed with the suggestions and would use his best endeavours for that purpose. He disclosed that *Mis Majesty's* Government had been approached on the subject. He however warned the Council that the matter did not rest with him. The provision of shipping and foreign exchange were some of the difficulties but he said that he would do his best. Similarly, the provision of more consumers' goods for the cultivator was having his fullest support. Lastly, he welcomed the suggestion that landlords and those who had a stake in the countryside should take a larger and more direct interest in the growing and procurement of food and it was his intention to see how best they could harness them to that end.

Control and more control until complete rationing was achieved was the policy of the Government of India, declared *Major-General Wood*, Food Secretary, winding up the debate. This plan of the Government has been unfolded to the public and he was at a loss to understand why Government were being accused of not disclosing their future plan. *Major-General Wood* made reference to free-trade and said that it should be recognised that it did not necessarily mean the free buying and selling of goods ; it also meant freedom in the matter of transport, availability of transport and other considerations and to talk of free trade in conditions that obtained in war and as applying in this country was a misnomer. It could be only a partial free trade and under it, the easiest outlet the longest purse, would win. The Council then adjourned.

#### EXPORT OF RICE FROM CALCUTTA

14th. AUGUST :—In the Council of State to-day, the Chairman, *Sir David Devadoss*, who presided in the absence of the President, *Sir Mameckji Dadabhoj* said that he could not admit *Mr. V. V. Katiker's* adjournment motion to discuss the failure of the Government to stop export of a large consignment of rice from Calcutta to South Africa. *Sir David* explained that a chairman had all the powers of the President only inside the House, but had no authority to admit questions, resolutions and adjournment motions, notice of which was usually given before the House met. He, therefore, could not admit the adjournment motion, which was tabled just before the meeting started to-day. He would leave it to the discretion of the President and the motion, if admitted, could come up at the next meeting. Adjourning the House till Friday, the Chairman said that if an earlier meeting was desired, members would be notified.

#### DELHI UNIVERSITY BILL

25th AUGUST :—The Council of State took up the consideration of the Delhi University Bill to-day, as passed by the Central Assembly. The Education member, *Sir Jogindra Singh* making the motion claimed that the fundamental educational principles which found sanction in the Bill had not been challenged ; and the controversy ranged round other aspects which had no direct relation with education. The main object of the Bill and of the reorganisation scheme, he said, was to create in Delhi, the capital city, an All-India University of the first rank, which would set a standard for other universities to follow. Proceeding, *Sir Jogindra Singh* said that the most important feature of the Bill was the three-year degree course. The advantages of such a change were obvious. It would give the high schools a higher standard of scholarship and better qualified teachers ; it would give the universities better prepared and generally more mature students. *Sir Ramunni Menon* strongly opposed the creation of the All-India University at Delhi on the immense scale, which as far as he could gather, was contemplated in the Delhi University scheme, when vast areas of illiteracy remained in India, requiring to be reclaimed. He said

that it would be absolutely unjustifiable to spend the tax-payers' money on what could be characterised as "white elephant in academic robes" in Delhi. Mr. *Hoosain Imam* criticised the Government for not circulating the Bill and not referring it to a joint select committee of both the Houses. Mr. *P. N. Saprú* could not complain that the Bill was not timely or opportune. He, however, felt that a prejudice had been created against the Bill from the outset. The Bill did not only give effect to the three-year degree course, but changed the character and the constitution of the University.

**31st. AUGUST :—**The Council of State passed the Delhi University Bill to-day. Thirty two amendments were discussed to-day, all of which were rejected by the Council. On the amendment relating to colleges being situated in close proximity to one another and to the University, Mr. *John Sargent* declared that the University would give the most sympathetic consideration to the question of conveyance for non-resident students. Moving that the Bill be passed, Sir *Jogindra Singh* said : "As days pass and a new world takes shape it is my hope that communities in all spheres of life will take their proper share as sons of India". Mr. *P. N. Saprú* stressed the importance of Indian languages and physical education. Mr. *Kalíkar* criticised the lack of provision for migration of students. *Sardar Bahadur Sobha Singh* criticised the attitude of the Muslim League on the Bill. Mr. *Padshah* asserted that the hopes expressed by the Government would not be realised unless the legitimate rights of the minorities were adequately safeguarded in the University. Mr. *Hossain Imam* hoped that the Government would not sleep over the demands of minorities but would soon translate their undertaking into a reality. Pandit *Kunzru* urged that the Government should bring in necessary legislation to give statutory status to the Board of Secondary Education in Delhi. Sir *Jogindra Singh*, winding up the discussion, declared that he had been pleading that the Centre must have control over education and he would do his best to secure funds for education in the country. The Bill was passed.

#### FOOD SITUATION IN BENGAL.

The Council devoted the rest of the afternoon to discussing Pandit *Kunzru's* adjournment motion relating to the Central Government's ban on the publication of Dr. S. P. Mookerji's statement on the food situation in Bengal. Pandit *Kunzru*, making his motion, referred to the recent publication by the '*Statesman*' of pictures of Bengal distress over foodgrains. If the Government of India, he argued, did not desire publication of any news concerning Bengal distress, why did they permit the publication of pictures by the '*Statesman*' which had created deep impression on the minds of the Indian public. Pandit *Kunzru* claimed that Dr. Mookerji's statement was not such as would have created panic in the country. He deplored the lack of uniformity of censorship. Mr. *Kalíkar* was likewise surprised that when photographs were allowed to be published why should the Government have banned the publication of Dr. Mookerji's statement? Mr. *P. N. Saprú* asserted that the Government had not taken any effective step to relieve distress in Bengal. Mr. *Hossain Imam* claimed that the statement of Dr. Mookerji was most improper. Dr. Mookerji tried to make political capital even out of the distress of the people. At the same time he could not condone the Government for letting pictures of Bengal distress be published and ban the publication of the statement. Mr. *S. Roy Chowdhury* and Rai Bahadur *Ram Saran Das* further supported the motion. Rai Bahadur *Ram Saran Das* asked the Government why were they sleeping after the Burma rice supplies had been cut off. The Government should have preserved rice supplies, instead of exporting it to countries outside India. The Home Secretary, Mr. *Conran Smith*, replying to the debate, referred to members criticising the food policy instead of confining their remarks to the motion before the House. Mr. *Hossain Imam*, for instance, he said had condemned the statement of Dr. Mookerji and at the same time had asked the Government to get out. He did not know which Government he meant.

Mr. *Hossain Imam* : Government of India.

Mr. *Roy Chowdhury* : No, the Bengal Government must get out first.

Referring to Dr. Mookerji's statement, Mr. *Conran-Smith* said that a summary of the statement was put out by the leading news agencies. The Chief Press Adviser, when he saw the full text of the statement, was of the opinion that it contained certain objectionable passages, which exploited the food situation for political purpose. The Chief Press Adviser, therefore, advised the newspapers not to publish the statement outside Bengal. The summary of the statement, however, was published in many newspapers. There were passages in the statement to

which no objection could be taken and it was significant that only such passages were published in two of Bengal papers, namely the '*Hindustan Standard*' and '*Advance*.' Mr. Conran-Smith referred to the "Muslim correspondent of the '*Statesman*,'" who had described the statement as heavily loaded against the Bengal Ministry without any concrete and helpful suggestion for the relief of the Bengal distress. No member of the House, said the Home Secretary, had made any concrete suggestion for the Bengal Relief. Government had no objection to statements being published on the Bengal situation, but in the present times of war, utmost care and restraint was essential for the safety of the country. Nothing should be done to endanger the safety of the country. Mr. *Padshah* did not feel justified to support an attack on the Bengal Ministry. The motion was talked out and the Council adjourned '*sine die*.'

## Autumn Session—New Delhi—15 to 24 November 1943

### MONETARY HELP TO BENGAL

The autumn session of the Council of State commenced at New Delhi on the 15th. November 1943 and continued till the 24th. November. The President read His Excellency the Viceroy's message to the Legislature. This was in terms similar to the one sent to the Assembly on the opening day. The members of the Progressive and Muslim League parties remained seated.

**17th. NOVEMBER :—**The Council of State discussed non-official resolutions today. Mr. *Hossain Imam*'s resolution urging a grant of Rs. 1 crore or more to Bengal to meet the present emergency of food shortage occupied the House for the better part of the day. Mr. *Hossain Imam* was supported by Mr. *Padshah*, *Kumar Shankar Roy Chawdhury* and *Rai Bahadur Srinarain*. *Sir A. P. Patro* and Mr. *Dalal* opposed the resolution while Mr. *J. H. Burder* felt that the resolution was premature. Mr. *C. E. Jones*, Finance Secretary, did not agree with Mr. *Hossain Imam* that sympathy with Bengal did not mean anything unless it was accompanied with money. Mr. *Jones* wanted the Council to visualise the effect of pouring money into famine-affected areas of Bengal. It would lead to further inflation, he said. The problem in Bengal was to get on with the job. It would be premature to say that the Centre would step in and meet the deficit in Bengal budget, he said. The resolution was withdrawn.

The Council next passed Mr. *P. N. Saprú*'s resolution asking the Government to keep in view the necessity of finding funds for educational expansion and public health improvement in India. Mr. *Saprú* had originally urged for the building up of a reconstruction fund for the purpose, but when the Government spokesmen, Mr. *C. E. Jones* explained Government difficulties in accepting the principle of making bloc allocations for individual purposes at this juncture, Mr. *Saprú* altered the text of his resolution and the House agreed to pass it in the amended form. The amended resolution instead of advancing a proposal for a reconstruction fund, urged the Government "to keep in view the necessity of finding funds for the purpose".

Before adjournment *Pandit Kunzru* moved his resolution urging the removal of restrictions on the publication of news not relating to the war and in particular news relating to the internal political conditions and the economic well-being of the people.

### DEBATE ON THE FOOD SITUATION

**19th. NOVEMBER :—**The Council of State began the three-day debate on food situation in the country to-day. Mr. *B. R. Sen*, initiating discussion, traced the history of food crisis in Bengal and the steps the Central Government had taken to meet the crisis. The key to the problem in Bengal is not so much what we can send from outside : and under the most favourable conditions we can send only limited quantities compared to the total production which is available within the province ; but the extent to which we are able to restore public confidence which has yet to recover from the shocks it had received and get the marketable surplus of the local produce resume its normal flow." On the question of procurement Mr. *Sen* disclosed that the Government of India intend to examine the possibility of establishing central foodgrains monopoly which was recognised to be the only completely satisfactory solution. Meanwhile procurement for domestic requirements and for export must continue to be carried out by Local Government agencies under general supervision. Mr. *Sen* declared that the Government of India were watching with equal care the situation in other seriously deficit areas in India,

such as Travancore, Cochin, Deccan States and Bombay, the Ceded Districts of Madras and the cyclone-affected districts of Orissa and were taking all possible relief measures for them.

*Sir A. P. Patro* regretted that famine had been made the sport of politics in Bengal. He thought the two parties were fighting for power and the result was that the people were starving. It was a crime to gamble with human lives and the country's safety. He said that the provincial Government having proved inefficient, the military ought to have been requested to assist many months ago.

*Sir Sobha Singh* said the Bengal famine had exposed the constitutional defects inherent in the Government of India Act 1935. By becoming autonomous units, the provincial Governments had become self-sufficient and insular in their outlook, regardless of the good of the country. He suggested that the greater part of the land under Jute cultivation should be switched over to the rice crop.

*Dr. H. N. Kunzru* in a speech lasting an hour and a half, gave an account of the scenes he had witnessed in Bengal and Orissa, and observed that if the truth had been told earlier, the situation would not have deteriorated to the extent it did. Whoever had controlled the news about Bengal, had done a very serious injustice to that province. *Dr. Kunzru* emphasised that His Majesty's Government should arrange to supply to India a million and a half tons of foodgrains, as had been suggested in the Gregory Report, and unless that was done, the Gregory plan, he thought, would break down.

Both the Fazlul Haque and Nazimuddin Ministries did not comprehend the magnitude of the calamity that was approaching, said *Dr. Kunzru*. It was clear that up to July the ministers, according to their public statements, did not realise the gravity of the situation. The speaker put the estimate of deaths at much more than 50,000 per week in Bengal alone, and said: "Winter is fast approaching and famished and weakened people, unable to stand exposure to cold, will die in greater numbers, unless immediate steps are taken to provide them with warm clothing." The aman crop, *Dr. Kunzru* hoped, would greatly mitigate suffering, but there were yet two months more before it would be available. He warned that if any attempt was made to purchase a large part of this crop and the people made to feel that the Government were removing the crop to Calcutta or elsewhere, a more serious situation would arise. *Dr. Kunzru* thought that the Government of India would have taken direct and immediate interest in the situation, had famine occurred in the "martial" Punjab. Further, the Bengalis were too quiet and submissive a people. "Had they asserted their will to live, I am sure, their troubles would have been attended to earlier." *Dr. Kunzru* strongly urged the Government to formulate special plans and take special measures to rehabilitate those unfortunate people who had been reduced to beggary. He did not find any reference to this aspect of the problem in the Government statements made so far. He asked the Government to explain what had happened to the proposal of rationing Calcutta. In his opinion all towns in Bengal with a population of 25,000 or over should be rationed. As regards the transport of food into the districts, much more energetic measures had to be taken. There was nothing to indicate that any special effort was being made to co-ordinate various methods of transport and to make full use of the waterways of Bengal. He emphasised the need of bringing down the prices of foodstuffs to the ordinary requirements of villagers and stressed the implementation of the Gregory recommendations with regard to the adequate supply of manure and importation of tractors etc. Turning to the question of provincial autonomy, *Dr. Kunzru* observed, "We have thought too much of the independence of the Provinces and too little of the welfare of the people." The constitutional technicalities should not stand in the way. The question of food supply should be tackled as a whole and no province should be free to deal with it as it likes. He suggested the appointment of an agricultural committee to lay down plans and co-ordinate the efforts of the provincial Governments in carrying them out. He believed in the economic unity of India and unless this unity was maintained, he said "we shall face greater disasters than any hitherto." He asked everyone to take account of the warning that there would be a general food shortage all over the world after the war. Earlier in his speech, *Dr. Kunzru* referred to famine in the other parts of India, namely, Malabar, Travancore, and Orissa, and said that distress in these parts had been overshadowed by the distress in Bengal. He asked the Government of India "to revise the quota exports from Orissa, determine the province's needs sympathetically and adopt measures for the restoration of normal conditions there."

20th. NOVEMBER :—Theoretically, at any rate a country such as India, with a comparatively small percentage of deficit, should not have to rely on other countries for food, certainly not for grain. Either by increasing production or by decreasing consumption, it is our duty to balance our account," declared Mr. R. H. Parker, opening the second day's famine debate to-day. "As it is necessary to plan for years ahead, it is by no means too late for the Government to introduce rationing in Delhi as an example, and I hope that they will do." Referring to the statements in the press and in the Assembly about him as "an honest Briton who has confessed to the crime of hoarding," Mr. Parker pleaded guilty to the accusation of honesty, but not to the crime of hoarding for, the kind of hoarding to which he made reference in the House during the last debate was the very necessary and proper organisation of food supplies for employees. The pity, he said, was that the Government failed to do for the people generally what certain employees did do for their employees.

Mr. M. B. Dalal declared that the only possible short-term method of relieving distress was importation and equitable distribution. He warned the Government that Bombay was not out of danger yet and if there were not sufficient reserve for other provinces, Bombay's fate might be the same as Bengal's. Emphasising the need for increased production in the country, Mr. Dalal urged the formation of something in the nature of a "land army," with modern equipment, to produce more food, and recommended large-scale subsidies to producers.

Mr. P. N. Saprú said the central question was that when it was found that the provinces had their own views in the matter of food, what did the Government of India do to see that its policies were enforced? One could not get away from the fact that the Central Government and Indian members of that Government failed in their duty to inform His Majesty's Government of the real state of affairs. He strongly criticised the Fazlul Haq as well as the Nazimuddin Ministry. The whole story regarding Bengal was one of muddle, bungling and desire to stick to office on the part of everyone concerned, he said.

Mr. Hossain Imam, at this stage, placed before Mr. Saprú a newspaper containing the explanation to which he had referred earlier. Mr. Saprú took the newspaper and flung it impatiently aside, whereupon Mr. Hossain Imam excitedly explained, "This attitude of mind is responsible for India's slavery."

Mr. Saprú went on to declare that it was not speeches but action that would make the Moslem League Party respected. He emphasised that for a considerable period, the Food Department was under the control of Lord Linlithgow and it is a strange commentary that the Viceroy did not visit Bengal, Mr. Saprú supposed that Lord Linlithgow's desire probably was that his successor might get credit for having done what he did not do himself, because on the political side there was not much to be expected.

Mr. V. V. Kaliker thought that the present calamity in Bengal has occurred on account of mal-administration by the provincial Government, inaction on the part of the Government of India and neglect of the British Government. Mr. Kaliker urged that if surplus provinces did not carry out the policies of the Government of India, they should be forced to do so, and for this purpose, even amendments should be made in the Government of India Act. Confidence in Bengal could only be restored if there was a coalition ministry in that province, representative of all groups and parties, as had been suggested by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee.

The Maharaja of Darbhanga complained that people connected with agriculture had never been consulted seriously and Government always looked to the West and not to this country for curing India's ills. Government experiments, he said, had been signal failures. He emphasised the need of making full use of the administrative machinery of the landlords, which keeps close and direct touch with the cultivators. These indigenous agencies would be much more efficient than Government officials, both in the matter of procurement and distribution. He trusted that Government would stop pumping out paper currency into the country and adopt fiscal devices to check inflation.

Sir Gopalaswamy Aiyengar severely criticised the mortality statistics in Bengal and claimed that even if the figure of 58,000 cited by the Food Member were correct, it was too staggering a figure for the country. He referred to past famines in one of which he himself was an administrative officer and said that arrangements were such that not a single life was lost on account of starvation. It was an administrative scandal of the first magnitude and should be thoroughly probed.

*Sir Buta Singh* said that requisitioning in a province like the Punjab would definitely do more harm than good and, if compulsion were employed, the food-grains would disappear again. *Sir Buta Singh* said : "The impression is growing that the financial policy of the Government of India is to deprive the cultivators of their legitimate dues, that it is anti-industrial and the development of industry has been choked in the name of deflation. The impression is gaining strength and may have serious repercussions.

The Agriculture Member, *Sir Jogendra Singh* dwelt on the progress of the "Grow More Food" campaign. The Agriculture Member claimed that the cultivated land was already over-crowded and "salvation of India lay in diverting at least" 30 per cent of rural population to industries. This brought him to the question of industrialisation, for which purpose, he said, it was necessary that there should be a rise in the purchasing power of the masses. He agreed that there should be an all-India plan for education and agriculture, but constitutional difficulties stood in the way of the Centre dictating to provinces on those subjects. The whole thing, he claimed, depended on money and they should do their best to make money more productive. He warned the house that the foundation of life in India rested on agriculture for which planning was urgently needed. He argued for constructive programme for agriculture in this country.

*Mr. M. L. Das* dwelt on conditions in Assam, which, he said, were acute. He urged that the Government of India should take the situation in Assam into serious consideration and take steps to give relief. *Mr. Padshah* supported the amendment asking for the appointment of a Royal Commission to enquire into all the allegations and charges and counter-charges hurled by different bodies and persons. The House then adjourned.

**23rd. NOVEMBER :—**On the third day of the debate, *Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava*, Food Member, referring to the demand for enquiry, reiterated his statement made in the Assembly that the Government could not accede to the proposal at the present time. He was prepared to accept the amendment tabled by *Mr. Parker*. The Food Member said : "We have been in closest consultation with the Government of Bengal on their 'Aman' procurement scheme and we have come to the following conclusions :—Although there is in prospect a very large crop, it may be that fear for the future will operate to influence cultivators to hold on their stocks and not bring them freely to market. We consider, therefore, that one of our primary objects in dealing with this matter should be to endeavour to re-establish confidence in the countryside that no undue demand going to be made on the cultivators own necessary supplies. To this end, we propose to reduce to the minimum the amount which the Government procurement agency will be forced to procure in the early stages of the season and for that reason we propose to continue the importation of foodgrains into Bengal in quantities equivalent to the requirements of Calcutta. Supplies to deficit districts will be made by linking traders in the deficit district for the purpose of procurement of specific quotas from surplus districts. It will, therefore, remain for the Government purchasing agency to procure only requirements of essential services outside Calcutta, of any rationed areas outside Calcutta, and a certain quantity for a provincial reserve to meet emergent demand. The Government procurement organization will, in effect, exert no undue pressure on the market. The main danger to the success of such a system is speculative buying. This is proposed to be controlled by rigorous reinforcement of the Foodgrains Control Order and the control of movement. The Government of Bengal intend to encourage the cultivator to bring his surplus to the market by a widespread propaganda campaign and every endeavour will also be made to make available in the rural areas greater supply of consumers goods.

Referring to rehabilitation of distress areas, the Food Member, pressing his personal views said : "We must be prepared to assist these people, in case of necessity, with loans or gratuitous help in securing cattle, utensils, clothing and implements for their livelihood." As for rationing in Delhi, *Sir Jwala Prasad* said that they had already taken up the question, and their rationing adviser had consultations with the Delhi authorities. It was their intention to introduce rationing on full scale in this city, from the Viceroy downwards, as soon as the scheme could be prepared and put into execution.

*Mr. Hossain Imam* would not like to make political capital out of Bengal's tragedy. Framing his charge sheet for the present Bengal crisis, he placed the Bengal press in the forefront and accused it for not disclosing the correct facts till the League Ministry came into office. Then it was too late, he said. *Mr. Imam* charged *Fazl-ul-Huq-Mookerji* combine, with conspiracy of silence and for

mishandling the situation. He coupled the Governor of Bengal with them for not disclosing the real facts of the Bengal situation. He said that the Governor of Bengal had full facts before him and he should have known what was in store for Bengal. Mr. N. R. Sarkar, the first Food Member also, he said, joined the conspiracy of silence. Lastly, he criticised the conduct of the person who held the food portfolio after Mr. Sircar had resigned. Proceeding, he criticised the Transport Department, which had failed to secure ships even on the Indian water. Some of these ships, he alleged, were plying for pilgrim traffic between Egypt and Arabia, instead of carrying food for this country.

*Pandit Kunzru* : What about the part played by the present ministry from May to July? The present Ministry took steps to prevent newspapers from publishing news about Bengal.

*Mr. Hossain Imam* : "I will deal with that in my own time." He asserted that the storm broke up on April 24 when the present ministry took office. Proper signals were given to start all sorts of propaganda to discredit the ministry. Mr. Hossain Imam wanted the House to stand up with him against any attack on provincial autonomy. He claimed that the recent orders under Section 126 A on the Sind Government to maintain its price control was an attack on provincial autonomy.

*Mr. P. N. Saprú* : "Why does not the Sind Government resign on that issue?"

*Mr. Hossain Imam* : "We stick to our guns. You resigned and now you come before the Government begging for the release of your leaders. We are more realistic."

*Pandit Kanzru* : "You stick to offices."

Making his concrete suggestions, *Mr. Hossain Imam* said that the price of agricultural products should not be fixed arbitrarily. The Government should fix only floor and ceiling prices and leave exact determination of prices to the provinces. Furthermore, the price fixation by the centre should be done in consultation with the interests concerned. The Central Government should also disclose its own procurement plans. Lastly he wanted a reduction in acreage under jute cultivation and a cess to improve irrigation in Western Bengal.

*Rai Bahadur Ramsarandas* wanted to know why the consignments of foodgrains to India were stopped in last summer. Referring to the Punjab, he said that the prices had risen there because the Government failed to import foodgrains. Regarding the "grow-more-food" campaign, he regretted that while the campaign was on, the agricultural implements and cattle had become scarce. He urged that the Government should take land revenue both in cash and kind and the Government should speed up imports of foodgrains into India.

*Mr. B. R. Sen*, winding up the debate, denied the allegations that to meet the needs of Bengal the interests of the people of certain districts of Orissa, affected by cyclone, had been sacrificed. He said that the most hopeful aspect of the local situation was the bumper "Aman" crop, the harvesting of which had already commenced. Referring to the army purchases, Mr. Sen said that the total requirements of the defence services amounted to 6,51,000 tons a year, of which wheat constituted 5,00,000 tons and rice 1,50,000 tons. In other words the requirements of the defence services amounted to only 1.2 per cent of the total production of foodgrains of India. It was not a net addition to the demand on Indian resources. The Indian soldier would have eaten even if he remained in the village, though as a soldier he might eat a little more. Mr. Sen dwelt on the four principal recommendations of the Gregory report. They were the basic plan, procurement, statutory price control and rationing. Mr. Sen, referring to the basic plan said that they would, in a few days, be sending out a more firm statement of the provisional Khariff plan. As for procurement, they had been scrutinising procurement scheme prepared by the local Governments. Referring to rationing, Mr. Sen explained that in the Madras Presidency rationing was already in force in the Madras City, Malabar, Salem, Coimbatore, Saidapet and Vizagapatam, and was contemplated in the Nilgiris, and Tinnevely. In the Bengal Presidency the rationing schemes were already in operation in Dacca, Faridpur, Serajgunj. In Calcutta and the surrounding industrial areas rationing would be introduced in the very near future. In Bihar it had been decided to introduce rationing as soon as possible in no less than fifteen of the main towns and industrial areas in Bihar. In Sind arrangements were complete for the introduction of rationing in Karachi. In U. P. rationing of up to 60 per cent of the population of all larger towns was already in operation. It was intended that the scheme at present in force should be expanded to cover 100 per

cent of the urban population in the near future. In the Delhi Province it was the intention of the Government of India to introduce rationing in Delhi City in the near future. In Orissa rationing was already in force in Cuttack and Sambalpur. In Assam certain articles not including rice, were rationed in Shillong. In the O.P. in Nagpur an incomplete rationing scheme was already in force. In the N-W-F.P. rationing was in force in Peshawar. In Baluchistan Quetta-Pishin was a rationed area. The information available regarding rationing in the Indian States was also incomplete, but rationing was in force in Cochin, Travancore, Indore, Bhopal, Gwalior, Junagadh, Dewas, Cutch, Rajkot, Vithal-Gadh State. In Mysore rationing was to be introduced in both urban and rural areas. Mr. Sen also disclosed that the question of price control in the Punjab had been engaging their close attention.

The Council adopted Mr. Parker's amendment by 24 votes against 19 and adjourned. Mr. Parker's amendment runs as follows : "And at a suitable date an enquiry should take place to examine the whole question of the food shortage in India and in particular in Bengal. The enquiry should be conducted by a suitable body of the type of a Royal Commission and its personnel should be completely outside the field of Indian politics. Its terms of reference should cover a full examination of the present food shortage and the making of recommendations to prevent the recurrence of the existing distress."

#### MODIFICATION OF CRIPPS PROPOSALS

24th. NOVEMBER :—The Council of State to-day adopted Mr. G. S. Motilal's resolution, recommending the Government to convey a request to His Majesty's Government to modify the Cripps proposals so as to make them acceptable to the people of India.

#### CHARGES AGAINST DETENUS

The Home Member stated on Pandit H. N. Kunzru's resolution asking for revision of cases by High Court judges and furnishing detenues with charges against them, that the Government would be able to announce within a month their decision regarding the furnishing of charges against detenues. The matter was under the active consideration of the Government. He was not opposed to the examination of cases by advisory committees but said that it was not difficult to constitute such committees which would consist of men of both judicial and executive experience. The Council at this stage adjourned *sine die*.

## The Central Legislative Assembly

### Monsoon Session—New Delhi—26th. July to 25th. August, 1943

The Central Legislative Assembly began its monsoon session at New Delhi on the 26th July 1943 with Sir *Abdur Rahim*, President, in the chair. Sir *Azizul Haque*, Sir *A. K. Roy* and Dr. *N. B. Khare*, the three new members of the Executive Council took the oath amid cheers.

#### 16 ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS FAIL

Sixteen adjournment motions fell through, some being disallowed by the Chair, one by the Governor-General, and one for want of a sufficient number of supporters, while a large number relating to food were dropped in view of Sir *Azizul Haque's* announcement that a day would be given to the discussion of the food situation as a whole. Dr. *Khare*, Indian Overseas Member, also announced that a day would be set aside for discussion of the situation arising from the South African Pegging Act. Mr. Govind Deshmukh's adjournment motion on the same subject was therefore withdrawn.

Among motions disallowed by the Chair was one by *Sardar Sant Singh* who sought to discuss Government's refusal to forward Mahatma Gandhi's letter to Mr. *Jinnah*. The Home Member objecting to the motion pointed out that a similar motion was discussed in the last session when Government's policy with regard to correspondence with Mr. *Gandhi* was explained and it was stated that this policy had been in existence for a considerable time. The subject of the present motion

was therefore not a new or urgent matter. The Chair held that the motion did not raise any new or urgent matter. The Chair announced that the Governor-General had disallowed the same member's motion to discuss the Government of India's refusal to permit Mr. *Phillips* to meet Mr. *Gandhi*.

#### RECIPROCITY ACT AMEND. BILL

Among official Bills introduced was one by Dr. *N. B. Khare* to amend the Reciprocity Act of 1943, in order that an Act, which it is pointed out is virtually unworkable in practice, may be made effective and in order to carry out the intention of the legislature in passing that Act. The issue of a notification under the Act does not automatically cut down rights and privileges enjoyed in India by persons domiciled in the notified British possession. No provision is made in the Act for the breach of any directions or obligations imposed under any rules which might be framed under the Act. The amending Bill seeks to remove these defects.

#### OTHER OFFICIAL BILLS INTRODUCED

*Sir Jeremy Raisman*, Finance Member, introduced a Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to Government securities issued by the Central Government and to the management of the Reserve Bank of India of the Public Debt of the Central Government.

Dr. *Ambedkar* introduced a Bill to amend the Indian Boilers Act and a Bill to amend the Motor Vehicles (drivers) Ordinance and a Bill to amend the Mines Maternity Benefit Act.

Mr. *C. M. Trivedi*, War Secretary, introduced a Bill to amend the Indian Army Act and the Indian Air Force Act, and Mr. *J. D. Tyson*, Education Secretary, a Bill to amend the Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Act. *Sir A. K. Roy*, Law Member, introduced a Bill further to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure.

The House agreed to *Sir A. K. Roy's* motion to refer to a Select Committee the Bill to make certain provision for appeals in criminal cases tried by a High Court exercising original criminal jurisdiction.

#### AIR RAIDS ON INDIA

Replying to a question by Mr. *A. N. Chattopadhyaya*, Mr. *N. V. H. Symons*, Civil Defence Secretary, said that between April 2 and June 26 this year, there were seven enemy air raids on British India and three on Indian States. All the raids on British India were directed against military targets in SE Bengal. The number of civilian casualties in these raids on British India was 110, the number of wounded being 32. Damages to property was negligible. Neither casualties nor desertion among the ARP services had been reported from Bengal, Assam and Orissa as a result of recent raids. Full ARP measures were in force and no special measures were necessary. In the industrial areas of Bengal, as elsewhere in India, where the civil defence services have been put to the test in recent months, they have given complete satisfaction. Replying to Mr. *Lalchand Navarai*, he announced that the Government would be glad to arrange for the discussion of the war situation at a secret meeting to be held during the current session, when a full statement on the war situation would be made by the C-in-C, if the President issued directions similar to those issued in connexion with previous secret sessions.

The War Secretary, Mr. *C. M. Trivedi*, revealed that during these raids 16 Japanese aircraft were destroyed and eight probably destroyed while six. Allied aircraft were reported missing, the pilots of two being safe. Military damage caused by these raids was negligible.

#### INDIAN PRISONERS IN JAPANESE HANDS

The number of Indian personnel so far notified as being prisoner-of-war in Japanese hands was 1270, said *Sir Phiroze Khan Noon*, Defence Member, replying to a question by Mr. *Bhutto*. Indian personnel numbering 68,490 were still unaccounted for and it was believed that the majority of them were prisoners of war in Japanese hands. It was not in the public interest to disclose the number of Japanese prisoners of war in India. Very little information, he added, had been received regarding the treatment of Indian prisoners of war in Japanese hands. Such information as was available indicated that in many cases prisoners captured by the Japanese had been most brutally treated.

NUMBER OF DETENUS

The Home Member, replying to Mr. *Govind Deshmukh*, revealed that the total number of persons in detention under Rule 26 of the DI Rules on June 1, 1943 was 11,717, excluding the NWFP for which figures were not available. As regards conditions of detention and release, he said that the Government of India were concerned only with security prisoners detained in the Chief Commissioners provinces while each provincial Government was empowered to determine the conditions under which security prisoners should be detained in that province. The power to direct the release of security prisoners lay with the authority directing arrest and detention. In the case of a security prisoner detained under the orders of the provincial Government full discretion rested with that provincial Government.

Mr. *L. K. Moitra* asked if there were any fresh cases of detention under DI Rule 26 following the Federal Court's judgment on it. The Home Member replied that there had been some cases of detention subsequent to the amendment of the DI Rules.

TREATMENT OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

27th, JULY.—*Sardar Mangal Singh*, Congress Member from the Punjab, spoke on Mr. *T. Krishnamachari's* resolution asking for a revision of Government policy with regard to treatment of political prisoners and detenus. He described the treatment of prisoners of the 1942 civil disobedience movement which he alleged was worse than that of prisoners of war in India and that of detenus in India before 1942. He supported the resolution. *Paudit Nilkanta Das* was confident that, if responsible persons were permitted contact with Congressmen in jails, many of the latter would come out to assist in easing the present situation. He asked for a revision of the whole policy in view of the improved war situation. Mr. *Govind Deshmukh* moved an amendment seeking to delete reference to political detenus since Aug. 1942 from the text of the resolution. He said that when a meeting of Liberals in London demanded better treatment for political prisoners and detenus in India, they looked at the question from a more humanitarian point of view, and he wanted the Government of India to approach the question from the same point of view. Mr. *Neogy* asked if the Home Member was perfectly satisfied that the alterations he had made for "preventive and precautionary purposes" in the treatment to be meted out to political prisoners after 1942 were being worked rightly in the provinces. All sorts of allegations had been made, for instance, in the Punjab Assembly, but not a single one had been refused by the Government. *Sardar Sant Singh* criticized the Defence of India Rules. From the number of ordinances made in the Act it was apparent that it was being used for purposes far beyond those for which it was meant. He asked the Government not to look at every case from the police point of view and not to assume that every Indian was guilty and was out to hamper war effort. He asked the Government Member to accept Mr. *Joshi's* demand for a Committee of the Legislature to revise Government's policy or to appoint their own Advisory Committee. *Nawabzada Liaquat Ali*, Deputy Leader, Muslim League Party, declared that so far as the demand for humane and decent treatment of detenus and political prisoners was concerned, the Muslim League Party had the fullest sympathy, but there were occasions when Government might in the larger interests of the country take some action which in its judgment was necessary to preserve the peace. That, however, was no reason why such persons should not be treated as decent human beings. *Sir Reginald Maxwell*, Home Member, winding up the debate, said he could almost have accepted the resolution as amended by Mr. *Deshmukh* but for the words in Mr. *Joshi's* amendment. "In consultation with a Committee of the Legislature specially appointed for the purpose, the Central Government and the Legislature, he declared, could not step in and supersede Provincial Governments in matters in the provincial field. He, however, stated that, since the last debate on the subject Government had not been idle; they had been in correspondence with Provincial Governments and as a result Provincial Governments had been reviewing cases of persons detained under Rule 26 and a total of 4,823 persons detained had been released by these Governments themselves. A great deal of correspondence had also been undertaken by the Central Government with Provincial Governments to secure uniformity of conditions and there had been considerable improvement in certain Provinces in matters of freedom of correspondence and interviews. Correspondence with Provincial Governments also showed that security prisoners received substantially better treatment than convicted persons.

Mr. *Joshi's* amendment was rejected by the President's casting vote and the resolution with Mr. *Deshmukh's* amendment was negatived by 41 votes to 38.

#### CIVIC RIGHTS FOR HARIJANS

28th. JULY :—Full social and civic rights for Harijans, the right of Indians to possess firearms and a monthly salary for members of the Central Legislature were sought to be secured by three non-official Bills introduced in the Assembly to-day. The first Bill, introduced by Mr. *A. N. Chattopadhyaya*, provides, among other things, that no court recognize any civic or social disabilities imposed by custom on Harijans and that the words "backward class," "depressed class," "untouchables," "harijans" and "scheduled class" be removed from usage. The right to possess firearms and other weapons was proposed to be given to Indians in general and Hindus in particular by a Bill introduced by Pandit *Nilkanta Das*.

#### OTHER NON-OFFICIAL BILLS

A monthly salary of Rs. 500 for members of the Central Legislature was proposed in another Bill by Pandit *Nilkanta Das*. He pointed out that the present method of remunerating members by means of a daily allowance was unsatisfactory as a member's income varies from session to session according to its length.

The house agreed to Dr. *N. B. Khare's* motion that Moulvi *Abdul Ghanis* Bill further to amend the Indian Merchant Shipping Act be circulated for eliciting opinion till Oct 15. The Bill sought to increase from Rs. 1 to Rs. 3 the daily compensatory allowance given by a shipping company to each cabin class Haj pilgrim who held a return ticket and was detained at Jedda for more than 25 days because the shipping company had not provided him with accommodation in a pilgrim ship.

Mr. *Kazmi* introduced a number of bills to amend the Civil and Criminal Procedure Codes and a Bill to make it clear that prosecution for an offence committed under the Indian States (Protection against Disaffection) Act can only take place in a town or district where such publication were first printed or the author of a book or document usually resides.

#### RECIPROCITY ACT AMEND. BILL

29th. JULY :—The Assembly to day passed the first reading of Dr. *Khare's* Bill to amend the Reciprocity Act, so as to make it more effective in application. Further stages of the Bill were postponed in order to give time to members to consider amendments which were received late. Moving consideration of the Bill, Dr. *Khare*, member for Indians Overseas, said the original Act had been found defective and, as it stood, it was virtually unworkable in practice. Under its provisions, the rights and privileges enjoyed in India by persons domiciled in a notified British possession could not be cut down, nor was there any provision by which penalties for breach of directions could be imposed. His amending legislation would remove those defects and make the Bill effective for the purpose for which it was enacted.

*Sir Syed Raza Ali*, India's former Agent-General in S. Africa, said the Bill had not come up a minute too soon. Dr. *Khare* had acted in a reasonable manner, both as an Indian and as a Member of the Government, specially when he called a representative meeting of public men to consider the situation arising out of the "pegging" legislation. He, however, protested against what he called Government's attempt to find scapegoats by saying that the Act was defective whereas everybody had considered it workable at the time it was passed, and the Indian Overseas's secretary had described it as a measure that was to be administered with care. Mr. *Hooseinbhai Laljee* said that the House must acknowledge it was the first time that Government had risen to the occasion. The people of India wanted a full expression of its strong resentment at what F-M Smuts' Government were doing. *Sir Frederick James* said it was a tragedy that the House should be asked to enact a Bill with the intention of applying, as a retaliatory measure, those forms of discrimination in this country which were unfortunately imposed on Indians in other parts of the Empire. *Sir Cowasji Jehangir* said that the only effective way to make S. Africa wake up was trade retaliation, but trade retaliation was a weapon which would do more damage to the thousands of Indians in S. Africa than to the hundred S. African resident in India. During the debate, Dr. *Khare* granted that if the Bill was passed it was not going to make any impression on S. Africa. He also said that

retaliation was not a permanent solution of the problem. But when conciliation, consultation, negotiation and representation failed, what other remedy was left? He gave credit to Government for their promptitude in bringing the amending Bill so soon after the defects in the original Act were discovered.

#### OTHER OFFICIAL BILLS

The House adopted three Bills moved by the Labour Member, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. One further amends the Indian Boilers Act 1923, and provides for the inspection of the boiler-fed water system; the second amends the Mines Maternity Benefit Act, 1941 to ensure that women receive maternity benefit for every day, except those on which they attend work and receive payment, during the days of confinement; and third, amends the Motor Vehicles (Drivers) Ordinance, 1942, providing for the reinstatement of requisitioned drivers, on the termination of compulsory service under the ordinance, in their former employment on the same terms as before, and safeguarding the position of a driver, about to do a called up for service, who is dismissed by his employer in order to evade the liability to reinstate him.

Mr. J. D. Tyson's Bill further to amend the Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Act, 1937, and Mr. C. M. Trivedi's Bill further to amend the Indian Army Act 1911, and the Indian Air Force Act 1932, were also passed. The Assembly adjourned.

#### ATTACK ON MR. JINNAH

30th. JULY:—A resolution condemning the cowardly attack on Mr. Jinnah and congratulating him on his providential escape was passed in the Assembly to-day. Leaders of all parties and Sir Sultan Ahmed, Leader of the House, associated themselves with the motion.

#### SOUTH AFRICAN PEGGING LEGISLATION

Dr N. B. Khare, Member for Indians Overseas, initiated the discussion on the South African "pegging" legislation. "After tracing the history of Indo-South African relations, he said that from the earliest days of Indian immigration into Natal, the White population of South Africa had been guided by no other motive but "gross self-interest." By passes, licences, registration, taxes, tests, and reservations regarding property and trading, and by denying the elementary right of the franchise to people born and bred in their country, the Government of South Africa have done their utmost to humiliate and hedge in their Indian population. To this has been added social and public indignity of many kinds. "The constitutional drawback from which India suffers does not detract from the inherent justice of the case of Indians in South Africa and some means must be found for maintaining the dignity and prestige of India and of the Government of India, even in wartime. Fortunately in this matter the people of India and the Government of India are at one and the latter have already publicly characterized the recent legislation as repugnant, unnecessary and inopportune. Had India been independent she would have considered this a "casus belli" against South Africa. But we must not think lightly of breaking away from the British Commonwealth of Nations because the ideal of co-operative inter-dependence on a footing of equality is better than the ideal of isolated independence. There may be also a forlorn hope of representations yielding valuable results after the election fever in South Africa has cooled down. But representations unbacked by any action, is valueless. As for action, an amended Reciprocity Act is already before the house for consideration and the possibility of applying other feasible and proper measures is being carefully examined." Sir Henry Richardson supported the Government of India's declaration that the Union Government's legislation, giving statutory recognition to racial discriminatory policy, was repugnant, unnecessary and inopportune. He said that whatever reasons might have inspired the Union Government in this action, he could not agree with those who felt that it indicated a lack of appreciation of the great part which India had played, and was playing, in the war and he hoped that no political considerations would be permitted to cloud the issue. Suggesting trade retaliation, enforcement of the Reciprocity Act against Union Nationals in India and the recall of the Indian High Commissioner from South Africa, Sir Sayed Raza Ali, India's former Agent-General in South Africa, said that it was a lame excuse to say that Indians were penetrating extensively into predominantly European areas. The Government of India had to do something, and he suggested that immediate sanctions should be imposed to prevent export of foodgrains and gunnybags from India and refuse the import of wattle bark and paints, etc., from South Africa. He also urged on the Government to impose restrictions on South African nationals

in this country within the next two months, and to recall the Indian High Commissioner. Dr. *Banerjee* advocated a rigorous application of the provisions of the Reciprocity Act, notice to terminate the Trade Agreement between India and South Africa, an examination of the articles by which he could prevent import and export, recall of both the High Commissioner and the Trade Commissioner, and lastly a common non-European front. Nawabzada *Liaquat Ali Khan* held that HMG had not played fair to India. If they had exerted any pressure, he was sure, the South African Government would have stayed their hands. He asserted that the war could not be made an excuse for delaying any action. "War or no war we want action at once: action to uphold the dignity and honour of Indians wherever they may be." Dr. *Khare*, winding up the debate, announced that he had called a meeting of the Standing Emigration Committee for August 7 when he hoped to place his proposals for its consideration.

The Assembly passed the motion, with Mr. *Deshmukh's* amendment, which read as follows: "The position arising out of the recent 'pegging' legislation in South Africa be taken into consideration with a view to enforce the Reciprocity Act and adopt measures to redress the grievances of Indians in South Africa."

#### H. E. THE VICEROY'S ADDRESS

2nd. AUGUST :—Crowded galleries and a full House listened to the Viceroy's address, which lasted an hour-and-a-quarter and was frequently cheered, particularly the passages in which he paid a tribute to India's defence forces and to the Indian Press.

"From the very beginning of the war I have done everything a man could do to bring the Indian political parties and their leaders together, to remove doubts as to the intentions of HMG regarding India's future, to achieve that sufficiency of common agreement between the parties and communities of this country and that necessary preliminary acceptance of the legitimate claims of all that must be the pre-condition of any constitutional advance that is worth having, or that can hope for permanence", declared Lord Linlithgow in his farewell address to the Central Legislature today.

He added: "It will always be a sharp disappointment to me that these four years of war should, for all that effort, have seen us no nearer our goal, and that as I speak today, these internal divisions and these communal rivalries and thus reluctance to place India first and subordinate sectional ambitions and jealousy to the common interests of the country should still stand in the way of progress.

"I regret the more that at a time when India's contribution to the war effort has been so great, when in so many ways her stature has been so enhanced, greater progress should not have been possible in the constitutional field during these years of war. That there has been no greater progress is due not to lack of effort or enthusiasm or goodwill on the part of HMG or myself.

"As I have said elsewhere, those divisions and that lack of agreement are due not to reluctance of HMG to transfer power to Indian hands, but to their very readiness to do so. But the fact, the lamentable fact, remains, that, to the grief of all of us, those divisions exist. Nor during all that time has a single constructive proposition—and I deeply regret to say it—been put forward by any Indian party. The whole burden of framing constructive proposals in relation either to an interim or final solution has been left to HMG and myself.

"We for our part, most anxious to give all the help we could, have tried one proposal after another, and we have done our best to harmonize the sharply conflicting claims that have faced us. The best that we can devise, informed as we are by centuries of experience of parliamentary Government, has been freely offered. Yet, while one endeavour after another by HMG to find a solution fair to all parties and communities in India and acceptable to India as a whole has been rejected by one party or the other, not one such practicable alternative proposal has been put forward by any one in this country."

Narrating the efforts made by him to secure Constitutional advance in the centre and in the provinces, he said: "If I have not been able to achieve the measure of success I had hoped for, I at any rate, during the time of war, have been able to bring into being changes of real significance and far-reaching importance. It is true that I have not been able to persuade the great political parties to take their share in the Government of the country, but the Government of India, a body of seven of which the majority were officials, has been changed into a body of 14, eleven of which are non-officials and four only, including the C-in-C, are Europeans. Of its broad basis, of the representation it gives to the various

communities and interests, of the equality of its members, there can be no question whatever.

"Such changes cannot be a substitute for a Constitution determined by ordinary processes and agreement—processes which cannot be completed under the stress of war. Short cuts can only be a danger alike to present unity and post-war solutions. At the stage now reached the real problem to be faced is the future problem: we must look forward, and not backward. And it is the need for India herself to find a solution. That in all friendliness and sincerity I would most earnestly commend to your consideration today. I have said it before, and I say it again quite plainly that the path to full and honourable co-operation with the Government of the country has always been open to those who desire it for its own sake. HMG and the Viceroy can try to help as they have tried in the past. But the burden is on India, on her leaders, on the principal elements in her national life. It is discordance between those principal elements, lack of trust, lack of readiness to accept the legitimate claims of the minorities of the parties, or interests that stand in the way.

Those are obstacles that only Indians can remove. And it is most important, and I would most earnestly urge this on you, that if there is to be any progress Indian public men should without delay, start to get together and clear the way for it. The post-war phase is drawing rapidly nearer. HMG, as you will remember, have voiced the hope that on the conclusion of the war Indians themselves may sit round the table and hammer out a Constitution having the general support of all the principal elements in India's national life. Are India's leaders to be found unprepared when the day comes for those discussions? Is it not the course of wisdom to sit to work at once without wasting a day, to try by discussion between themselves to find in readiness for those discussions an accommodation of differences that prevent progress at the moment and build a bridge over the profound gulfs that divide party from party and community from community?

They alone can do it. The burden is on them and not on HMG. And the whole field is open to them. If the proposals which HMG have at one time or the other put forward in default of any proposals from Indian leaders are unacceptable to India as a whole, there is nothing to stop India's leaders from considering and devising an alternative, whatever its nature, or from trying by private negotiation with other parties in this country to secure their support for any such alternative. All I would say—and I say it again as a friend of India and as one concerned to see her progress in whatever manner is best suited to her national genius and the interests of all within her borders—is this, that whatever alternative and whatever scheme is devised must take into account practical considerations and must have the general support of all the important elements in Indian national life.

"No scheme, however good it may look on paper, that ignores important elements or interests, that overlooks the essential necessity for substantial agreement inside India as its basis has any hope of surviving for long. A National Government can be a reality only if it is generally representative, if it has general support of the major parties and the people as a whole, if its establishment leads to the assuaging of communal and other bitterness and rivalry and to the harmonising of all the many divergent points of view that a country such as India with its great range of climate and races, its different historical traditions must always present.

"In Field-Marshal Viscount Wavell India will have as Viceroy one who has proved himself through a long and glorious career as one of the great leaders of men in the field and one of the outstanding soldiers of our time, but you will find in him also, and this I can say from personal experience of two years of close, intimate and friendly collaboration, an understanding, wise and sagacious statesman, a man of sound political sense and judgment, a leader of courage and tenacity whose wide human sympathy, whose affection for India and whose profound interest in her problems are well known. In the difficult days that lie ahead—for the problems of peace are no less exhausting and complex than the problems we have had to face in the war—his ripe experience, his fresh up-to-date knowledge of India and his sincerity and openness of mind will be of value to this country. That cannot be overstated."

Reviewing his term of office, he said: "The 7½ years of my Viceroyalty have lain in momentous times. Through the whole period we have been faced by political issues of the first importance. For the last four years there has been the

dominating need to concentrate on India's defence against hostile attack; on the expansion and training of our armed forces whether naval, military or air, and on organizing our war effort in terms of men, money and supplies. India's response to every call made on her throughout the war has been magnificent. She may well be proud of the superb contribution she has made to the victories of the Allies and the triumph of the United Nation.

"The recent legislation in S Africa affecting the status of Indians in that country has been a matter of profound regret to my Government and the situation which results therefrom is under active consideration.

"In other fields India's international status has been enhanced in a variety of ways. She is represented in Washington and Chungking. China and the President of the U. S. are represented here. For over a year now she had representation on the War Cabinet. She has been very closely associated with all developments of importance in connexion with the war. The splendid work of her fighting men whether by sea, land or in the air has added to her renown throughout the world. The magnitude of her contribution to the war effort of the Allies is known to every one."

Referring to the development of nation-building activities by the carrying out of carefully-considered Government schemes for the establishment of new factories or the expansion of existing ones, and by the operation of private enterprise, he said: "In particular the Chatfield and Ministry of Supply Mission projects for new ordnance factories and expansion of old ones are now either completed or nearly complete. I may also mention the great expansions in the steel industry, in the manufacture of machine tools, in the chemical industry, and in the capacity of the rubber manufacturing industry, especially for making tyres.

"Those results have not been easy to achieve in the face of the difficulties, known to all of you, which arose and still arise from the growing claims on the shipping resources of the Allies, from the closure of certain sources of raw material by the tide of Japanese aggression, and from the pressure on India's internal transport system arising from the greatly increased burden of war production and military movements. In solving these difficulties, and in maintaining its war effort despite them, India has received and is receiving the greatest help from the other Allied nations, especially from HMG and from the USA. The Technical Mission which our American allies sent us last year, and the Lease-Lend Mission now with us, have been of the greatest assistance to us. We have lately had a joint Anglo-American Steel Mission which gave valuable advice and help in connexion with the production and distribution of steel, and I must pay a cordial tribute to the admirable work of the Eastern Group Supply Council, itself the outcome of the Eastern Group Conference, for the initiation of which India was so largely responsible and which did such invaluable work.

"This vast expansion in the field of war productions has not been achieved without material sacrifice of the goods ordinarily available to the agriculturist and the townsman. I will refer later to certain aspects of that problem. But I am glad to think that many of the industries engaged in the manufacture of vital war supplies are now better equipped to produce goods for ordinary internal consumption than they were before; the experience gained in manufacture under the stress of war adds materially to our knowledge of modern skill and technique; and we are extracting and putting to use in India more and more of our own raw materials. Over and above this realizing the importance of providing for essential civil needs we are now endeavouring to release for civil consumption a larger share of the industrial output of our own resources. The steps we have already taken in this direction will be steadily pursued, consistently with our responsibility for supplying the armed forces in India.

For the moment and for some time to come, our energies must be devoted to exploiting all available resources for waging war. But the moment will arrive when this process must be reversed, and our efforts will be directed again towards the normal activities of peace and the use and development of those resources for the rehabilitation of our economy and the maintenance, and wherever possible, the improvement of the standards of living of our people. Post-war reconstruction is a phrase familiar today in every continent, but the nature of this reconstruction must depend upon local condition and the vicissitudes of battle.

"In some countries the rebuilding of the bomb-shattered homes of the people and of the factories in which they earn their livelihood must be the first stage of recovery. Then again a nation the greater part of whose adult population of both sexes has been conscripted into the fighting services or war industry has to

face problems vastly different, at least in degree, from those which confront us here in India, where despite the magnitude of our war effort, large section of the population still pursue their customary avocations more or less undisturbed by the tide of the war save in so far as changes in the price level may have affected their lot for better or for worse.

"Our own problems in this field, vital though they are, are of a different order. War has brought to India a marked and significant increase in industrial activity and an even more important increment in the number of persons skilled in mechanical and industrial work of all kinds. Evidently the problem is to carry forward after the war as much as we may of this enhanced industrial activity, transmuted betimes from its present warlike shape into forms capable of producing the needs of a world at peace. Certain of our industries, some of them highly important, have come through the past four years with few changes of a technical character, and for such the problems to be solved will be mainly of a commercial character.

"Closely linked with industrial expansion are the problems of agricultural improvement. The best hope of permanent progress, whether in town or countryside, lies in the maintenance of a sound balance between field and factory—for the farmer, a steady and profitable market for his own produce and the opportunity to buy the products of this factory, at reasonable prices; for the factory, a copious supply of raw material and a vast market for the finished product. The careful fostering of this natural, healthy and resilient partnership, which is the foundation of our economic strength and the firm base or platform from which we may develop our overseas trade must be the first care of Government and all concerned with industry or with agriculture."

Describing the effect of the cloth control scheme, he said that prices of cloth of all kinds had fallen not only in wholesale but also in retail markets. In some retail markets they have fallen by more than 40%.

Referring to inflation, he said that the Government was determined to do everything in their power to stabilize economic conditions at tolerable levels. The drive against inflation was being pursued simultaneously in the monetary and commodity fields. The Government of India was also resolved to check speculation and profiteering in every sphere which affects the life of the nation and to repress and penalize all cognate anti-social activities.

He was glad to say that the measures already taken were beginning to have a most salutary effect. Not only had the vicious upward trend been checked, but several important indices had moved sharply downwards with beneficial effect on the whole price structure, but there was no room for complacency.

"We should not," he said, "delude ourselves that this battle was over. On the contrary the campaign has only begun and we are determined to maintain pressure and fight relentlessly on every part of the anti-inflationary front. The stake is nothing less than the economic safety of the country: it demands co-operation, co-operation of all of us, and no effort can be relaxed until this insidious danger is removed.

He thanked the Indian Press for all the help it had given him during his stay in India. Occasions there may have been when there were differences of view on matters connected with the Press. Misunderstanding there may have been from time to time, but I remain deeply grateful to this institution for its fairness, its eager anxiety to serve the public, its concern to observe and if possible to improve the best traditions of journalism, and I would not like to leave India without paying this public tribute to it and to that hard-working body of intelligent and able men by whom India is so well served in the Press."

The Viceroy paid a tribute to the spirit of the people of India, the confidence, enthusiasm and courage which they had shown during the four years of a devastating and exhausting war and the cheerful readiness with which they had borne the many burdens that a total war involved. There had been great achievement on the home front as well as in the field and one on which India would look back with pride and the world with admiration. The Viceroy also conveyed his sincere and heartfelt thanks to the personnel of all the services in the country.

#### RECIPROCITY ACT AMEND. BILL

2nd AUGUST :—South African soldiers passing through India at the end of the war should not be permitted to stay for more than six months, while soldiers from other countries might be allowed a year's time. This was urged by nearly a dozen speakers in the Assembly this afternoon supporting an amendment moved by Sir

*Syed Raza Ali* to Dr. N. B. Khare's Reciprocity Act Amendment Bill, the clauses of which were under discussion. Sir Raza Ali's amendment related to the clause providing that "any direction made by the Central Government imposing disabilities in respect of entry into or travel or residence in British India upon persons domiciled in a British possession shall not, until the expiry of one year after the termination of the present hostilities, apply to any person domiciled in that British possession who is a member of the armed forces. The amendment, which sought to reduce the period from one year to six months, was supported by Mr. Hussainbhai Lalji, Mr. Kailash Behari Lal, Sir Mohamed Yamin Khan, Maulana Zafar Ali, Mr. Govind Deshmukh, Sir Vithal Chandavarkar, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Mr. N. M. Joshi, Mr. M. Nauman, Mr. K. C. Neogy and Maulvi Abdul Ghani. They emphasized that South Africa must be made to feel that, because of the unfortunate action taken by the Union Parliament in passing the pegging legislation, India was determined to treat S. African nationals with special severity. Sir Frederick James, European Group, opposed the amendment and Sir Firoz Khan Noon, Defence Member, speaking as Member-in-charge of demobilization, pleaded against placing any time limit and urged the House to accept the assurance that the Government would lose no time in taking demobilized S. African soldiers out of the country. After all there would be no soldier who would not want to rush home as quickly as possible after demobilization. But there might be difficulties of transport and allowance must be made for that. Dr. N. B. Khare, Indian Overseas Member accepted the amendment, which was passed. The House also passed Mr. Deshmukh's amendment providing that the Bill shall come into force from Sept. 1. Further debate was adjourned.

3rd. AUGUST.—South African officers should not be placed in positions in which they would have Indian troops serving under them, and wherever these officers were already in such positions they should be transferred. This was one of the immediate retaliatory actions suggested by Sir Yamin Khan and Sardar Sant Singh, speaking on the third reading of Dr. Khare's Reciprocity Act Amendment Bill, to-day. Sir Raza Ali, Mr. K. C. Neogy, Sir Frederick James, Sir Vithal Chandavarkar, Mr. Hussainbhai Lalji, Dr. Bannerji, Syed Murtaza Saheb and Mr. Kailash Bihari Lal gave general support to the Bill as amended and congratulated Dr. Khare and Mr. Aney, former Overseas Member. Sir Raza Ali commended to Government the principle of blow for blow in its relations with South Africa and urged them to give up their defensive attitude. He added that a further amending Bill with more stringent provisions was necessary and should be brought soon. Dr. Khare replying said as a doctor he knew when and how to use the knife against countries which ill-treated Indian nationals. If certain countries needed incision than others he would not hesitate to make one. The Bill was passed.

Earlier in the course of the debate on the second reading, the House divided on Sir Raza Ali's amendment prescribing one year's imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1,000 or both as punishment for disobedience of any rule made under the Act. The amendment was rejected by 47 votes to 29.

#### DELHI UNIVERSITY AMEND, BILL

The House next took up discussion of the Delhi University Act Amendment Bill on the motion of Mr. J. D. Tyson, Education Secretary, that it be taken into consideration. Mr. Tyson referred to the general agreement among members of the Select Committee whose report was before the House, on the provisions of the Bill, particularly the major issue of a three year degree course, on which there was only one dissident. Maulvi Abdul Ghani moved the circulation of the Bill and he was supported by Sir Ziauddin Ahmed and Mr. Lalchand Navalral. Mr. S. C. Chatterji opposed the motion.

#### NUMBER OF DETENUS

The number of persons detained under the Defence of India Rule 26 from the beginning of the war up to June 1, 1943, was 17,766 of whom 11,717 were still under detention on that date, said the Home Member in reply to Mr. Bhutto's question in the Assembly. The number of persons convicted during the same period under the Defence of India Rules was 75,941, while the number actually in jail on June 1 was 15,099. The above totals did not however include the North West Frontier Provinces, for which figures were not available.

There was no automatic arrangement for the review of each case of detention after a particular period, the Home Member added. The principle which both the

Government of India and Provincial Governments had constantly in mind, however, was that no security prisoner shall remain in jail whose detention was essential in the interests of security and the efficient prosecution of the war.

DELHI UNIVERSITY AMEND BILL

4th. & 5th. AUGUST :—Mr. *Lalchand Navatrai*, concluding his speech in favour of the motion, insisted that there should be statutory safeguards that arbitrary power regarding withdrawal of recognition of colleges would not be exercised. Mr. *Habibur Rehman* opposed the circulation motion as that would only mean delay. Mr. *John Sargent*, Educational Adviser to the Government of India was in belief that the reason why the three years course was not introduced in other universities was that it was not possible unless the standard of high school education was raised. All the university bodies were in full agreement with the proposal of having a three year course and had fully endorsed the provision of a wholetime vice-chancellor and the suggestion regarding withdrawal of recognition of colleges. In Delhi, Mr. *Sargent* continued, they were in a position to re-organise high school education. If they were able to carry out a universally liked idea, it seemed to him that they were doing a good thing. He admitted that migration of students from and to the Delhi University appeared to be a complicated business, but reciprocal arrangements could be made by goodwill on both sides. Professor *P. N. Banerji* asked why such a comparatively small university as that of Delhi should have a paid vice-chancellor while a large institution like the Calcutta University was content with an honorary vice-chancellor.

The motion for circulation was rejected by 45 votes to 38 and the motion for consideration passed by 16 to 28. The House took up discussion of the clauses, and had not concluded when it adjourned till the next day, the 5th. August, when on the second reading of the Bill the House rejected by 40 votes to 26 an amendment to reduce the term of office of the Vice-Chancellor from four to three years.

During discussion of the clauses of the Bill today, the Muslim League Party made a sustained attempt to secure increased Muslim representation in the administrative and other bodies of the University. Mr. *Ghulam Bhik Nairang* moved an amendment that of the three persons forming the committee to select names for the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor, one shall be a Muslim. He said that the amendment would remove the feeling among Muslims that since its inception the Delhi University had, for all practical purposes, been another edition of the Benares University. Condemning the attempt "to communalize a temple of learning," Mr. *Jamnadas Mehta* said: "We have had too much communalism in this country. Let us at least have education free from that taint. I would not mind if all the three persons belonged to one community. Let them not ask for it because they are Muslims." Mr. *J. D. Tyson*, Education Secretary, opposing the amendment, pointed out that there was no provision for communal representation in the Delhi University Act as it stood. No request had been received from the University. He had had the University Acts in India searched and was told that the principle of communal representation had not been accepted by any university except the Dacca University, where it was accepted as a special case. *Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan*, replying to Mr. *Mehta*, said that the temple of learning lost all its sanctity when it became the stronghold of one particular community. Referring to Mr. *Tyson's* statement about the principle of communalism the speaker asked, why fight shy of the problem now if the complaints were justified that Muslims had not had a fair chance in the past in the Delhi University? Mr. *S. C. Chatterjee* appealed to the Muslim League Party to consider whether though their grievances were genuine, it would redound to the credit of this House and the country if it made an enactment which advertised the fact that even in a temple of learning they could not rise above communal prejudices. The amendment was rejected by 37 votes of 21.

DEBATE ON THE FOOD SITUATION

9th. AUGUST:—Initiating the food debate in the Assembly today, *Sir Mohammed Azizul Haque*, Food Member described the difficulties and obstructions the Government had to face. "Unabated action has brought us safely through great difficulties in this first six months of the year," he said, "We have many difficulties today and we shall probably have more difficulties in the future. I can assure the House that the Department for which I speak will spare no effort to solve

these difficulties." Calling for support of the Government in their efforts, *Sir Azizul* declared: "I hope that the discussions with the provinces and the States in conferences we have organized will lead to greater mutual understanding and greater co-operation. There are still those in this country who do not help us; who are indifferent to the fate of others, so long as they can attain their own selfish and absolute security of profit. I appeal to public opinion to express itself against those men; against the hoarders and speculators. So far as I and my Department are concerned, so far as the provincial Governments working closely with us are concerned, we will do our best to see that they do not escape. He described the results of the food conferences held since 1939 and referring to the conference of Dec. 1942, said that the rice position was discussed in it and on behalf of the Bengal Government which was represented by official representatives and the then Chief Minister. It was stated: "We do not require for the next few months any rice even though we are in deficit." On inquiry whether the Bengal Government had any suggestion to make as to how they would be able to get rice if it was required by the province, neither the Chief Minister nor the official representative had any suggestions to offer. "We have to make our suggestion," said the official representative, "when the occasion arises." The general position taken up by Bengal was that as they were not in surplus, but in deficit, they should not be asked to contribute in any way to the all-India pool and that they would be able to manage their affairs if they were not asked to undertake any extra provincial responsibility. The Chief Minister said at this conference: "We know rice is enough for us. We do require some wheat from outside. We do not want to be fixed to a policy. We shall act as we may decide." The other provinces thereupon considered their deficits and surpluses without taking Bengal into account. As regards Millets the Bengal representative declared that his province was not particularly interested. The conference made certain general recommendations. As regards price control Bengal was definitely against fixing any price on the ground that the commodities would not come out. Bengal opinion was as follows: "We have regarded the whole affair as so academic that we have not attempted to make any calculations. In the case of rice, it is of little importance, so long as we are allowed to look after our own interests." Madras, the C. P. and Assam were also opposed to the enforcement of any maximum price and the U. P. was opposed to the fixing of the price of any commodity other than wheat. The official representative of Bengal was of the opinion that all price control measures should be given up and that the price should be moderated by market activities and controlled distribution. The Punjab, the main wheat producing surplus area, agreed to a purchasing agency subject to the Provincial Government deciding the quantity to be exported from the province. Referring to the second Food Conference in February this year, the Food Member described the procurement and supply plan which was one of the decisions at the conference, and said that taking the all-India position as a whole the Central Government should have received during April, May and June about 1,450,000 tons of various kinds of food grains from the surplus provinces. They actually obtained just about 5·7 lakhs tons for distribution to deficit Provinces and States. "By about the beginning of May the situation began to assume a critical character, and it looked as if the food situation in Bengal was beginning to get completely out of hand. The province was faced with a rigorous shortage and it looked as if the industrial war effort generally and civil life of the province were in distinct danger of dislocation with its inevitable reaction on other areas as well. The Government of India had, therefore, no other alternative but to tide over the immediate situation by introducing free trade in the Eastern Zone as the only means of getting a flow of foodgrains into the deficit areas. This was done and for the time being a grave crisis was averted. If free trade had full play, it would have had a permanent effect not only in bringing supplies to the deficit areas but also bringing down price level of the whole of the eastern region, even though there would have been some temporary rise for a time till the market found its equilibrium. But as soon as free trade was declared in the Eastern Zone, obstructions of every kind were placed in its way. I have before me a list of over 60 cases reported from time to time, and we have not yet been able to complete the investigation of these cases. But the nature of the allegations is as follows: Stocks purchased were requisitioned, stocks purchased were seized, a percentage of all purchases was ordered to be surrendered and in some cases at a much lower price than purchase prices, stockists were ordered to close godowns, traders were warned not to sell, station masters were asked to refuse wagons, carters and carriers

were stopped from assisting movements, export was banned by peremptory orders."

A voice: By whom? By Government?

Sir Azizul Haque said until the investigations were finished he was not prepared to say.

"Among those who complained, were the General Managers of Railways, the Chief Mining Engineer of the Railway Board, the Price Administrator, the Indian Mining Association, the Officer-in-charge of Rice Supplies to aerodrome construction, the Chambers of Commerce and industrial concerns, not to speak of traders and purchasing agents. It is said that trade agents were arrested and prosecuted and that goods in transit were seized. Thus free trade did not function. Taking the case of one of the provinces, we had an authoritative statement that the province had at least 3,000,000 mds of surplus grains. This province did not take any step from Jan. to April to purchase any rice for its own purposes at a time when price was admittedly low. Yet with the introduction of free trade it tried to build a reserve stock for its own needs. We are just at the time considering the feasibility of gradually restoring free trade throughout India as the only other means of ensuring steady supply, thereby bringing down the general price level and distributing supplies commensurate with the needs of various parts of India. But for some time it looked as if this may possibly endanger even the partial supply to the deficit areas. With few exceptions, there was no acceptance of a common responsibility." To devise immediate steps, a conference was convened in July and it expressed itself definitely against any form of free trade and recommended reversion to the original procurement plan functioning under the Government of India, but with purchasing organizations working under provincial Governments. The Government of India accepted the recommendations of the conference. To overcome transport difficulties the Food Member went to Lahore to settle matters on the spot, but just at the time when we could clear up all operational difficulties, there came the unfortunate breach due to the Damodar flood. An attempt was made to send more grain by ships and two ships were actually loaded with wheat. But just after loading, the ships developed engine troubles and were now under repair. We have done all that is possible, but none can contend against obvious limitations and even where we can it cannot be done in a day. If growers are asked not to sell but to wait for better prices, if grains do not come to the 'mundies' in monsoon conditions, if some over-zealous officer 1,000 miles away requisitions foodgrains while in transit through this area from one State or province to another, it takes time for information to come, remedies devised, and goods moved again. For the time being our efforts are all directed to one end, namely, to arrange and ensure more supplies to the deficit areas. We propose to take other remedial and necessary measures as soon as the exigencies of the moment are under control. If the Government of India have to accept any responsibility in the food problem in India, we must devise adequate machinery to carry out and quickly enforce our decisions. How this can be done and ensured cannot be decided until the difficulties of the moment are tided over. The Food Member went on to point out that probably the provinces, both deficit and surplus, never anticipated any acute shortage. It was not the Bengal Administration alone which failed to anticipate events. Referring to the criticism that exports were the cause of shortage he stated that total exports of rice and wheat since January up to date was just about 85,000 tons, including exports to Ceylon. Since then rice export had been banned and unless there was a surplus in hand after meeting India's own needs, Government did not propose to export other foodgrains either, except such small quantities as might be necessary in the interests of India. About Defence purchases, he stated that from January to July the total of wheat and rice was about 275,000 tons to feed 2,000,000 men in the Army. The food problem was much deeper than appeared on the surface. If the average adult diet was only 1 lb. of foodgrains a day, the consumption needs of India was 50.5 million tons. With 45 million tons as seed requirements, the total foodgrains necessary was at least 55 millions tons. If half the people of India consumed a little more, namely, 1½ lbs. a day, the figures would go up to 61 million tons, and normal production of the principal foodgrains was only about 50 or 51 million tons. If the growers chose to keep any quantity as insurance against bad harvest, if they ate a little more than the poor meal of past years if there was any carry-over, it meant a gap in the supplies available in the existing conditions of things for the non-agriculturist population. The whole economy of India in the past was on the basis of India as one economic unit. "A spirit of economic nationalism is, no doubt, a healthy feature in the economic life of the people. But

when policies of economic nationalism are carried to such extremes as to exclude and prevent the fullest inter-provincial co-operation in times of food shortage, in the absence of the realization of a common purpose, it becomes difficult to devise any scheme that fits the interests of all and even when an agreement is reached one comes across many obstacles which give pretexts for breaking any agreement reached. In Europe, the same conditions have led to the present war. In India it has brought about the present food problem. He referred to the long-range Food Committee and said its report was being drafted and it was Government's intention to take action on the report without the least possible delay. He paid a tribute to other departments of Government such as the Agricultural Department and the War Transport Department, which were helping in the solution of the food problem.

Mr. *Akhil Chandra Dutta* urged that there should be no legal quibbling about the constitutional position; the Centre should take up the ultimate responsibility to organize and co-ordinate an all-India food policy. The case of Bengal was a special one. There the famine had resulted from war conditions and the Government of India, in the interest of defence of the whole country, should come to the province's rescue. To meet the emergency situation of the province military stores within Bengal should be made available immediately as loan for a temporary period, and the Government should stop purchases for the military, except for immediate requirements. He wanted Bengal to be declared a "famine" area forthwith.

Sir *A. H. Ghuznavi* said: "The crisis in Bengal has resulted from a series of blunders on the part of the Government ever since the outbreak of the war." Even after the declaration of war by Japan, Government did not wake up to the necessity to examine the statistical position of rice although it was common knowledge that Burma rice fed almost half the labour population of India and thus enable the superior quality of Bengal rice to be exported to other parts of India and even outside. When supplies from Burma stopped, the Government should have stopped the export of rice from the province and should have laid down enough stocks to provide for the contingency which was evident to all." He appealed to the Government of India to send food to Bengal and save human lives.

Sir *Henry Richardson*, Leader of the European Group, said he could not congratulate the Food Member or the Government for the programme of business this session. It was inescapable that Government laid itself open to criticism on the ground that while people were starving, discontent was rife all over the country and the food problem a burning question. Government were content to fiddle with legislative measures which were of far less urgency and which could have waited. (Hear Hear). It was deplorable that after all that had happened the lesson of the folly of being too late had not been learnt. The Food Department itself was formed years too late. When other countries were planning and rationing, India had a surplus in many commodities which, had a Food Department existed, could have been purchased and stored by Government as provision against the rainy day which had now come and found India unprepared. He emphasized the demand that this all-important subject of food should be placed in charge of a Member with ripe experience who would be able to devote his entire time solely to the problem, instead of one of the most hard-worked Members who inherited not only the Commerce Department but the Food Department and the Department of Industries and Civil Supplies. Criticizing the inadequacy of measures against hoarding the speaker demanded that, irrespective of who these persons might be, their names should be made known throughout the country and severe punishment meted out to them in order that once and for all warning might be given to all those other people who had only been encouraged by the ridiculous punishments which had been awarded (Cheers).

10th. AUGUST:—The transport aspect of the food problem was explained by Sir *Edward Benthall*, War Transport Member, when the Assembly resumed the food situation to-day. Sir Edward remarked that the speech which seemed to strike the right note was that of Mr. Joshi yesterday when he said that the magnitude of the deficit in the country was not such that it could not be overcome by efficient management. The food situation, he went on, would not be saved by a five-day debate, as a member suggested, but by action within the next six or eight weeks to secure the movement of food from the surplus to the deficit areas. As part of the action towards that end, the Transport Member mentioned that in recent weeks

progress had been made in co-ordinating the work of five different agencies, whose close co-operation was essential for a successful solution of the problem, namely, the Food Department, the Government of India, the Governments of the surplus provinces, the Governments of the receiving provinces, the priorities organisation. The result of such co-operation, he said, was demonstrated in the situation in Bombay, where six months ago, the position was desperate but now, owing to the collaboration of the Central Government and other Provincial Governments, special trains had been arranged, rationing had been introduced and there was ample supply of millets and wheat, and there was no general anxiety. The Transport Member admitted that the movement programme to South India fell short of expectations owing to railway operational difficulties but it was satisfactory that at the end of July 105.5 wagons per day were passing through Delhi against a target of 110 wagons a day in that direction. Food grains for Travancore and Cochin were moving via Karachi and although he had no recent figures, he had no reason to suppose that plan was not operating satisfactorily.

Referring to Bengal, he said that priority arrangements had been made to move 90 wagons of foodstuffs a day through the E. I. R. and 100 wagons a day through the B. N. R. besides foodstuffs sent in by other railways and those produced in the Provinces, and those sent in by steamer from Karachi. One steamer had been loaded and further shipments were being arranged. This route, the Transport Member observed, must be the route for further relief on a major scale in the near future. The quantity sent through the E. I. R. and B. N. R. would represent some 8,000,000 lbs. a day, which would be sufficient to feed more than 3,000,000 people at two and a half lbs. a day for each. The population of Calcutta and Howrah was 2,500,000. Efficient co-operation and energetic management could see the Province of Bengal through the next critical weeks, if support was given to both the Government of India and the Government of Bengal instead of making the sufferings of the people the sport of politics.

Mr. *Bhutto* considered it futile to have the debate if the Central Government were powerless to do anything. He believed nothing could be done unless the Provincial Governments were brought under control and the Food Department completely centralised. He suggested the appointment of a Committee of both Houses with the Food Member as President to deal with the situation and also suggested that Axis prisoners of war should be transferred from India to Australia and Canada.

Mr. *P. J. Griffiths*, European Group, after commenting on the "incredible slowness" of the Government of India and the obstinacy and obstruction of the provinces, said that the basic plan, though it failed when it came to Bengal, did much to ease the situation regarding wheat. It was certainly a plan which lessened the disaster, and the change at the time it was made from the basic plan to the policy of free trade was the part of wisdom and statesmanship and he for one would not be a party to any condemnation of the Government on that score. Suggesting practical action under four heads, he advocated, firstly, rationing in urban areas all over the country, secondly, a drive for food stocks similar to the recent drive in Calcutta, thirdly, very much stronger action against offenders and fourthly, a very much stronger line with Provincial Governments which would not play. Mr. Griffiths compared the methods adopted in India with that followed in Chungking where big prosperous merchants who had offended against the food law were paraded through the public streets with words of ignominy and contempt written upon them. Was it not time that something really drastic was done in this country? Dealings of the Central Government with Provincial Governments, Mr. Griffiths emphasised, were bilateral. Provincial Governments wanted support from the Central Government in many matters, and the Central Government had, through indirect methods, endless ways of bringing pressure on the Provincial Governments. (Hear, hear.) He declared that the greatest obstinacy had been shown by some of those provinces which were at present governed by section 93 (cheers). Mr. Griffiths concluded with a strong plea for vigorous action.

Mr. *K. C. Neogy* compared the present situation in Bengal with what existed in 1770, when the East India Company hoarded food in the name of its employees. The East India Company, he said, still existed in the country. Lord Clive might not be with them but there was the Lord of Clive Street installed in the Government benches (laughter and cheers). India, Mr. Neogy pointed out, was normally a deficit country with regard to food-stuffs. It was admitted that there were 20,00,000 soldiers enlisted in the country and a very large number of foreign troops brought

from outside besides the large number of foreign prisoners of war who he understood were being entertained with a lavishness due to foreign friendly potentates—all these meant an excessive consumption of food and went to aggravate the deficit. He suggested that ships such as those advertised by Mr. Griffiths with millions of tons of wheat from Australia and other surplus areas should steam towards India and as an emergent measure military authorities should be induced to part with a part of their stocks. The Food Member had referred to the attitude of the Bengal Government representatives at the food conference, but, asked Mr. Neogy, what self-respecting Government could be expected to depend upon the Government of India. It had been stated in reply to his question that 793,000 tons were required to be sent to Bengal and it was agreed that that quantity was going to be sent to that province by the Central Government. But actually 39,693 tons had been provided. What, asked Mr. Neogy, was the use of the Bengal Government disclosing its plans to a Government of this character. He was not surprised therefore that the Government of Bengal did not take the Government of India seriously in this matter. It had also been stated in reply to his questions that there had been no exports from Bengal after March this year. But he wanted to know what was the export from December upto March. No figure had been given to him, but in the Bengal legislature the figure given of export in 1943 was 2.84 lakh tons of rice. He did not know how far this was correct but that was the figure given.

*Sir Edward Benthall* : Exported where to ?

*Mr. Neogy* said : I don't care where it went so long as it went out of the province and was thus denied to the people of the province.

*Nawabzada Liaqat Ali Khan* said that the object of the debate had been completely frustrated as the Government had not told them what steps they proposed to take to relieve the situation or invited the advice of the members on those proposals. How could the non-official members assist the Government, when they did not know what the Government proposed to do. He also criticised the discussion on food having been fixed for the last days of the session and said while the people were crying for food, Government were thinking of improving higher education in the country. (Laughter). The Nawabzada charged the Government with criminal negligence in not setting up the Food Department for so long after the outbreak of the war, and it was also criminal negligence on their part to ignore the home front. Provincial Governments would not co-operate with them. Government had asked the country to damn those people who had placed obstructions in the food policy, but Government were not bold enough to name those people. The Government of India, as at present constituted, the Nawabzada believed, could not command the confidence of the people. Food was the most important thing and in this the Government had been most negligent. He urged on the Government to get a move on now and when the next crop came, he hoped, they would not be found in the same mess.

*Sir Azizul Haque*, Food Member, winding up the debate, declared that he yielded to none in the House in feeling for the sufferings of the people. The speeches during the last two days seemed to suggest that the situation was solely the result of one or two factors which each speaker stressed. For instance, it had been stated that huge quantities of rice were lost with the loss of Burma. The Food Member pointed out that the total rice production in India was 25,000,000 tons and the total import from Burma was  $1\frac{1}{2}$  million tons. So far as Bengal was concerned, the average imports from Burma were 400,000 tons, and excluding exports from Bengal the net import into that province was roughly 200,000 tons. In 1941-42 the net import into Bengal was 224,000 tons as against a production of  $8\frac{1}{2}$  million tons. The debate concluded and the Assembly adjourned.

#### ASSEMBLY UPROAR—SECRET SESSION NOT HELD

12th. AUGUST :—An uproar and heated exchanges marked the proceedings this morning when *Nawab Siddiq Ali Khan* sought leave for an adjournment motion to discuss "the failure of Government to secure the attendance of Government Members in time to constitute a quorum for the holding of the afternoon meeting of the secret session on Aug 11, thereby depriving the House of the privilege of eliciting full information about the war situation and discussing it."

The *President* remarked that he understood that 21 members were actually present yesterday afternoon (Voice : "Eighteen") and that according to the usual practice no bell was rung. As for the motion, did it imply that only Government members were to attend the House in time ? Was that not equally the duty of elected members ?

*Several voices* : "The elected members were present : 20 of them were in the House. Only one official member was present."

*Sir Yamin Khan* drew the Chair's attention to a ruling given by President Patel that when there was official business in the House, it was the duty of the official benches to keep the quorum.

The *President* could not hold that it was the duty of only Government members and members nominated by the Government to attend the House regularly and in proper time and that this was not the duty of the elected members. Were he to lay down any such rule it would mean that the constituencies need not look to the members elected by them to carry out their duty. He was loath to give any such ruling.

#### DEBATE ON CURRENCY POLICY

*Sir Ziauddin Ahmed* moved a resolution of the Government's currency policy and concentration of their attention more on the stability of the bank rate of interest. He declared that if the price of three sets of articles namely, silver, cotton piecegoods and wheat and rice, were stabilized, the prices of other commodities would move in sympathy. He suggested that a maximum rise of 50% over the pre-war price was reasonable, and the Government should fix prices at the level. As it was, the value of the rupee had gone down to 8 annas and therefore it was necessary that the salary of Government employees should be doubled.

The Finance Member, *Sir Jeremy Raisman* said that with regard to inflation the state of affairs which existed in this country up to the beginning of May was capable of being construed as leading to uncontrolled inflation, and he admitted that the Government had anxious moments over the tendencies which were apparent at that time, but the Government had now satisfied themselves of their ability to deal with that situation. There was now no feeling of pessimism whatever. The important thing in war time was to ensure that even though currency and bank deposits might expand they did not have their automatic effect on the price level. The Government had satisfied themselves that it was not necessary to submit to any automatic advance of price because of increase in the volume of currency. He himself was not sure of it three months ago, but he was quite sure today that the Government could stop that nonsense. It required drastic action and the fullest measure of public support for that action. Rebutting Mr. Krishnamachari's remarks on government loans, the Finance Member drew attention to the remarkable success of Government loans, and said that the volume of money which flowed into Government coffers was a definite indication of a swing-back from commodity to money as against the previous tendency of a move from money to goods. He would point out that in a vast country like India, there was no need to be alarmed by the currency figures of 750 crores or even a thousand crores. In relation to the population of the country and other factors, it was not an intrinsically excessive figure, but it was important to check the tendencies which that figure seemed to indicate. Dealing with commodity controls, the Finance Member expressed confidence that the textile control experiment would succeed.

*Dr. P. N. Bannerjee* : What if it fails ?

The Finance Member declared that if it failed it would be the Government's duty to face the resultant situation without regard to sentiment. But he did not believe that the experiment would fail. He believed the leaders of the textile industry had realized that the position which existed a few months ago could not possibly continue, and they realized their duty to this country and were prepared to help the Government to supply cheap cloth. He explained that control must continue in regard to food, and said that in the circumstances sugar control in spite of initial difficulties was working satisfactorily. It was the success of sugar control which encouraged him to feel that control of the textile industry could also be worked. It was the Government's intention to proceed further with commodity control and bring all commodities to a reasonable price level. He regarded as his enemy every man, who tried to produce a rise in commodity prices. He reiterated his belief that it was possible to deal effectively with inflation in this country. It required determination on the Government's part : it required the fullest support of the people. It was a course which went deep down to the national well-being and one in which everybody could assist without feeling that he was doing damage to any political conviction.

#### WAR INJURIES (COMPENSATION INSURANCE) BILL

18th. AUGUST :—The Assembly to-day passed the War Injuries (Compensation

Insurance) Bill introduced by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Labour Member of the Government of India. During the debate on the Bill, Dr. Ambedkar agreed to an amendment moved by Mr. Abdur Rashid Chaudhury and supported by Mr. Hussainbhai Lalji to omit the provision under which any person authorized by the Government might enter any premises or property under the control of an employer for the purpose of obtaining information regarding the number of persons employed or other details necessary for the administration of the Act. Mr. Lalji vehemently declared that such a power was not given even to the income-tax authorities, who had the responsibility of collecting crores of rupees. Dr. Ambedkar, in agreeing to the amendment, said he thought the Government's purposes would be sufficiently served by the other provision in the same clause requiring any employer to submit to an authorized person such accounts, books or other documents as were necessary.

The House agreed to Dr. Ambedkar's amendment providing that the total amount of the fund raised from premiums paid by employers for the insurance of employees under the war injuries compensation insurance scheme shall not be more than Rs. 1,500,000 and that if after all payments made out of the fund any balance remains, it shall be constituted into a fund to be utilized and administered by the Central Government for the benefit of workmen.

#### DELHI UNIVERSITY AMEND. BILL

The House then resumed discussion on the Delhi University Act (Amendment) Bill and accepted two amendments, one by the Government and the other by the Muslim League Party. The Government's amendment raised the number from 8 to 12 of bodies and associations, which if approved by the Chancellor, could elect representatives to the Court of the University. The League's amendment raised the number of representatives from the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly on the Court from two and four to four and eight respectively. Mr. J. P. Tyson, Education Secretary, said the Government amendment would enable the Chancellor to redress the grievances of minorities. Another amendment by the League Party seeking to raise the number of persons to be appointed by the Chancellor to the Court, from 15 to 16 "at least half of whom shall be muslims," was under discussion, when the House rose for the day.

17th. AUGUST :—Continuing the debate on the Delhi University Bill, the Assembly today disposed of 14 out of 101 amendments so far tabled relating to the schedules to the Bill. Discussion to-day again centred round the demand of the Muslim League for adequate representation of the community on the Court and Executive Council of the University. Rao Bahadur N. Shrivastava's amendment urging reservation of three seats for the Scheduled Castes and two for labour, out of the 12 seats which the Chancellor is given power to fill to secure the representation of minorities not otherwise in his opinion adequately represented, was rejected by 36 votes to 16. The amendments by the Muslim League were rejected after the Chair had asked the supporters to stand in their seats. The Government's amendment, which was accepted, increased the number to be nominated on the University Court by the Chancellor from 15 to 25, of whom 18 shall be appointed to secure representation of minorities not otherwise in his opinion adequately represented. The House agreed to reduce the number of seats on the Executive Council allotted to professors from two to one and then adjourned.

18th. AUGUST :—Muslim and minority representation in the University services was discussed at great length on the second reading of the Bill in the Assembly to-day. Mrs. Renuka Ray, speaking on an amendment for the elimination of the system of nomination for women on the Executive Council of the Delhi University, asserted that women in India were opposed to the system of nomination and she would either like to have women coopted by the Executive Council or elected by a special constituency of women registered graduates from all parts of India. The demand for minority representation in the University services occupied the Assembly for the rest of the day. Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang, Moulvi Abdul Ghani, Mr. Nauman, Mr. Kazmi, Maulana Zafarali and Sir Ziauddin supported the amendment while Mr. Kailash Beharilal opposed it. So did the Government. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan explained that their purpose in moving various amendments on the Delhi University bill was not only to secure effective representation for the Mussalmans on the Delhi University, but also to raise the general question of university education for the Mussalmans. He quoted figures to show that five universities in India did not employ any Muslim teacher, while twelve did not employ Mussalman teachers in science subjects. Calcutta University had 2 Muslim teachers out of 120 : Dacca had 4 out of 48, Lucknow had 2 out of 20

and Patna had 2 out of 31. In all there were 43 Muslim professors in the universities of India, all of whom belonged to the I.E.S. There was one Muslim Reader and six teachers in all. He wondered if the Government had realised the significance of their attitude that they would not accept the principle of communal representation in the university services. The Nawabzada asserted that he would not subscribe to the dictum of efficiency. Furthermore, there were suitable Mussalmans forthcoming for services in the universities. This view was further supported by Dr. Ziauddin, who speaking from his experience of the Aligarh University claimed that suitable Mussalmans were forthcoming for teaching posts in the universities. Government's view point was explained by Messrs. *Tyson* and *Sargent*. Confining himself to the Delhi University, Mr. *Tyson* claimed that the amendment would not be workable. Firstly, because the amendment was wide enough to include university teachers, who mostly belonged to the autonomous colleges and secondly, because the amendment would make religion instead of degree as the basis for selection. Mr. *Sargent* reminded the House that there was paucity of Muslim teachers even in the Dacca University, which had been cited as an example to copy by the Muslim League. He claimed that there was definite shortage of suitable Mussalmans for certain branches of teaching. In Delhi they were anxious to build a university and therefore they would look for quality in the teaching. The Assembly discussed eight amendments all of which were rejected and then adjourned.

19th. AUGUST :—The Assembly disposed of 13 amendments before it rose for the day. Two of these amendments were accepted by the Government. One of them added five members to the Academic Council. They would be appointed by the Chancellor and would be persons capable of advising the Academic Council on subjects connected with Islamic learning and culture. The other amendment added another two to the Academic Council, to be elected by the Court of the University.

The House devoted the rest of the day to discussing the demand of the Muslim League for Muslim representation on the Academic Council, the Board of Examiners, the Library Committee, and the committee of Courses and Studies. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, Mr. G. B. Nairang, Sir Ziauddin Ahmed, Mr. Q. A. Kazmi, Maulvi Abdul Ghani and Sir Yamin Khan supported the demand. The Nawabzada quoted figures to show the "entirely inadequate" representation of Muslims on some of the Delhi University bodies. Muslims, he said, would not rest till they had secured adequate representation on all the Universities in India. The fight on the Delhi University Bill was only the beginning. Mr. *Sargent*, Educational Commissioner, Government of India, Mr. J. D. *Tyson*, Education Secretary, and Mr. *Kailash Bihari Lal* opposed the amendments. Mr. *Tyson* reiterating the Government's viewpoint, said that although Government sympathized with the minorities and recognized the justice of their case, they were unable to accept the amendments, which sought to introduce communalism in the University. The Assembly at this stage adjourned.

20th. AUGUST :—Thirteen more amendments to the schedules of the Bill were disposed by the Assembly today. There were nearly 40 more amendments to be considered. Today the Assembly accepted five amendments one of which was by the Government. One of the Muslim League's amendments, which was adopted, reduced the initial fee for registered graduates from Rs. 20 to Rs. 15. The amendment reduced the period for annual fee from 15 years to 10 years. The other amendment of the League Party deleted the provision for recognition of Ramjas Intermediate College. The Nationalist Party's amendment provided that the Principal of the College concerned shall serve as an adviser on the committee of selection. All the other amendments were rejected.

The main discussion today centred round the proposals for a Muslim advisory board of seven members elected by the Muslim members of the Court to advise the university on matters affecting the interests of Muslim education. The Government opposed the amendment and was supported by Dr. P. N. *Banerjee*. The Muslim League Party was supported by Mr. Q. A. *Kazmi*. The Government's contention was that Muslim education did not differ from the education of other communities and if they were to set up a board for one community, they would have to do the same for others. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan explained how Muslim education differed from the education of the other communities. He said that after the August disturbances last year, students from the non-Muslim colleges went on strike. All non-Muslim Colleges were not functioning. The Arabic College was the only educational institution which continued to function. The Hindu boys had made politics part of their education. Muslim boys had not. He wanted to

know what action the University took against those boys who went on strike. The University did not take action, he said, because it was dominated by Hindus. They, the members of the Muslim League, had been endeavouring for the last 10 days to 'de-Hinduise' the University of Delhi. The speaker added that the experience of the last 20 years had shown that the interests of the Muslims in the Delhi University had gone to the wall. This had been admitted by the Government. The amendment was rejected by 39 votes to 15. The Assembly then rose for the day.

**21st. AUGUST :—**The Assembly disposed of 10 more amendments to the schedules of the Bill when it adjourned till Tuesday next. Two of these amendments were withdrawn and the remaining eight were rejected. Today's discussion centred round general provisions relating to colleges. The Bill lays down that, "save as otherwise provided in the Act, all degree colleges shall be in close proximity to one another and to the university and shall ordinarily be located on the University estate." Mr. G. B. Nairang, Mr. G. V. Deshmukh, Maulana Jafar Ali, Maulavi Abdul Ghani, Sir Mohammed Yamin Khan, Dr. P. N. Banerjee, Mr. Kailash Behari Lal, Mr. John Sargent, Mr. J. D. Tyson and Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan participated in the debate.

The supporters of the amendment generally pointed out the difficulties of Delhi students attending University lectures and games. They explained that the university site was about seven miles from new Delhi and it would be a real physical strain on the students to cycle to the university site, twice a day, once to attend lectures and once for games. Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan appreciated the proposal as an ideal, but pointed out the difficulties in putting the ideal into practice. The first difficulty, said the Nawabzada, was that of finances. It was true that one college had already shifted and another was in the course of shifting to the new site. The smaller colleges, however, had not the finances to undertake the job, and unless the Government were prepared to guarantee liberal grants and loans it was no use making a statutory provision as was contemplated under the clause. He wanted the Government to vote for the provision with open eyes as it would cost them about Rs. 25 lakhs. The Speaker, proceeding, said that the university was planning its teaching on the basis of 3,000 students on its rolls, while the provision for hostel accommodation was for only 500 students. It was evident that a majority of students at the university would be non-resident students. In short, Delhi University could never become a residential university. Government was compelling all colleges to shift and cluster round the university. In doing so they must also consider the transport facilities for non-resident students. Mr. John Sargent, Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, said that the proposal marked a definite change in the character of the university. The university was originally intended to be a residential university. In due course, that ideal underwent a change and developed into a university with corporate teaching by the constituent colleges. Mr. Sargent said that no college had been dissatisfied with the provision. The proposal would facilitate corporate teaching and colleges would be able to make reciprocal arrangements in order to specialise in particular subjects. As for finance Government, notwithstanding difficult times, had provided Rs. 8 lakhs during the last two years. The Muslim League's amendment was rejected by 28 votes to 20.

**24th. AUGUST :—**The Assembly passed the second reading of the Bill today, when the remaining 19 amendments were discussed, three being accepted and the others rejected. Today's discussion mainly centred round "instruction provided by colleges." The Bill laid down that recognition of a college could be withdrawn by a majority of members of the Executive Council. The Muslim League's amendment that the majority should be two-third was rejected by 30 votes to 17. Replying to an amendment by Seth Yusuf Haroon, the Educational Adviser, Mr. J. Sargent, assured the House that the intention of the Government was that all women's colleges should be staffed and inspected by women. There were, however, certain difficulties at present mainly on account of the paucity of suitable women of requisite qualifications. The amendment was withdrawn. Sir Ziauddin Ahmed's amendment elicited information that provision relating to a Diploma Board in domestic science had been made in anticipation of the Lady Irwin College for Women applying for recognition.

**25th. AUGUST :—**The Assembly today passed the Delhi University Act Amendment Bill without a division, the Muslim League Party dissenting. Mr. J. D. Tyson, Education Secretary, moving the third reading of the Bill, said that Government had no intention to completely overhaul the administrative machinery of Delhi University. Government primarily brought in the Bill to give legal

sanction to the three years' degree course. He denied the charge that the executive Council of the University was either a Government-ridden or a Vice-Chancellor-ridden body. Referring to the demand for communal representation on University bodies, Mr. *Tyson* said that Government were not satisfied with the present position and would always welcome minorities playing a greater part in the Delhi University. Government had undertaken to use their influence to get the principle of proportionate representation accepted by the University. As for Muslim representation, he said that there was only one Muslim-managed college in Delhi. There were 46 Muslim registered graduates out of 580 on the rolls. This was the main snag. The number of Muslim examinees, however, had been on the increase and were 300 last year out of a total of 1,800. This was an encouraging feature, and he hoped that in time to come the Muslim community would pull its full weight in the University.

Sir *Ziauddin Ahmed* felt that the object of the Bill might have been achieved by a three-clause Bill. He said that the Delhi University had not had sufficient experiences yet to justify vital changes in its constitution. The most important thing, he said, was how the Act would be administered.

Sir *Mohammed Yamin Khan* said that he was glad that the Government had recognized the fact that the Muslims had not had a fair deal in the Delhi University and he welcomed the assurances given by Mr. *Tyson*. He hoped that Government would bring in an amending Bill to give effect to the suggestions made by the Muslim League.

Mr. *G. V. Deshmukh* welcomed the assurance given on behalf of Government that the consideration given to a community in the University would be in proportion to the advantage it took of the University institutions.

Mr. *J. Sargent*, Educational Commissioner, Government of India, speaking as an educationalist, felt that the Bill was unlucky to get involved in communal issues. He appreciated the general support given to the main principles of the Bill. Referring to corporate teaching, he said that their intention was to raise the standard of teaching in the University. He agreed that a fair trial should be given to the experiment, which was being launched in the shape of a 3-year degree course.

Nawabzada *Liaquat Ali Khan* said that he had been in favour of a 3-year degree course from the outset, but the Bill had introduced other fundamental changes of vital importance. Government, on the strength of their official and nominated bloc, had not accepted a single material change in the Bill. Referring to the charge of communalism, the Nawabzada said that it was an irony of fate that Government whose life-breath was communalism should come out to oppose the introduction of communalism in the University. He said: "Did not Sir *Edward Benthall* represent the Europeans, Sir *Sultan Ahmed* the Muslims and Sir *Jogendra Singh*, the Sikhs?"

Mr. *Tyson*, replying to the debate, explained that the Bill was a step towards making the Delhi University a model university. He disclosed that the University of Delhi had generally supported the Bill.

The Bill as amended was passed and the House adjourned *sine die*.

## Autumn Session—New Delhi—8th to 19th. November 1943

### VICEROY'S MESSAGE TO ASSEMBLY

The Central Assembly began its autumn session at New Delhi on the 8th. November, 1943, when the President, Sir *Abdur Rahim*, read a message from the Viceroy. The Viceroy's message read:—"It is customary for a new Viceroy to address both Houses of the Indian Legislature at the first opportunity. I have declared to depart from the precedent and shall deliver no address during the November session. My reasons for this decision are:—First, that whereas my predecessors assumed office in April and were able to devote several months to the study of the Indian situation before an opportunity of addressing the Legislature occurred, I assumed office in October, less than three weeks before the opening of the November session: and secondly, that for the time being my energy must be very largely devoted to the study and treatment of the food problem—a matter upon which I do not feel that I could make a comprehensive statement in the immediate future. It is my intention to address both Chambers at an early stage of the Budget session of 1944."

After an absence of about four years, 10 members of the Congress Party attended the House today, and one of them, *Sardar Mangal Singh* put the first question of the day amid cheers.

## COAL RATIONING SCHEME

During question time today, *Sir Edward Benthall*, War Transport Member, replying to *Mr. K. C. Neogy*, announced that the coal rationing scheme had now been put into operation. He stated that a total of 25.64 million tons a year had been adopted as a reasonable figure which could be made available for distribution. Rations had been fixed on the basis of actual supplies made during the 12-month period from August 1942 to July 1943 and took into account estimated increases in the consumption of essential services. The total allotment for industries and domestic supplies had been fixed at 1,024,587 tons a month, which represented an increase of 20 p.c. on actual supplies made between August 1942 and July 1943. The scheme was in essence a compromise between conflicting interests and made possible only by the pooling of resources between India and the UK. It was proposed to watch its working very closely, making internal adjustments whenever required and to review the position again early next year. As regards alternative fuels, *Sir Edward* mentioned that some industries in various parts of the country had been making extensive use of firewood, and an engineer had been appointed and attached to the office of the Controller of Coal Distribution, one of whose functions would be to advise industries regarding the utilization of alternative fuels. Referring to coal supplies to industries *Sir Edward* stated that against an average daily requirement of 25 Wagons, Calcutta received 18 wagons per day in July, but 23 wagons a day in August, 36 a day in Sept. and 35 per day up to Oct. 22.

## FOODGRAINS DESPATCH TO CALCUTTA

Arising from a question about the dispatch of foodgrains to Calcutta, *Mr. Neogy* asked the War Transport Member whether it was a fact that the Bengal Government thought that the dispatching instructions of the railway authorities were defective, with the result that rice went to wheat sidings and vice versa and it took time to rearrange them. *Sir Edward* said that the instructions were not given by the railway authorities and that he could assure *Mr. Neogy* now that the movements were satisfactory. *Nawabzada Liaquat Ali* asked if the War Transport Member was aware that the statement attributed to the Bengal Government had been denied by that Government.

*Sir Edward* : I expect it was (Laughter).

## INDIAN DELEGATION TO BRITAIN

The House, by 43 votes to 39, passed *Dr. Govind Deshmukh's* adjournment motion to censure Government on its "unwise decision to send non-official gentlemen selected by it to undertake a tour abroad in Britain and to speak on India's war effort." The Congress members voted with the Muslim League, the Nationalists, the Independents, and some unattached members for the motion. Moving the adjournment motion, *Dr. Deshmukh* questioned the necessity of sending out the delegation at this stage when the whole world had acknowledged the country's war effort and sacrifices. He asked if we were following the example of any other country in sending this delegation, and whether the Governments of the UK and the USA came here to advertise their war effort? He supported that the delegates would attempt to justify the Government of India's actions and policy regarding political prisoners, as they knew that the world outside was in sympathy with the demands for greater rights for the Indian people. With a vastly expanding Department of Information and Broadcasting, it should have been possible, he thought, to send more literature to those countries in the form of the pamphlets explaining India's war efforts. He considered that the reported expenditure of Rs. 60,000 per person could have been incurred on some useful purpose.

*Sardar Mangal Singh* (Congress) said that the Government were sending the delegation to whitewash their actions. There were a large number of foreign Press correspondents in this country, and they could be supplied with the information the Government wanted to reach the public of Britain and the USA. He suspected that the delegation was going abroad to say things which it could not say in this country. "Let the representatives of the people go abroad," he said, "and tell the world how this country is being governed, or rather misgoverned." There was no use in sending delegations which would carry on propaganda against the public of India.

*Sir Sultan Ahmed* said it was his duty to clear misconceptions which seemed to surround the delegation. The misapprehensions expressed, he declared, had no basis and the lecturers had been instructed not to say one word on politics. They were going out to speak on the country's war effort and nothing else. *Sir Sultan*

said that the demand for sending the delegation came from India's Agent-General in the USA and from the British Ministry of Information. They could not possibly refuse that request. They had no choice. They would have failed in their duty if they did not comply with that request. The expenses of the delegation's tour in the UK would be borne by HMG. (Laughter). The question of the apportionment of their expenses of travel from the UK to the USA and expenses incurred in India was still under consideration. The delegation, Sir Sultan continued, consisted of four people, all of them men, according to Government, competent to speak. They paid visits to different factories in Bombay, Madras and Calcutta and he had no doubt that they were men of experience and knowledge and would not say anything they were prohibited from saying. He denied they were receiving instructions from various departments. He concluded by expressing his conviction that the speeches they would deliver would raise the status of India and not compromise the position of the country.

*Sir Yamin Khan* (Muslim League) felt that speeches by the Indian delegation giving out details of internal administration of war effort, such as working of factories, would be giving information to the enemy and thus would be highly detrimental to the interests of India. He said that an expert like Sir Guthrie Russell should have been sent out if the Government were anxious to conduct propaganda about their war effort.

*Sir Rawaswami Mudaliar* claimed that the issue before the House was whether it was desirable to publicize India's war effort and, if so, whether the selection of the personnel for the delegation was a suitable one. He asserted that so long as the selection was made by the Executive, there were bound to be criticisms from one interest or other against the choice. He explained that the field of selection in this country was a limited one. The Government, he claimed, were in a better position to judge whether India's war effort should be publicized abroad. Speaking from personal experience, he said, that the need for such publicity, particularly in the USA, was very great. He reminded the House that India at the Peace Conference would be asked what she had done to win the war; how her people had responded to the call of democracy, for which, he asserted, the war was being fought. "I hope Members will agree with me that it is of the highest importance that India's war effort should be publicized abroad." Some Members had referred to the food situation. It was a by-product of the war. People of the USA and the UK had no idea of what was happening in this country, and he held that the Government had done the right thing in deciding to send out a non-official delegation to educate public opinion in those countries about India's war effort.

#### TRADE UNIONS ACT AMEND. BILL

*Dr. B. R. Ambedkar*, Labour Member, introduced a Bill to amend the Indian Trade Unions Act. The measure provides for compulsory recognition of Trade Unions, the main conditions of recognition being that the trade union must have been a registered union for 12 months and that it must have previously applied to the employer concerned for recognition. Unions formed on a communal or sectarian basis will not be eligible for recognition. Obligation of employers consequent on recognition are also detailed.

#### STATEMENT ON FOOD FOR INDIA

**9th. NOVEMBER :—***Sir J. P. Srivastava*, Food Member, stated at question time today that six shiploads of foodgrains had arrived in India and although he did not know the exact tonnage he thought it was about 30,000, and more was coming. He said that the price at which wheat was landed in India was substantially low.

The Food Member faced a number of questions on Mr. Amery's statements in England on the food situation in India.

*Mr. Neogy* asked whether Mr. Amery's statement that the death-rate in Bengal was estimated at about 1,000 a week was based on information supplied by or through the Government of India.

*Sir Jwala Prasad* said that the Government of India had supplied information on the food situation, but it was not known whether Mr. Amery's statements were based on that information. "We have been sending telegrams to the Secretary of State from week to week."

*Mr. Neogy*: "Have HMG any other source of information apart from your telegrams?"

*Sir Jwala Prasad* said that they had.

*Sir F. E. James* : "How was it that in the early stages of the crisis, the Secretary of State made such grossly inaccurate statement in Parliament?"

*Sir Jwala Prasad* : "The question ought to be addressed to the Secretary of State. I am afraid."

Replying to Mr. *Neogy's* question about Lord Strabolgi's reference to a message from India, *Sir Jwala Prasad* said : "Shipments of wheat from Australia amounting to about 160,000 tons in all arrived in India between November 1942 and the end of April 1943. This quantity did not represent the full amount for which the Government of India had asked, but in view of the very difficult shipping position of the United Nations at that time, as well as the serious shortage of foodgrains in Ceylon, coupled with the success which had attended the efforts of the Government of India to procure old crop wheat earlier in the year and the prospects of a good rabi harvest, the Government of India agreed to forego further shipments of wheat on the understanding that a claim for imports later in the year might be favourably considered. We have had to make that claim, and shipments of wheat are now arriving in Indian ports."

Replying to Mr. *Chattopadhyaya*, the *Food Member* said that the civil population of Bengal was estimated at 63,090,000, and their requirements together with the military population, whose size it was not in the public interest to reveal, were estimated by the Bengal Government to be as follows :—Rice 3.9 million tons : wheat 121,000 tons ; millets and maize 2,000 tons.

The deficits estimated by the Bengal Government were as follows :—Rice 450,000 tons ; wheat 112,000 tons ; millets and maize 2,000 tons. The quantities of foodgrains supplied to Bengal from April to September 1943, were : Rice 204,000 tons (including arrivals during the free trade period) ; wheat and wheat products 187,000 tons ; millets and grain 43,500 tons.

Mr. *Neogy*. Is the Hon. Member aware that expert opinion is that the allowances of gruel given to destitutes are not supposed to be sufficient to keep a fair-sized rat alive ?" (Laughter).

*Sir Jwala Prasad* : "That is a matter of opinion. When I visited Calcutta I was told that it was quite sufficient, and in some cases too much."

Mr. *Neogy* : "Will the Hon. Member try some gruel on himself and see how he flourishes ?" (Laughter).

In the course of replies to questions about the food conference, Pandit L. K. Maitra interjected : "How many attended the conference and to what extent were they responsible for reducing the food supply in Delhi ?" (Laughter).

Mr. *Abdur Rashid Chaudhury* : "Is it true that representatives of profiteers were directly or indirectly on the conferences ?" (Laughter).

Replying to other questions, the *Food Member* said that the Government of India were closely and continually in touch with the Bengal Government with the object of improving methods of distribution and relief measures. Practical assistance and advice had been given ; rail and river distribution had been improved ; a senior Military Officer had been appointed as Director of Transport in Bengal ; local rationing schemes had been introduced, and over 5,400 relief centres opened. Reports from certain districts showed that there had been a perceptible improvement in conditions. About 23,000 tons of wheat had been released for the civilian population in Bengal this year from imports specially ordered for the Defence Services.

#### STABILIZATION OF PRICES

"We have reached a stage when in order to maintain the war effort it is necessary to cater for civilian requirements" said *Sir Jeremy Raisman*, Finance Member, Government of India in accepting a resolution of the Muslim League Party urging the stabilization of prices. The Finance Member observed that an attempt had to be made even now, to some extent at the expense of the war effort, to switch the country's productive resources to meeting civilian consumers' demands, and Government were continually at work to promote an expansion of production to meet civilian needs. The House finally passed *Sir Ziauddin Ahmed's* (League) resolution in an amended form recommending to the Government of India "to give the foremost place in their monetary policy to the stabilization of prices, on which the prosperity of the country largely depends".

The main resolution which was moved in the last session, recommended to the Governor-General-in-Council to modify their currency policy and to concentrate their attention more on the stability of prices than on the stability of the bank rate of interest. *Sir Aziz-ul-Haque*, Commerce Member, claimed that so far as

textile were concerned, Government had succeeded in bringing down the prices.

The Finance Member, in accepting the revised resolution, made it clear that the Government's policy in regard to the rate of interest on Government borrowings was quite definite and deliberate and they had no intention to depart from the cheap money policy hitherto followed. It had been vigorously criticised from certain quarters, but it had the overwhelming support of the majority opinion in the country. The food problem and inflation, Sir Jeremy observed, were closely connected and the one could not be solved without dealing with the other. The two were really two aspects of the same problem, but both could be tackled simultaneously, and that was why the Government of India had been trying to do. He thought relief would come in two ways. It would come by some expansion of production in the country even during the present difficulties and Government were continually at work to promote such expansion. It would also come by increased shipping which could be allotted to India in the further stages of the war. Finally an attempt had to be made now, even to some extent at the expense of India's war effort to switch back the productive resources of the country to meeting the consumers' demands. The need of the home front had become extremely important to the internal economy of the country. The position now is that we have reached a stage at which in order to maintain the war effort, it is necessary to cater for civilian requirements: otherwise civilian morale will undoubtedly suffer. These are considerations which are very present to the Government of India, but I would ask critics to realize there are so many factors which are beyond our control". The Government of India, he said, would continue to press India's demands for the requirements of the civilian consumer and they hoped that they would be able to produce a marked improvement in the situation.

#### HINDU MARRIAGES BETWEEN SAME GOTRA

10th. NOVEMBER:—Marriages between Hindus of the same "Gotra" or "Pravar" or Hindus belonging to different sub-divisions of the same caste, were sought to be legalized by a bill which, Dr. Govind Deshmukh moved today, should be referred to a select committee. The House discussed the motion for over three hours. Sir Asoka Roy, Law Member, opposing the motion declared that piecemeal legislation of the kind attempted by the mover should not be undertaken when comprehensive legislation such as had been prepared by the Rao Committee on Marriage was on the anvil, that Hindu opinion was sharply divided on the merits of Dr. Deshmukh's Bill, that the Special Marriage Act was available to those who wished to marry within the same gotra and it was not open to people to come to the Legislature and insist on sacramental marriage and ask the House to change the law for their benefit. The Law Member gave the assurance that he would do whatever was possible to see that the Rao Committee's Bill was brought before the House's next session and taken to its next stage. Dr. Deshmukh expressed satisfaction with this assurance and withdrew his motion.

#### BLAIR'S RETIREMENT & HITAVADA ORDER

During question time today, the retirement of Mr. J. R. Blair, formerly Chief Secretary, Bengal Government and the order issued on the *Hitavada* of Nagpur in connexion with it were the subject of a question by Dr. Govind Deshmukh. The Home Member said that the retirement was voluntary and was in no way connected with any breach of the Government Servants' Conduct Rules. The Government of the C. P. were asked to obtain from the editor of the "*Hitavada*" information as to the source of an article entitled "Another Civilian Resigns, Story of a Censored Letter," which appeared in the issue of that newspaper dated Aug. 2. This article purported to disclose the working of the censorship and it was clearly necessary in the interests of military security as well as in the public interest to investigate its origin. The C. P. Government were accordingly authorized to resort to DI Rule 116 if the editor declined to give this information voluntarily.

The same Member asked whether it had been brought to the notice of HMG that if Italian prisoners were sent out of India, it would release a considerable amount of food for the consumption of the Army as well as the civilian population. Mr. C. M. Trivedi, War Secretary, answered that the question was still under consideration in consultation with HMG.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is it a fact that the standard of treatment given to Italian and other prisoners of war approximates more or less to the traditional

standard of hospitality given to sons-in-law in Indian households? (Laughter).

Mr. *Trivedi*: The treatment is governed by International Conventions.

#### NUMBER OF SECURITY PRISONERS

The number of security prisoners of all sorts in detention on January 1, 1943, was 9,853, said the *Home Member* in reply to Mr. A. N. *Chottopadhyaya*. The number on September 1 last was 10,780, but it was understood that a good many prisoners had been released since that date. The number of State prisoners detained under Regulation III of 1818 on September 30, 1943, was 10. No such prisoners were released during 1943. He had no information as to the number of prisoners detained under the Regulation or released by Provincial Governments. So far as he was aware, no special tribunals for examining the cases of persons detained under the DI Rules were at present in existence. The cases of these persons were however, under constant review by the Governments concerned, both Central and Provincial, and a number of persons had been released from detention as a result of these reviews.

The *Home Member*, in a statement in reply to Mr. N. M. *Joshi*, gave the number of persons undergoing imprisonment in connexion with the Congress movement in all Provinces on Sept. 1, 1943 as 19,284, and those undergoing detention as 8,073. The number of security prisoners released was 7,447. Except in the case of one news-paper, on which a pre-censorship order was served by a Provincial Government, there had been no censorship of news or comment appearing in the Indian Press about famine conditions in the country or deaths resulting from starvation in Bengal and other places, said *Sir Sultan Ahmed* in reply to Mr. K. C. *Neogy*. In so far as publicity in the Press outside India was concerned, the Government of India had no information either as to its volume or tone other than that contained in cabled reports to India, which had appeared in the Indian Press. The house then adjourned till Friday.

#### DEBATE ON FOOD SITUATION

12th. NOVEMBER :—Initiating the debate to-day on the food situation in the country *Sir J. P. Srivastava*, Food Member, Government of India, said that as against the Bengal Governor's estimate of province's requirements for the three months, October to December of 250,000 tons, 82,000 tons were sent during October. "We hope our arrangements will secure that the figure given by the Governor will be substantially exceeded," he said. The daily average rate of arrival of foodgrains and pulses into Calcutta during the period June to October was over 3,300 tons per day as against a daily average of 1,600 tons for the corresponding period of last year. In addition to the amounts which the Provincial Government were now sending out to the districts they had a month's reserve of foodgrains for Calcutta itself. As regards distribution to districts, despatches had during the last month risen from a few hundred tons to a thousand tons a day in addition to the arrangements which had been made to send from the Punjab direct to the districts a large quantity of wheat products. Arrangements were now in progress to double this figure. "We attach the greatest importance to two points in Bengal, namely, the rationing of Calcutta and the procurement of the aman crop. Our Rationing Adviser has gone to Bengal on more than one occasion and remained there for considerable periods working in close co-operation with the Provincial authorities on the gigantic task of preparing the Calcutta rationing scheme, which, I hope, will very shortly be in operation. We have also sent a senior officer of the Department to collaborate with the Provincial Government in the preparation of their "aman" procurement scheme, the final details of which are now under urgent consideration." Although to some extent the Department had been unavoidably preoccupied with the situation in Bengal they had constantly kept before them the needs of Travancore, Cochin, Bombay, the Deccan States and Madras. The Food Member referred earlier to the revised basic plan which came into operation from August 1, aimed at the distribution of 1,400,000 tons of foodgrains, to deficit areas within the period of eight months ending in March, 1944. During the first three months of its operation, over 650,000 tons had been despatched to the deficit areas. The principal recipients had been Bengal with 219,000 tons, Bombay 76,000 tons, Madras 7,000 tons, Travancore-Cochin 46,000 tons, and the Deccan States 6,500 tons. He acknowledged with gratitude the additional surpluses voluntarily declared by provinces and States subsequent to the formulation of the revised basic plan which amounted to 220,000 tons. Referring to imports, he said his latest information was that

41,000 tons of foodgrains had already arrived and far greater quantities were on the way. He acknowledged the generous offers of assistance received from Australia, Canada, S Africa and New Zealand and thanked the O-in-C for the help given in the task of distribution. "In our price policy," he declared, "we have no intention of pushing down prices below a level where they give a fair return to the producer and we intend by every means in our power to protect the producer against undue rise in prices of the commodities which he requires. We intend to remove progressively those price divergencies in different areas which give rise to so much heart burning. But we are convinced that control of the prices of foodgrains is as essential factor not only in the feeding of the poor but in the whole economic structure of the country." Stressing the importance of increasing the country's resources by an intensification of the "Grow More Food" campaign he mentioned that according to the first all-India rice forecast, the acreage under rice alone had gone up by about four million. So far the condition of rice and other kharif crops or millets and maize has been reported good almost without exception throughout the country. "I cannot be satisfied and shall never be satisfied so long as hunger and distress exist. I claim that we have been successful in maintaining a steady flow of grain from surplus to deficit areas according to prearranged programmes. The delivery of grain to most of the deficit areas has enabled them, with the assistance of their own efforts, to keep the situation under control and in Bengal we are able to show a considerable improvement in the supply position.

Three amendments were moved after the Food Member's speech, urging that the food situation be taken into consideration. One moved by Mr. *Abdur Rashid Chaudhry* (Unattached) asked for a committee of inquiry of the Central Legislature with an elected majority to report on the situation; the second by Sir *Mohammad Yamin Khan*, (League) urged the appointment of a Royal Commission, and the third by Mr. *K. J. Neogy*, recommended the appointment of a committee consisting of eminent economists, judges, administrators and an accountant-general under the chairmanship of a lawyer who has held high judicial office to inquire into a number of points relating to the continued prevalence of famine conditions. Mr. *Chaudhry* declared that the blame for Bengal's distress lay with the bureaucracy. He deplored the apathy of the British public and referred to the fact that only 35 members were present in Parliament when the food debate was held.

Mr. *C. P. Lawson* (European Group) demanded an inquiry to be conducted by some non-political and unbiassed body. The time for it was to be chosen so that, consistent with arriving at the earliest possible conclusion, no interruption took place in the urgent efforts which were being made to remedy the situation. Emphasizing the absence of consumer goods as a factor preventing the free flow of foodgrains he thought that while many shiploads of wheat from Australia or Canada might be urgently needed, one tanker of kerosene oil might result in the release of many shiploads of wheat from the hands of stockists in this country. A shipload of bicycles might be worth many cargoes of grain.

Mr. *Shamlat* (Congress) explained that his party's decision to keep away from the Assembly was not for all time and that the subject of food was one on which the Party ought to make its voice heard. The House adjourned at this stage.

#### TRADE UNIONS ACT AMEND. BILL

13th. NOVEMBER :—The Assembly today dealt with five official Bills. One of them was Dr. *Ambedkar's* Bill further to amend the Indian Trade Unions Act, providing mainly for compulsory recognition of Trade Unions under certain conditions and defining what recognition would imply. The House agreed to circulate the Bill for eliciting public opinion. Mr. *Griffiths*, while supporting circulation of the Bill, criticized certain of its provisions and characterized it as nebulous, uncertain and indefinite in many parts. He took particular objection to giving protection to labour and treating them as hot-house plants instead of leaving it to labour as in Britain to build up Trade Unions which were reasonable, representative and efficient. *Maulvi Abdul Ghani* objected to the provision that communal Trade Unions should not be recognized. Mr. *N. M. Joshi* declared that employers had shown hostility to the Trade Union movement and that was the reason why the Bill was needed. Employers in many cases insisted not only on Trade Unions being representatives but wanted Trade Unions to have no politics whatever. Sir *Gurumath Bewoor*, Secretary, Posts and Air, replying to criticisms of the Posts and Telegraph Department's attitude to Trade Unions said that the Department was in fact the first to recognize Trade Unions. He imagined that one

of the reasons why the provisions of the present Bill were not meant to be made immediately applicable to labour employed by the Crown, by a Federal Railway or a major port, was that Government already had well-established rules for recognition of Government Servants' Unions. Sir *Cowasji Jehangir* declared that the worth of a Trade Union depended upon its leaders and that all Trade Union leaders in India were not of the same calibre as Mr. Joshi or Mr. Jamnadas Mehta. Dr. *Ambedkar*, replying mainly to Mr. Griffiths' criticisms, pointed out that there was nothing indefinite about the conditions on which recognition was to be given to Trade Unions. The representative character of a Union would be decided by a Tripartite Board to be set up under the Bill. That Board would go into all the relevant circumstances, including, if necessary, the private character of the leaders of a Union. As regards the provision about labour employed by Government, he explained there was really no exemption for them. What was provided was that a date would be fixed when the provisions would be made applicable to them as well. The motion that the Bill be circulated was agreed to.

#### OTHER OFFICIAL BILLS

The House passed the *Home Member's* Bill further to amend the Victoria Memorial Act, the Law Member's two Bills further to amend the Cr.P.C. and a Bill to make certain provision for appeals in criminal cases tried by a High Court exercising original jurisdiction. The House then adjourned till the 15th.

#### DEBATE ON FOOD SITUATION

15th. NOVEMBER :—The Chair ruled at the outset that the amendment of Mr. Shambhu Dayal Misra ( Congress ), urging the public trial of Lord Linlithgow, Mr. L. S. Amery and Sir John Herbert, was out of order and could not be moved.

Mr. *Shamlat* ( Congress ) concluding his unfinished speech of Friday asserted that only a National Government could successfully deal with the situation and was the supreme need of the hour.

Mr. *K. C. Neogy* declared that the famine bore "the hall-mark of genuine British manufacture." On an earlier occasion, Opposition members had tried to rouse Government to the need of taking prompt action to prevent the Bengal tragedy. It had been said that things had been made difficult by the division of responsibility between the provinces and the Centre. Were it a question of repression the Government of India had only to press a button in New Delhi and the whole thing was done swiftly and efficiently, but not when it was a question of saving lives. Replying to the contention that growth of population was the real difficulty, he said that during three centuries, the population of Britain had increased more than eight times as against that of India which had been four times. In 50 years the total increase in India was about 39% as against 186% in the USA. It was also revealed by figures that the yield per acre of land in Bengal had not progressed since the days of Akbar, although Japan with the same problems of over-population and uneconomic holdings had a yield per acre of three times that of Bengal : and China more than double that of Bengal. As for hoarding not more than 10% of the agricultural population could have anything like a surplus. He granted that the reserves built by European industrial concerns in Bengal might not be very large in quantity : but it was not so much the quantity that mattered as the simultaneous withdrawal of foodgrains by different competing parties. Hundreds of European employers in Bengal contributed to the shortage. They made a mad rush to secure grain : and every European employer was engaged, according to Government, in essential war work and, therefore, entitled to build up food reserves.

Sir *Jogendra Singh*, Member for Education, Health and Lands, said the impression he had formed as a result of his visit to Bengal was that the clouds were lifting : grain from outside was not only now flowing into Calcutta but into remote towns in a steady stream. The charities organized by the people of Calcutta and outside had done a great deal of succour and to save. A rich harvest of rice would soon be ready. He declared that he was not satisfied with the constitutional position in which the Centre had no direct responsibility in the fruitful fields of education, agriculture and health. "If India is to resolve the economic deadlock it must have centralized direction, centralized finance and decentralized activities. I feel that unless we at the Centre guide the emergent forces which are raging in full blast in all the countries of the world, we shall fail entirely in advancing the economic interests of this vast continent. The strategy of the future must aim at production of food and goods. We are worried about the increased circulation of money. We ought to worry more about increasing the production of goods."

*Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi* traced the present food famine in Bengal to the policy of denial put into operation by the ex-Governor, Sir John Herbert. He said that the removal of rice and the destruction of boats and other means of conveyance in the SE districts had led to a breakdown of normal trade channels in those parts which gradually affected other parts also. He urged greater imports from abroad and the taking over of the control of food matters by the Government of India. He advised the Government not to disturb the aman crop by making any purchases but to let it flow freely into the market.

*Chowdhury Mohd Ismail Khan* said that the responsibility for the Bengal famine ultimately rested with the British Government. If the Indian Ministers were wrong, why did the Governors intervene and stop the rot." He thought that the Indian Members of the Government of India had not discharged their duties properly. Some months ago when the life of a single man was at stake, three of them vanished from the Government benches; but now when hundreds of thousands were dying of forced starvation the Indian Members were sitting opposite "as cool as cucumbers." He added: "People clamoured for food but the Government gave them wood—Maj-Gen Wood," (Laughter). His complaint against the economic experts was that they had not drawn the attention of their employers in good time to the great catastrophe to which the country was heading. He supported the demand for a Royal Commission. He also asked the Government to "capture or corner" the aman crop in Bengal.

*Mr. Jannadas Mehta* charged the Government with neglect and complacency and called upon the Indian Members to "get out" if they could not do better than they had done in the past. In the face of terrible reality, those Indian Members had no right to ask people to have consideration for the Government's difficulties. He was prepared, however, to absolve even the Government from a deliberate policy of starvation; but hoarders and profiteers, zamindars and capitalists, were deliberately robbing and fleecing and starving their own countrymen. The Punjab, he declared, had starved Bengal.

*Sardar Mangal Singh* stoutly defending the Punjab, said that profiteers and hoarders should be punished along with the members of the Government of India. He stated that at the end of June 1,58,000 tons of wheat released by the Punjab remained to be dispatched to Bengal. What, he asked, did it show? Was it a case of hoarding by the Punjab zamindar or holding up of grain by the Railway Members?

*Sir Edward Benthall*: May I inform the Hon. Member that all that wheat is in Bengal.

*Sardar Mangal Singh* replied that that might be the case now. The Punjab zamindar, he asserted, was not profiteering either. Who, he asked, was pocketing the difference of Rs. 10 between the price at which wheat was bought in the Punjab and *atta* sold in Bengal? The demand for a Royal Commission, he characterized, as a trap. He said he could say in advance what a Royal Commission would recommend. Their very first finding would be that the transfer of power to Indians was a mistake. The country, therefore, did not want a Royal Commission. The country knew who the real culprit was. It was the Government which had encouraged undesirable elements in the country. It should now seek a solution of the difficulty by getting the help of the real representatives of the people, Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah. They were the people who could solve the problem.

*Mr. Jannadas Mehta*: They are as much responsible for the muddle as the Government.

*Mr. L. C. Gwilt* (European Group) said the food emergency which exist and would continue to exist not only until the gathering of the aman rice crop in a few weeks time, but for the next several years, called for the greatest measure of national unity. Unless there was a rapid change in the attitude of some of the "surplus" provinces, and national co-operation to assist towards procurement, the future must hold the most serious consequences from which India might take a generation to recover. He appealed to all to avoid permitting the state of Bengal to degenerate into a political issue, and asked the Press to devote space to "what is right in the rationed areas as they have done in the past to what is wrong in Bengal." He asked the Central Government not to supply the imported grain to any province which had not shown their bonafides in introducing an efficient measure of food control or rationing. He suggested that senior appointments in the provincial food administration be made by the Public Services Commission. Agriculture should be transferred from the Department of Education, Health and Lands to the Food Department, or a separate portfolio for it created.

*Sir Cowasji Jehangir* thought that the deficit of 2,500,000 tons given for the whole of India was an error and that it should not be really more than 1,500,000 tons. From what he had seen and learned in his own province of Bombay, the only method of procurement was to take grains direct from the cultivator's hands. He did not know what were the "political risks" to which the Gregory Report referred in dealing with these proposals. The revenue officers were there to buy grains from the cultivators at a fair and equitable price. There were difficulties, he granted, but he hoped that the Central Government would bring this suggestion to the attention of the provincial Governments and that Bombay at least would adopt it and show the way for procurement as it had shown the way for rationing. He endorsed the plan of rationing as the only equitable method of distribution, and he was glad to hear from Mr. Kirby that a principle of rationing was that there must be a month's stock and a likelihood of maintaining that stock.

Mr. N. Sivaraj declared: "Whatever the position of India in the British Empire and whatever her constitutional status among other parts of the Empire, the fact remains that India is today on a war basis on account of the responsibility forced upon it by the British Government. It is my contention that those who took this responsibility of declaring war have also to bear the responsibility of finding food supplies for the civil population of India." During the war, he added, such initiative as that of the Government of India had been taken away by HMG. and in that particular case of food, he blamed HMG. Referring to the demand for a Royal Commission, Mr. Sivaraj said: "I feel that such a Commission will be useful only at a later stage. I think it is of no use at all at the present moment." During the war food must become a Central responsibility, and if it was necessary to amend the Government of India Act in order to confer such power on the Government of India, he would ask the Government to approach the Secretary of State to have the Act amended. Mr. Sivaraj concluded by commending the work done by the Madras Food Council in introducing rationing in the city and procure supplies for that purpose.

16th. NOVEMBER :—Mr. R. H. Hutchings, Secretary, Food Department, Government of India said that the prime need was not to continue singing about what should be done but to lay down broad principles and agree on a coherent policy which would make allowances for special conditions and emergencies and apply that policy consistently throughout the country. He claimed that that was the aim of the Food Department today. The most important feature of the situation was psychological. The situation was now different from what it was a year ago. They now had a policy which they did not have before. The Administration were far more alive to their duties and responsibilities than before: the public itself was beginning to realize that food was no longer a subject which could be made the sport of political ambition or financial ingenuity and at least one High Court had given a salutary judgment. The House would shortly see other measures which Government had in preparation to teach the same lesson. The problem was in essence an administrative one. Food must become the first priority subject for the time being of all administrations; the whole resources of those administrations should be focussed upon it in all its different and connected aspects. One of the most important points was the effective application of the Foodgrains Control Order. (Voices: How far have you succeeded.) Mr. Hutchings pointed out that the administration of that Order was a provincial matter. It was still open to amendment, and if members had any amendments to propose he would welcome them. But the Order was the basis on which stocks in each province could be located and assessed. That should form the basis of any sound food administration. Next to it came price control. "Price control must, we believe, not only be supported by control of other commodities and the attempt to supply consumer goods, but it must be accepted throughout India in principle and we will neglect nothing to make it effective." Referring to rationing he said that experience had shown that wherever it had been introduced it had been successful and it had been welcomed by the great majority of the people.

Mr. Hossainbhai Lalji, leader of the Independent Party, said that during the last four years food had been taken out of India in quantities which had not been disclosed. Whereas figures of military consumption had been published, figures of export during the last four years were not reliable. He could not understand why Government now waxed so eloquent in thanking the countries who had come to India's help. Why did nobody thank India when food was going out from here?

Dr. G. Deshmukh (Congress) said that his concern was not so much with the

deaths of yesterday but with the deaths of to-morrow, for the problem of Bengal might soon be the problem of the whole of India. He suspected it was a famine brought on according to plan. For how else can you explain the binding on the part of the Government.

*Sir Frederick James* expressed the view that everybody who was in public life during the past two years must share to some extent the blame for the present situation. About rationing he asked if it applied to all alike. He asked that question because in Bangalore certain classes of dependants of military officers get rations which in some cases were even 12 times the amount given to the civil population. His inquiries showed that the military authorities in Bangalore were perfectly willing to apply exactly the same scale of rationing to dependants of military officers but they must be approached by the civil administration in the matter. The civil administration was that of the Central Government and he asked why it was not moving. *Sir Frederick* then referred to the extravagance in restaurants and hotels in Calcutta and Delhi. In the Middle East which he and others visited recently when there was a shortage of meat four meatless days were ordered for all alike. Had anybody ever thought of a riceless day in India? Profiteers in the Middle East received short shrift. He had seen 12 of them exhibited with chains on a platform in a public street exposed to the derision of the people. Why, he asked, should there not be a nation-wide campaign of austerity? Starvation and misery among the ordinary people were sowing seeds of discontent which would be reaped in a wretched and unpleasant harvest in this country. There was a good deal of waste in military circles. He knew of a case in which a distinguished scientist was approached by the authorities of a prisoners of war camp to tell them how to make compost out of surplus bread. That was when people were starving. The GOC-in-C, Southern Army, however, had taken the matter in hand and *Sir Frederick* expected that something would be done to set it right. *Sir Frederick* asked for medical relief to the affected areas so that the younger generation might be helped to get over the effects of starvation. He held that this situation in India was the responsibility not only of the administration in India, not only of the British Government which had direct and primary responsibility, but also of the United Nations' war. A satisfactory feature of the crisis was the instant and willing response from various countries but that response could not be carried into effect unless the United Nations decided that the supply to India had first priority in their war effort.

*Sir Edward Benthall*, Member for War Transport, refuted allegations that lack of transport facilities was responsible for the Bengal crisis. He gave figures to prove his plea that there were enough wagons available in the Punjab, but very often there were no foodgrains to transport. In any case, said *Sir Edward*, there had been no complaints since August last, and the fact that the Punjab had been claiming that it had exported foodgrains out of all proportion showed that transport had been made available. The time, he said, might come when due to imports and new crops, hoarders might hasten to dispose of their stocks. There might be some difficulty in meeting such a situation. He assured *Sir Frederick James* that the needs of Travancore and Cochin were very much in the mind of the Government and arrangements would be made to transport foodgrains to those two States and for which purpose a detailed programme was being worked out. Referring to Bengal, *Sir Edward* said that adequate arrangements had existed to deliver foodgrains to Calcutta, but often no foodgrains were available for transport. Government had provided 30 wagons daily to transport foodgrains from Calcutta to the E districts. In addition to this arrangements had been made to transport 500 tons of foodgrains by rail and 325 tons by steamer from N to E daily. Arrangements had also been made for transport of the aman crop in Bengal. With these arrangements, it was hoped steady improvement would be made in the Bengal situation. He declared that food must be moved and would be moved.

*Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan* said: "It is sad commentary on Lord Linlithgow's Viceroyalty that a man who had come out to India with hopes and promises to improve the lot of the agriculturist should leave its shores with the worst famine that has faced this country. If Lord Linlithgow had devoted more time to the economic conditions of India than to the geographical unity of this country, things may not have drifted to their present state. Lord Linlithgow never realized his responsibility and duty, for if the military can give assistance today, it could have done so four months ago with the result that thousands of lives might have been saved. The Nawabzada paid a warm tribute to Lord Wavell for his prompt action in dealing with the Bengal situation. He disputed the statement

of Sir Edward Benthall that transport was available for moving foodgrains from Calcutta. As for the "Grow More Food" campaign, he said that the large acreage under foodgrains was possible at the cost of cotton which was no longer wanted by Japan. There were 20,00,000 acres of fallow land lying in Assam which could produce 1,00,00,000 mds. foodgrains at least. The Government had never thought of putting it under cultivation. The Nawabzada concluded by saying that the whole responsibility for the present state of affairs lay with the British Government which had dragged India into the war and made her into a base of operations. Bengal had become a frontier and it was the duty of India and the Empire to save Bengal. The Government of India must help Bengal financially to save the lives of millions of human beings.

#### OFFICIAL BILLS

17th. NOVEMBER :—The Assembly today disposed of the four remaining official Bills and devoted the rest of the sitting to discussing the food crisis. The House passed *Sir Aziz-ul-Haque's* two Bills, one to amend the Indian Tea Control Act and the other to amend the Indian Companies Act.

The *Finance Member's* Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to Central excise duties was referred to a select committee; and the *Law Member's* motion for circulation of the Bill to amend and codify the Hindu Law relating to intestate succession, as reported by the joint committee, was passed.

#### DEBATE ON FOOD SITUATION

Dr. G. V. Deshmukh complained of heavy exports of foodgrains from the C. P. and asked that the food supplies to Italian and other foreign prisoners of war quartered in India should be HMG's responsibility. He expressed disagreement with those who were clamouring for the reduction of prices of agricultural commodities. He was not against fixing prices but in that process several factors, such as the cultivator's needs for his family's sustenance, education, medicine, seed for the next year's crop and provision for possible failure of crops should be borne in mind.

*Sir Ziauddin Ahmed* said that wastage of food should be made a criminal offence. He complained against the way in which the Food Department have ignored members of the House in choosing the personnel of conferences and committees and alleged that this was done because the department finds members of the House very inconvenient in their criticisms. More shiploads of wheat were expected to arrive in this country shortly, said the Food Member, *Sir J. P. Srivastava*, replying to *Khan Bahadur Shabbhan*, during question time today. It was not in the public interest, he said, to reveal either the quantities expected or the name of the countries from where imports had been arranged. The Food Member informed Mr. Essak Sait that so far as Orissa was concerned, it was expected that the winter rice crop would relieve the situation. As for Bombay, the Government of India were taking steps to supply foodgrains from surplus areas as well as foodgrains imported from abroad. In addition, the provincial Government was taking measures to procure considerable part of the crops which were being harvested or would be harvested shortly. Steps had also been taken to supply Madras with millets, but the position there was reported to have improved considerably. "The Government of India agree as to the importance of ensuring that certain conditions exist when statutory price control is introduced," said *Sir J. P. Srivastava* in reply to a question by Dr. *Govind Deshmukh*. In the present emergent conditions, all-India statutory prices for all foodgrains are an impossibility. The Government of India have therefore, decided that, pending the enforcement of statutory control of the prices throughout India, such provinces as desire to enforce statutory control should be permitted to do so subject, however, to the approval of the statutory price by the Central Government. These decisions apply to all provinces without exception."

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Labour Member, replying to Mr. K. C. Neogy, said that 1940 was the peak year for coal production in India. Since then production had fallen slightly year by year. The fall assumed serious proportions for June 1943. Compared with the corresponding months of 1942, the output in June, July and August of this year fell by about 353,000 tons each month, while September showed a decrease of 299,000 tons. Mentioning the principal steps taken to improve the situation, Dr. Ambedkar said: "More wagons have been provided to take away coal particularly in the Bengal and Bihar coalfields. Efforts are being made to ensure the prompt delivery of colliery stores and machinery. Women have, since

August, been permitted to work underground in the C. P. and Berar coalfields. "Action has been taken to prevent interference with colliery labour from military activities in the coalfields. Schemes are under preparation for providing a greater quantity of consumer goods for collieries and, in particular, of food and arrangements are being made to ensure an adequate ration at concession rates to the miners. Welfare officers are about to be appointed in the Bengal and Bihar coalfields to promote the health and general welfare of miners."

The decline in output was due mainly to the shortage of labour which was drawn away by the "Grow More Food" campaign and by military works in the vicinity, added the Labour Member. An increase in output of coal was necessary to meet the internal requirements of Indian industry and essential consumers.

*Sardar Sant Singh* repudiated the charge in hoarding and profiteering made against the Punjab. As regards hoarding, he gave figures which, he said, proved that wheat was coming freely to the markets in the Punjab. As regards profiteering, he declared that he knew, that the Bengal Government made profits. He also knew that the Central Government made a profit of Rs. 1-2 a md. on wheat brought from the Punjab and sold to Bengal, and in this way made a profit of Rs. 1 crore. Was the Finance Member prepared to deny that?

*Sir Jeremy Raisman* was heard to remark that he was prepared to give Rs. 10 for every one which *Sardar Sant Singh* alleged had been made by the Central Government.

*Sardar Sant Singh* went on to repeat the charge against the Central Government.

The Finance Member, interrupting him again, asked if he supported taxation by Government to cover themselves against loss on food supplies.

The Food Member remarked that what *Sardar Sant Singh* said was ancient history and that he would give a reply in due course.

*Sardar Sant Singh* charged the millers of Bengal with making large profits. (*Sir Henry Richardson*: Untrue). Referring to the War Transport Member's statement about empty wagons coming from the Punjab because no wheat was forthcoming, *Sardar Sant Singh* gave figures of wheat which he said was lying in stations in the Punjab for want of wagons.

The debate was adjourned at this stage.

18th. NOVEMBER :—The Assembly today concluded the debate on the food crisis in India when all amendments to the Food Member's proposal (on the first day of the debate), that the food situation be taken into consideration by the House, were rejected.

The Muslim League's amendment asking for the appointment of a Royal Commission was rejected by 41 votes to 26, the Congress Party, the Nationalists and some unattached members not voting. The other amendments were all rejected without a division.

*Sir J. P. Srivastava* (Food Member), replying on the debate, said he was not prepared to accept any of the amendments. This, he declared, was not the time for any inquiry. He was not, however, baulking or avoiding an inquiry being undertaken at the proper time, and he would place before HMG a full report of the debate in this House.

The debate began with a speech by *Sir Aziz-ul-Haque* who replied to references made to his administration of the Food Department before he became Commerce Member. He said that from January to June this year, the monthly average mortality rate in Calcutta was less than the average of the preceding five years, and it was difficult for him to believe at that time that a crisis was impending in Bengal. But the Food Department were not complacent or idle; they took what steps were possible to have a co-ordinated and concerted policy; they set up a long-range Planning Committee; tried to arrange for imports and so on. There had been a reference, he said, to the export of foodgrains by the UKCC, which, it was said, had denuded India of foodgrains.

*Sir A. H. Ghuznavi*: "It is correct."

*Sir Aziz-ul-Haque* declared it was not correct to any extent. The UKCC did not take any grains away except perhaps 100 tons to Persia.

*Mr. Jinnah* interrupting asked what was the total quantity exported.

*Sir Aziz ul* said that the Food Member would give up-to-date figures in the course of his reply.

*Mr. K. C. Neogy*: "Has the Hon. Member read *Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas'* minute to the Gregory Committee's report?"

Mistakes and miscalculations, *Sir Aziz-ul* continued, had been made, but never deliberately; they were ordinary incidents of life. As a result of action in

the direction of control taken in recent months, the price of a number of articles had come down.

*Sir Henry Richardson*, Leader of the European Group, while generally favouring an inquiry at a suitable time by a suitable body of the type of a Royal Commission, declared that there was much to be done here and now by the Central and Provincial Governments and by the public. He thought that the Gregory Report was a blue print, and the important thing was to stick to its proposals and implement them without further hesitation of chopping and changing. Referring to some of its recommendations, Sir Henry asked whether the Central Government were satisfied with the measure of co-operation received from provinces, and, if not, what steps they proposed to take in the matter. About procurement, he said that the most important thing was to allay panic among agriculturists and to make them realize that high prices would not last for ever. In Bengal, he suggested that Government should announce that Calcutta would be fed by imports from outside the province so that foodstuffs in the mofussil would be available for mofussil needs. For generations cultivators in many parts of India had been burdened with debt; here at last was a chance if they were wise to make a new start to become creditors rather than debtors and to learn those habits of thrift which, in other agricultural countries of the world, were the most stable foundations of the State. He would like to see a future established whereby the agriculturist would have easy access to farm implements, improved seeds, good housing, good education, medical benefits and the many other vital needs which hitherto had remained unsatisfied. On the side of production, he urged that among other things India should follow the example of the allotment movement in Britain. Advocating rationing, he said that a particular province could not dispense with rationing merely because it was a surplus province. No town anywhere in the world was a surplus area and the mere fact that a town was situated, say, in the Punjab, rather than in Bengal, could not constitute a logical reason for excluding it from the rationing system. "Rationing" he asserted, "is not just an expedient to carry us for the next few months: we are not dealing with a purely temporary emergency which will be at an end when the aman harvest has been gathered in. We are dealing with a problem which is likely to continue for some years to come. There is a world shortage of food and the demands from the devastated areas after the war will require the utmost human endeavour to meet them. India which is more nearly self-sufficient in food than many countries in the world, will have to make every effort to live on her own resources and this can only be done if a sound system of rationing is introduced now and maintained until the period of world shortage is over." He refuted the charge of hoarding by capitalists and employers in Bengal and said that if the worst charge against capitalists was that they had made certain that their labour force would be fed, he for one would not blush.

*Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar*, Supply Member, speaking amid many interruptions made a vigorous and eloquent presentation of Government's case. He conceded that a certain amount of indignation on the part of members was natural and it was not right that with a calamity of this kind facing the country, any member should stand up and say in a spirit of self-righteousness that the Government had done its best. He wanted to suggest remedies for the situation rather than dwell on the difficulties of the past but in order to meet the statements that the Government was devoid of any policy and was callous and inconsiderate, inefficient and lacking in foresight, he would make a very brief review of what Government had done. It was not true that the food question was thought of only when the Food Department was established. The war began on September 3, 1939, and on September 9, 1939, authority was delegated to Provincial Governments, giving them power to control the price of various foodstuffs and other necessities of life. Within six weeks of the declaration of war, the first Price Control Conference, which was really a Food Conference, was called. Agricultural prices at that time were in a depressed state, and when the conference was summoned, commercial bodies were all unanimous, and many provinces were also of the view that there should be no control of prices of foodstuffs. The Bombay Government was the first to take advantage of the delegation of authority, and within a few days the Congress Ministry that was in power at that time enforced the Price Control Order. The Bombay Government's policy had always been to let the agriculturist realize a fair share of prices and at the same time take into account the interests of the consumer. He should like to single out the Bombay Government for its far-sighted policy throughout.

In 1940 there was a relapse in prices, and in 1941 prices were again shooting up in a manner that was unfair to the consumer. On Dec 5, 1941, the price control on wheat was opposed. The Government of India at that time were helped by the parity of prices prevailing between the main wheat-producing provinces of the Punjab, the U. P. and Sind. In Feb. 1942 the next Price Control Conference was held. Burma was in danger of invasion and the question whether rice should be controlled was considered. All the rice-growing provinces felt the time had not come, but Government foresaw the deficiency and one of their first act was to maintain a shuttle steamer service to bring to India as much Burma rice as possible before occupation. (A voice: How much rice did you get?). Sir Ramaswami said he had not the figures at the moment.

A Member "Nothing".

*Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar:* "Whas is the good of your saying 'nothing' 'knowing nothing'?" (Laughter).

In April 1942 (he went on) the next Price Control Conference was called and a regional system of price control for rice was evolved and in May the Foodgrains Control Order was issued designed to prevent boarding and profiteering and making other provisions.

*Sir Cowasji Jehangir.* "How many Provincial Governments were under Sec. 93 then?"

*Sir Ramaswami:* "That information is available to the Hon. Member as much as to me. If the suggestion is that some of the Sec. 93 provinces did not carry out this Ordinance, he is right.

*Mr. Jinnah.* "What were you doing?"

A voice: "He was doing his best." (Laughter).

*Mr. Jinnah:* "I meant to ask what was the Government of India doing?"

*Sir Ramaswami* said the Government of India were asking the provinces to take action suggesting to them on what lines to proceed. The Provincial Governments pleaded they were arranging staff, building up the machinery for enforcing the Order and making other arrangements.

*Sir Ramaswami* proceeded to say that there had been too much concentration on the fact that sufficient grain was not going to Bengal and not much on the more vital question of the price and whether because of the price there was starvation in the midst of plenty.

Several voices: "Who is responsible?"

*Mr. Jamnadas Mehta:* "Inflation."

*Sir Ramaswami* said that Provincial Governments might be responsible: the profiteer and the boarder might be responsible, but he knew of one group of persons who brought it about. That was those who went about in the villages and told the agriculturists: "Don't sell grains, don't accept currency notes." If there was pre-determined famine in this country, he knew of one group of persons who preconceived, pre-determined and planned to bring about this condition. (Loud cheers greeted these remarks, in the midst of which *Dr. Govind Deshmukh* and *Mr. Abdul Qayum* from the Congress benches stood up to protest against the remarks.)

*Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar:* "My hon. friends do not know to whom I am referring and still they are protesting. Do they feel my remarks apply to them?" (Renewed cheers and further protests.)

*Dr. Deshmukh:* "It doesn't matter to whom he is referring: they are my countrymen." *Sir Ramaswami:* "They are also my countrymen." (More cheers).

He proceeded to emphasize that we must get back to the position of statutory price control for all foodstuffs. That was the first essential. The second essential was rationing. He was convinced that rationing in rural areas was not possible. But the question had been continued in a peculiar way by the surplus and deficit provinces. The surplus provinces said why should we adopt rationing? He ventured to say to these provinces that it was a misconception. Where, he asked, was equality of sacrifice in such a position? To send your surplus to other provinces at a price which you could demand was no sacrifice, much less equality of sacrifice. Those that took up that position were not entitled to any credit. What else were they doing except keep their commercial contacts? (Cheers). Replying to the argument of inflation he pointed out that there was no inflation in the UK just as there was here. (*Mr. Jamnadas Mehta.* "No no") Currency notes worth £1,000,000,000 had been issued there without any backing but by strict rationing and price control, all that money had been immobilized. Everything had been rationed even furniture. Only utility furniture was available. "And even

that only if your house is bombed or you are going to try another wife" (Laughter). During these discussions (he went on) he felt there were occasional unnecessary political issues raised: even economic issues were complicated by the fear that some high political issue was going to be admitted or some political lesson about geographical unity was to be drawn from the economic situation. He would be hiding his head on the sands of prejudice, like an ostrich, if he believed that by these subtle methods and arguments grave issues which had to be resolved by medical adjustment could be settled. (Cheers).

Mr. Jinnah : "I hope you will take some measures by which you can impress this upon Lord Hailey."

Sir Ramaswami suggested it was hardly for him to undertake that Lord Hailey was a careful student of these matters.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee, the Nationalist Party leader, charged Government with an attempt to minimize the Gravity of the famine in Bengal. They avoided the use of the term famine, they manipulated figures to their own purpose, they gagged the Press both with regard to news and views, and now they were forcibly respecting destitutes from Calcutta with the ostensible object that the health of the city should not deteriorate but in reality to minimize the gravity of the situation. The effect of the general policy of concealing facts had been a slackening of action to cope with the disaster. "Had the truth been told, more vigorous help would have come from outside in time. It was according to him, "a Government-made famine," and the responsibility rested not with the Provincial Government alone on whom Mr. Amery had tried to shift the blame, but on the Government of India and the Secretary of State also. He suggested that to meet the emergency in Bengal there should be large imports into that province from other provinces and abroad and an equitable system of distribution under the auspices of a Provincial Food Council, adequate transport facilities for food being given the highest priority, and even suspension of war needs for some time. The aman rice crop should not be tampered with by Government and should be distributed in the province outside Calcutta which should be fed by imports.

Mr. Abdul Qaiyum, Deputy Leader, Congress Party, said he was not a believer in Royal Commissions. "In the eyes of the people of this country, the Government of Britain and their henchmen here, sitting opposite, are responsible for the calamity. It will be improper for us to ask those who are guilty to arrange for a Royal Commission to come at some distant time and whitewash their actions." The speaker quoted from Mr. Amery's statements and said that as late as January last it appeared that the British Government were fully conscious of the approaching calamity, but they refused to take any action. Even in the course of the recent Lords debate, Lord Huntingdon had pointed out that the dangers were fully foreseen. Referring to Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar's insinuations against the Congress Mr. Qaiyum asked what was wrong with the advice the Congress gave to the country. They knew the real conditions in the villages. They knew there would be inflation, a rise in prices, maldistribution and so on, and they therefore advised the agriculturist not to part with grain but to lay in stock for emergency. "Had we not given that advice, the conditions in the country would have been worse." The responsibility, he said, was primarily that of the British Government and their agents here. The British Government had thrown all responsibility on the Provincial Governments and had tried to make out a case against provincial autonomy or self-government, but he asked who was responsible for the monetary policy of the country, for exports, transport and the denial policy. There was one and only one answer to that, namely, the Central Government. He asked why exports were not stopped when the war started. "It is no use trying to get credit for having done something which could have been done before." He observed that when things went wrong, it was customary for the Government of India to take shelter behind provincial autonomy. While elsewhere in the world Governments had been planning ahead, Mr. Qaiyum remarked, it was news to him to hear that the Government of India now had a plan. (Laughter). He thought India's was the only Government which had no plan. Whatever measures they were taking would be a temporary palliative. A long-term policy could not be based on the opinions of economists imported from abroad. There was something called nationalism in economics and the job could only be done by Indian economists. "If the imported persons are really such good experts, why should their own country have spared them in war-time." (Laughter). Planning for self-sufficiency ought to have been done at the outbreak of the war, said the speaker. If only 2,000,000 acres of uncultivated land had been put under cultivation,

the present calamity would not have occurred. He also criticized the procurement methods of Government in allowing middle-men to function without check and control. Why should Government not buy direct from the producer, as was being done in Kashmir, and force the agriculturist to part with a portion of his produce, open Government shops and Government granaries, he asked.

Mr. M. A. Jinnah thought it a pity that one had to participate in the debate under the shadow of the tragedy in which thousands were dying. In January 1943, the Secretary of State made the statement that there was no danger of famine in India and that everything was all right. "May I know on whose authority he made that statement? Who supplied him with the information in January 1943 to enable him to make that solemn statement?" Referring to the Muslim League amendment, Mr. Jinnah said: "Out of our despair and helplessness and as a forlorn hope, by passing this amendment, you will say to those who want to understand, that we hold this Government *prima facie* guilty of gross neglect, lack of grip and foresight and colossal failure to discharge their responsibility." "You know you are guilty," he declared pointing to the Government benches. "If you don't know this much, then God help you." Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar had made an insinuation that there was a party which acted in such a manner that it became more difficult for the Central Government to formulate a policy which would have prevented such an appalling situation. If it was true there was such a party, a party which was playing this game, may be out of bitterness, or of ill-will or on political grounds, why did not the Government openly say this was happening? "So far as the Muslim League and the Muslims are concerned, we don't introduce any political issues, or make capital, financial or political. We know one thing. Our countrymen are dying and let me tell you, if the monsoon fails, then I don't know what will happen. It is no use saying that this is God's act. God has not yet intervened. (Cheers). He may. Therefore, be prepared to meet this intervention." "On behalf of the Muslim League," he said, "I can assure you we are prepared to give you every possible assistance, notwithstanding the fact that we condemn you that are guilty of failure to discharge your duty and have treated every party with contempt, kept it at arm's length and carried on as if you wanted that no party should co-operate with you and wanted to run your own show. All that will not stand in the way of our giving you the fullest co-operation." "In the three months, August, September and October, you have done a good bit with success. How were you able to do it? Could you not have done that before? Why did you not do it? I can only surmise. It is not the fairy god-mother, the present Food Member (laughter) that has come to our rescue. It is the military hand which believe in action that may have moved even this wooden, antediluvian and incompetent Government to action." (Cheers).

The Food Member, Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava, in winding up the debate, said that he fully recognized the depth and sincerity of the feelings which had given rise to a desire for an inquiry. "I am prepared to accept that inquiry, of full and authoritative character, may be desirable; but I must make it perfectly clear that I am irrevocably opposed to any inquiry at the present time or in the immediate future for several reasons. I doubt, indeed, whether it would be practicable to constitute at the present time a committee or commission of adequate weight and status to deal with a question of this importance without calling away from urgent duties men who can ill be spared. Even if that consideration be unfounded, the mere statement that an inquiry is about to be held, and even more so the holding of that inquiry, cannot fail to distract Ministers and responsible officers from their pressing duties which ought to be and must be for some time to come directed solely towards the relief of famine conditions, the rehabilitation of the people and effective administration of food control. I fear also that it would at the present time increase bitterness of feeling, or at least revive and keep alive recrimination and militate against that concentration in the common effort which is so essential to the solution of the food problem. Our position is not that there cannot and must not be any inquiry, but while we are still in the midst of the emergency and the crisis is upon us and still continuing it is clearly impossible to determine when is the most appropriate or the earliest practicable time for the inquiry to begin. We cannot decide to what exact points that inquiry must be directed, nor in consequence can it be said what form the inquiry should take or who should conduct it. These points cannot be decided now. We do not know when the critical stage of our struggle will end nor what will be the result. "I have no desire to balk or avoid an inquiry. Indeed, I am prepared to state that if an amendment in the terms described by Sir Henry Richardson had been

before the House, I should have been prepared to accept it. His amendment would have provided for an inquiry at a suitable date into the food shortage in India and in particular in Bengal. It was to have been conducted by a suitable body of the type of a Royal Commission of which the personnel was to be completely outside the field of Indian politics. Its terms of reference would have covered a full examination of the present food shortage and it would have made recommendations to prevent a recurrence of existing distress. Such an amendment would have been accepted by me; but I regret that I cannot accept any proposal which demands that an inquiry be held now which specifies the precise constitution of the committee or its terms of reference or binds me to institute an inquiry within a specified time. Government will vote therefore against the amendments which would have that effect." Sir Jwala disclosed that when he took over the Food Department, Calcutta was reported to have had a few days' stock. Today besides the daily arrivals of foodgrains for meeting current requirements, Calcutta had more than a month's reserve on its hands. The supply position had considerably improved during the last three months and between now and the end of December the Government intend to put in 120,000 tons at least. The Government of India have given large sums of money to Bengal in the forms of loans and advances totalling Rs. 12 crores, in addition to Rs. 63 lakhs for growing more food. Referring to malnutrition, the Food Member said that the public health authorities were making special inquiries into the steps that were necessary and possible to minimize the effects of famine. It was not possible for the Government to replace deficits in rice with equivalent surpluses of rice from other areas and some adjustment in diet by the utilization of foodgrains which might at first be strange to the people, was essential. The result might be a change of habit which would in the end prove beneficial to many classes and to the introduction of better balanced diets in many areas where the reform had long been needed. Sir Jwala said that all possible steps were being taken to assist the Bengal Government in the provision of medical relief. The military authorities had made available a hospital, a casualty-clearing station and two field ambulances. They had also made available the services of 100 Army doctors, including 10 experienced hygienists, for medical relief and epidemic work. The services of 29 doctors and 10 public health inspectors had been obtained from the Government of Burma. The military authorities had also supplied 1,000,000 vitamin capsules for the treatment of starvation cases and a consignment of 1,000,000 vitamin capsules had also been received by air from HMG. Exports of all foodgrains had been completely stopped since July last. There was no truth whatever in the report that a large consignment of foodgrains had been exported from Calcutta to S Africa. The total export of rice from Calcutta since January to date had been only 2,727 tons of which 2,000 tons were for the Persian Gulf and the balance for the requirements of the crews of the Indian ships in foreign ports. The Food Member reiterated that the problem was mainly one of shipping. The Government would assist the Provincial Government by going to the utmost extent possible to take the needs of Calcutta out of the Bengal market. As regards the aman crop, it followed that if the full effect of those additional supplies to Bengal was to be realized, confidence restored, prices lowered and normal movement resumed, the off-take from the rural markets should be reduced to a very moderate figure. Referring to the denial policy, the Food Member disclosed that 17,500 tons of rice and 20,000 tons of paddy were purchased. Of this 2,437 tons was released for Ceylon and the entire balance was consumed by Bengal. As regards boats, about 25,000 country-craft were removed on payment of compensation by the Government of India. There had been no attempt to remove boats altogether from any area. They were collected and kept under control at specified centres. Extensive use of country-craft for essential agricultural purposes or communications had been already allowed on temporary permits specially to move the aman crop of 1942-43 and the return of boats was now being freely permitted. In fact no boats were now held by the military authorities under the denial policy. Every effort was also being made to find alternative employment for fishermen affected by these orders. Alluding to Sir Frederick James' remarks relating to wastage in the Army, Sir Jwala said that necessary orders had been issued to ensure that no waste of foodstuffs was allowed, and any item of the scale now sanctioned which could not be consumed would be withdrawn to the extent necessary. The present scale of ration was considered no more than adequate by the military medical authorities. Officers commanding units were, however, fully aware of the food shortage and he was assured, would keep their eyes open for instances of waste. Dealing with allegations of profiteering by

the Central Government, the Food Member disclosed that in pursuance of the undertaking given by the Central Government, the accounts of the wheat transactions had been examined. Although all the final bills of the Agents had not been received yet and the final figures were not yet available, it appeared likely that the pool price of Rs. 11-10 would leave with the Central Government a substantial profit. The Government, therefore, had reduced the price of wheat to Rs. 11-15 a maund with retrospective effect and the Controller of Food Accounts had already been requested to pass on credits to the receiving administrations at 11 annas a maund on quantities received by them. When the accounts were completed, they would be reviewed as a whole and a further credit would be passed to the receiving administrations.

The House rejected the Muslim League's amendment by 41 votes to 26. Mr. Jamnadas Mehta's amendment was negatived by 41 votes to 5. The amendments of Mr. K. C. Neogy and Kailash Behari Lal were rejected without a division. The Assembly then adjourned.

#### SCHEDULED CASTES AND ARMY

**19th. NOVEMBER :—**In the Assembly today, Government accepted a resolution asking that the Army should be thrown open to members of the scheduled castes and that military service should not be the monopoly of a few privileged classes. Mr. Piaralal Kurell Talib, a scheduled caste representative from the U. P. moved the resolution and was supported by Mr. Husseinbhai Lalji, Dr. Govind Deshmukh, Mr. N. M. Joshi, Mr. Azhar Ali and Sardar Sant Singh.

Mr. Talib admitted that there might be no bar to the scheduled castes entering the Army, but because of a lack of definite policy on the part of the Central Government, Provincial Governments were following their own policies in their areas. He had received a letter from Madras stating that many young men from the scheduled castes had not been selected for commissions in the army because they had not the social status. This, he declared, was a cruel irony.

Mr. Sivaraj suggested that scheduled castes members should be appointed as Recruiting Officers. That was one of the ways in which scheduled castes could be encouraged to come in larger numbers.

Mr. C. M. Trivedi, War Secretary, accepting the resolution said that the position which the mover sought to obtain by the resolution already existed at present. Military services were open to every class in the country and there were few, if any, classes unrepresented in the Army. He gave the categorical assurance that there would be no discrimination against the depressed classes. He was surprised to hear that Provincial Governments rejected depressed class candidates for emergency commissions : for, Provincial Governments had nothing to do with selections of candidates for these commissions, and he was reluctant to believe that any candidate was rejected because he belonged to the depressed classes. If instances were given he would look into them.

Mr. Trivedi explained that there already existed a number of regiments of Mahars, Chamars and others from different provinces in addition to a little over 200,000 scheduled caste non-combatants from all provinces. He undertook to consider Mr. Sivaraj's suggestions, but he reminded the House that the whole system of interviews had been changed and under the new system selection depended on personality, qualifications, merit and not on parentage or status.

The resolution was passed.

Dr. Govind Deshmukh moved a resolution suggesting improvement of pay and condition of services of the Indian element in the Cantonment Department and Executive Officers' Service in the interest of efficiency and justice in the Indian element. Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang, Mr. Azhar Ali and Mr. Lalchand Navalrai supported the resolution.

Mr. Wakeley, replying for Government, expressed his inability to accept the resolution. He said that nobody knew what would be the size and lay-out of the Indian Army after the war and what would be the size and number of cantonments which would then be needed. It was, therefore, unwise to plan the Cantonment Services during the war. As for the scales of pay he explained that real pay did not compare unfavourably with those in civil employment. Government, however, were at present examining the position with a view to improving prospects and conditions of service of Cantonment personnel.

The resolution was withdrawn and the Assembly adjourned *sine die*.

# The Bengal Legislative Assembly

July Session—Calcutta—5th. July to 14th. July 1943

## MR. FAZLUL HUQ'S STATEMENT ON RESIGNATION

The Bengal Legislative Assembly met for a short session at Calcutta on the 5th. July 1943. There was a large attendance of members and the public galleries were crowded. Mr. *A. K. Fazlul Huq*, who had held the office of Chief Minister of Bengal for the last six years, but resigned office in the last session, sat in the Opposition as its Leader. The other front bench Opposition members were Dr. *Shyama Prasad Mukherjee*, Leader of the Hindu Nationalist Party, Mr. *Santosh Kumar Basu*, Leader of the unofficial Congress Party, and Mr. *Shamsuddin Ahmed*, Leader of the Krishak Proja, all of them members of the last Ministry.

After question-time, Mr. *A. K. Fazlul Huq*, ex-Chief Minister, and three of his colleagues in the last Cabinet, Mr. *Santosh Kumar Basu*, Mr. *P. N. Banerjee* and Mr. *Shamsuddin Ahmed* asked leave of the House to make statements regarding the circumstances connected with their resignations. A long discussion followed on the point whether they should be allowed to make their statements.

On behalf of the Government *Khawaja Sir Nazimuddin*, Chief Minister, objected to such statements being allowed to be made, stating that the rules of business of the House allowed an individual who had resigned to make a statement in explanation of the resignation, but it did not cover the present case where an entire Cabinet had resigned.

Allowing the ex-Ministers to make their statements the Speaker, Mr. *Syed Nausher Ali*, said that he did not think that the rules of business of the House warranted any conclusion that when an entire Ministry had resigned members of the Ministry would have no right to make any personal statement.

## Mr. Fazlul Huq's Statement on Resignation

In his statement on the events that led to his resignation, Mr. *Fazlul Huq* charged Sir John Herbert, Governor of Bengal with partisanship and violation of his Instrument of Instructions. At the outset, Mr. *Huq* said that the Secretary of State for India had stated in Parliament that Mr. *Huq's* resignation had occurred in the course of procedure under provincial representative institutions. The language used by the Secretary of State was mysterious, if not meaningless. He (Mr. *Huq*) sent a telegram to the Secretary of State definitely protesting against his incorrect version of events and requesting him to ascertain facts before he publicly committed himself to any account of what had taken place. He also sent a telegram to H. E. the Viceroy urging him to cable correct facts to the Secretary of State for India. To this he received a reply that the Governor had been in communication with the Secretary of State and with regard to variations between Mr. *Huq's* version and that of the Governor, the Secretary of State felt satisfied that the version of the Governor was correct.

Had India been a free country and this Assembly a real Parliament with sovereign powers, said Mr. *Fazlul Huq*, Sir John Herbert would long ago have been recalled to milder climes to spend his talents on less pretentious avocations than the Governorship of the premier Province of India. In all that he was saying, added Mr. *Huq*, he was referring only to Sir John's actions in his official capacity as executive head of the Province and his statement had no bearing whatever on any other aspect of his character or conduct.

After narrating the circumstances leading to the formation of his Cabinet in 1941, Mr. *Fazlul Huq* said that after they came into office "Sir John Herbert was not only unsympathetic but in many cases positively obstructive. We felt his interference and obstruction in matters of day-to-day administration so keenly that we apprehended that we were heading towards a crisis."

## DIFFERENCES OVER REPRESSIVE POLICY

Mr. *Huq* quoted from his letter to the Governor on August 2, (published at the end of this report) explaining to him that the situation was becoming critical and asking him to proceed on constitutional lines.

"I received no reply to this letter of August 2, 1942," said Mr. *Huq* in the course of his statement, "and I was surprised that even in the course of private interviews, Sir John Herbert never referred to the matters I had discussed in the letter regarding my strong criticisms of his actions. It is significant that he never

attempted to reply to any of the very serious allegations I had made in that letter although possibly he was all the time harbouring resentment."

Mr. Fazlul Huq also said that he and his colleagues were asked to dissociate themselves from the statement made by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookherjee on February 12 in the House regarding the circumstances leading to Dr. Mookherjee's resignation. They were asked practically to make a statement in the House that the Governor had been acting in a most constitutional manner and that the measures taken by the Government had not only been amply justified, but had been carried out under circumstances of exceptional clemency under great provocation. "Personally," said Mr. Huq in his letter, "I was not prepared categorically to deny all that Dr. Mookherjee had said. There was much in that statement with which I certainly agreed and I could not reconcile my conscience with the suggestion that had been made to me, to condemn statements with which I was more or less in agreement. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the European party became violently inflamed against me and I now suspect that from February onwards there was a sort of an agreement between my political adversaries on the one hand, high officials and the European party on the other, to oust me from office."

Mr. Huq continued : "A few days later came the Bombay Resolution of the All-India Congress Committee and the disturbances which broke out all over India on August 9. Bengal naturally had more than its share of the policy of repression carried on throughout India in the name of suppression of what was called the Congress rebellion in the country. The Defence of India Rules were freely used to arrest and imprison prominent leaders of the people and also to impose what was called collective fines in areas where the disturbances happened to be of an abnormal character. In the case of many of these arrests and orders of imprisonment I differed from the police point of view and also from the Governor's point of view. In a very few cases, my recommendations were accepted but I was overruled in every other case. In some cases the evidence appeared to me to be so slender that I expressed my surprise that the police should be insisting on orders being passed on practically no evidence. A few of these arrested persons have been released within the last week and I wish the materials on which they had been originally arrested and the reasons for which my orders of release were overruled by the Governor, could be made public. Possibly, the Governor has agreed to the release of prominent politicals in order to cover the present Ministry with short-lived glory, but the public can easily see through the game. In many cases, orders passed by me so long ago as August or September last have been allowed to remain unexecuted till some momentous considerations of State have induced the Governor to consent to their release at this moment just on the eve of the session of the Legislature.

"In the case of collective fines, we had tremendous difficulties. In most of the cases, the amounts imposed were hardly commensurate with the crimes that had been committed and in almost all of these cases, the innocent suffered more than the guilty. As usual, my dissentient voice never prevailed and the police point of view and the recommendations of the permanent officials found favour with the Governor."

#### INSIDE STORY OF THE "RESIGNATION"

Dealing with what he called "the circumstances under which Sir John Herbert managed to secure my signature on that fraudulent document called my letter of resignation," Mr. Fazlul Huq said that when His Excellency asked him for his resignation on the 28th March this year, after being summoned to Government House, he vehemently but respectfully protested. The Governor told Mr. Huq that he wanted his resignation as he (Mr. Huq) had made statements in the House that he would be prepared to tender resignation in order to facilitate the formation of an All-Parties Cabinet. "I said that I still adhered to that position but that was no reason why I should resign without being satisfied about the fulfilment of the conditions for an All-Parties Ministry. He, however, insisted on my tendering resignation then and there, and in order to clinch the matter, he brought out a typed piece of paper purporting to be my letter of resignation to the Governor. I explained to him that if I tendered my resignation at that stage, the Budget demands would remain unfinished and the Finance Bill also would be sabotaged. But the Governor was still insisting on my signature. I then asked for time to consult my colleagues and my Party. But the Governor was obdurate and refused my request. He was determined to have my signature then and there. I still resisted. Upon this the Governor slightly changed his front and assured me that

no effect would be given to the letter of resignation immediately, but that he would keep it with himself to be shown to party leaders in case there was the possibility of an All-Parties Cabinet. Upon this assurance given by the Governor, that the letter of resignation would not be made effective unless actually required for the purpose of the formation of an All-Parties Cabinet, I signed that letter and handed it over to the Governor. I again reminded him that it was not meant to be treated as a letter of resignation and that no effect should be given to it unless the circumstances arose for which I had consented to sign that previously drafted piece of paper.

#### GOVERNOR'S "PARTISAN ZEAL"

Of the formation of Sir Nazimuddin's Cabinet, Mr. Fazlul Huq said : "Sir John Herbert so far forgot himself that he stooped to canvass support for Sir Nazimuddin's Cabinet. He then proceeded to put Sir Nazimuddin in power with a Cabinet consisting of thirteen members, thirteen Parliamentary Secretaries and four Government whips, although in our time we were not allowed any expansion of our small Cabinet of only eight Ministers, or the appointment of more than one Parliamentary Secretary."

Mr. Fazlul Huq added : "When once he had made up his mind that I should be removed from the office of Chief Minister, Sir John Herbert did not hesitate to adopt any measures to achieve this end. He did not hesitate to cajole me, persuade me and to hold out promises which he never meant to keep. But, he forgot all his promises and cast his assurances to the wind the moment I had turned my back on Government House, and manifested all the zeal of a partisan in trying to secure colleagues for Sir Nazimuddin...Of all the faults of which a Governor can be guilty, the fault of partisanship is the most reprehensible. In England or the English Colonies such an attitude of a Governor would never be tolerated. A partisan Governor is no more fit for his high office than a partisan Judge. By being a partisan, he acts contrary to his Instrument of Instructions and makes himself liable to removal from office... A Governor who acts in contravention of the terms of his commission makes himself liable to censure, judicial punishment or recall. It is an outrage on the constitution if a Governor-General or Governor seeks to place himself above the law of the land by the exercise of his powers of discretion or individual judgment and the Legislature owes a duty to itself to help to discover and fight for constitutional remedies against such violation."

Concluding, Mr. Fazlul Huq said : "I have made certain definite allegations against His Excellency the Governor. I have charged him with partisanship and violation of his Instrument of Instructions. The charges are either true and correct, or false and incorrect. The public have a right to know whether His Excellency accepts my allegations as true and correct or otherwise. His Excellency is not without his remedy. Apart from issuing Government communiques or press Notes, His Excellency the Governor has the right to address the House and let the members know his version of the various incidents to which I have referred in my statement. The points raised are of the utmost constitutional importance and His Excellency would be extremely ill-advised if he allows the public to draw their own conclusions from his studied silence."

After Mr. Fazlul Huq had concluded his statement, three of his colleagues in the last Cabinet, Messrs. Santosh Kumar Basu, Pramatha Nath Banerjee and Shamsuddin Ahmed, made separate statements in explanation of their resignation.

The Chief Minister, Sir Nazimuddin, then placed before the House a statement on the food situation in Bengal by the Minister for Civil Supplies, Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, who is at present away in Delhi in connection with the food conference. The House at this stage adjourned.

#### Mr. Huq's Letter to Governor

The following is the text of the letter dated August 2, 1942, addressed by Mr. Huq to the Governor referred to in the ex-Chief Minister's statement :—

"At a time when the implications of the Congress resolution have filled all our hearts with the deepest anxiety for the future of India, I feel unfortunately compelled to write this letter to Your Excellency. I wish I could avoid this correspondence. But circumstances have left me no other alternative, and it pains me much to have to say very bluntly that you have contributed not a little to the creation of the situation which has forced me to take this unpleasant step. You are the Governor of the Province and I am your Chief Minister and your principal adviser. Our mutual relations impose on both of us reciprocal duties and obligations, and I can never shirk the responsibility of intervening by means of friendly

but frank advice whenever I find you are treading the wrong bath. If I allow things to drift, I will be failing in my duty to you and to the people of this Province. I am convinced that the time has come when I must speak to you quite openly what I feel in order to avoid a constitutional crisis in Bengal. More than once have I sounded a note of caution and have told you that you have been following a policy which cannot but have the inevitable effect of practically suspending the constitution in Bengal, reducing it in a position similar to that of the provinces governed under Section 99 of the Government of India Act. I have tried to convince you that, by listening to the advice of a few officials, you are acting as if your ministers did not exist and that you were free to deal direct with Secretaries and other permanent officials. As the head of the Cabinet, I cannot possibly allow this attitude on your part to go unchallenged. The present letter is no more than another and the last attempt to put matters a right, and I sincerely hope that this letter will have the desired effect. I am writing with the stern resolve to assert myself as the Chief Minister, and I can assure you that if it leads to a constitutional struggle between you as the Governor and me as the Chief Minister, I will not shirk from doing my duty regardless of consequences.

#### INTERFERENCE IN ADMINISTRATION

"Broadly speaking, there are two classes of cases wherein, I regret to have to say, you have failed to act as a constitutional Governor. In the first category, I will put that class of cases wherein I have detected your personal interference in almost every matter of administrative detail, including even those where your interference is definitely excluded by the Government of India Act. A little reflection will convince you how unwelcome must be such an interference, and how bitterly Ministers must resent impediments in the way of the very limited powers which they possess under the Act. As it is, the Act is bad enough and is no better than a clever subterfuge by which the permanent officials have got all the powers but no responsibility, whereas the Ministers have all the responsibility and no powers. But the camouflage with which the Act abounds is so transparent that it is not difficult to detect that, beneath the pretentious device of Ministers functioning in a system of Provincial Autonomy, the real power is still vested in the permanent officials, the Ministers have been given a mockery of authority and the steel frame of the imperial services still remains intact, dominating the entire administration, and casting sombre shadows over the activities of Ministers. Any interference with even this limited power of Ministers is, therefore, the worst of its kind, and I regret that your record in this respect has in no way been a negligible one. In the second category, I would put those classes of cases in which you have, directly or indirectly, encouraged sections of permanent officials to flout the authority of Ministers, leading them to ignore Ministers altogether, and to deal directly with you as if the Ministers did not exist.

"Arising out of all this, there is also one important factor, not directly connected with the cases I have mentioned above, but which has also contributed towards the creation of the situation which I sincerely deplore. I refer to your attitude in Cabinet meetings, where you monopolise all the discussions and practically force decisions on your Ministers, decisions which are in many cases the outcome of advice tendered to you by permanent officials belonging to services whose traditions are fundamentally opposed to a genuine spirit of sympathy with the feelings and aspirations of the people.

#### "ACT AS A TRUE STATESMAN"

"I know these are very harsh words to use to a Governor, but I want to be perfectly frank with you. I have decided to carry frankness to the extreme limit, because it is my earnest desire to render you the utmost possible help in the difficult days that lie ahead of us. Whether you will accept my advice or not, it is a matter with which I have no concern. The choice must lie with you. It is a question of confidence and trust. British officials in India are now faced with a situation unparalleled in the history of any civilised country in modern times. Gigantic events are shaking empires to their very foundations. Here, in India, we are faced with a crisis which may lead to the most momentous events affecting the destinies not merely of the people of this country, but of millions of human beings all over the world. If ever statesmanship was indispensable in guiding the policy of rulers, the present situation in India has need of that statesmanship in the fullest measure. I am therefore, asking you to play the role of a true statesman and to realise that India to-day has attained a position in world politics wherein the wishes of its people in matters of administration cannot be ignored with any-

thing like impunity. Administrative measures must be suited to the genius and traditions of the people and not fashioned according to the whims and caprices of hardened bureaucrats to many of whom autocratic ideas are the very breath of their lives. It is to your own Ministers and not to this class of officers that you should turn for advice if you desire to avoid pitfalls which have always been responsible for administrative disasters.

#### FOOD POLICY

"Let me now come to facts. As regards your personal interference in total disregard of ministerial responsibilities, I will briefly refer to only a few. There is first of all the case of your mandate to the Joint Secretary, Commerce and Labour Department, in April last in the matter of the rice removal policy. Here you acted as if the Government of India Act in Bengal had been suspended, and you were at the head of an administration under Section 93 of the Act. In a matter of such vital importance, affecting the question of the food-stuffs of the people, you should have called an emergent meeting of the Cabinet and discussed with your Ministers the best means of carrying out the wishes of the military authorities and of the Central Government. But you did nothing of the kind. You did not even send for the Minister in charge of the department, although he was readily available, but you sent for the Joint Secretary instead. You gave him order to take up the work of removal at once, without caring to find out the exact position regarding the excess of rice and paddy in different areas and the best means of removal and the cheapest method of carrying out the scheme. The Joint Secretary says that when he was arranging to carry out your orders, you grew impatient and gave him definite directions to arrange for the removal of excess rice from three districts within 24 hours. Even then you did not consult your Ministers, because presumably you thought you could not trust them. The result has been a dismal failure so far as this particular policy is concerned. The Joint Secretary, in his haste and hurry to oblige you, advanced twenty lakhs of rupees to a nominee of a friend to begin the work, without any terms having been settled, or without any arrangements having been made for the safety of public money, solely for the purpose of showing that he had started carrying out your orders. When we came to know of all this at a late stage, we did what we could to retrieve the unfortunate position into which Government had been placed, but even then we could not avert the disaster. At the present moment we are faced with a rice famine in Bengal mainly in consequence of an uncalled for interference on your part, and of hasty action on the part of the Joint Secretary. As regards the huge sums of money advanced indiscreetly under your orders by the Joint Secretary in the first instance, our legal advisers are extremely dubious if we can ever expect to recover the whole amount. The loss to Government is bound to be a considerable one and the responsibility for this needless waste of public money must be shared by you and your Joint Secretary.

"Then I come to the boat removal policy. In this you have all along been acting under the advice and guidance of some permanent officials without taking your Ministers into confidence. You have even ignored one who happens to be not merely your Chief Minister but also the Minister in charge of the Home Department. You seem to have been consulting the military authorities in secret and discussing plans with the permanent officials, and when everything is almost settled and matters have gone beyond control, you sometimes talk to us with a view to impart information as to what had been done or was being done. The most outstanding instance of blunder which has been committed by the permanent officials apparently with your knowledge and concurrence, has been the case of the prevention of boats from going out into the Bay of Bengal for the purpose of cultivation of the lands in the various islands lying at the mouth of the delta. Some tardy recognition of the urgency of the situation was made when a limited number of boats was allowed to go out into the Bay, but it was then too late to mend matters. I will not go into details, nor is it necessary to do so. It is enough for me to emphasise that the whole scheme was planned in consultation with the military authorities and some permanent officials, without the knowledge not merely of the Cabinet but even of the Home Minister.

"I now come to the question of the formation of Home Guards. It is true that you have recently given a belated consent to our proposals regarding these organisations, but the mischief of officialisation of Home Guards had already been complete. Constitutionally, you should have accepted our advice, but you did not, with the result that the permanent officials have practically officialised the whole

concern. I do not know how far you will now be able to retrieve the mischief that has been done.

#### CABINET EXPANSION

"I will now say a few words about the manner in which you have all along resisted my efforts for the expansion of the Cabinet and the appointment of Parliamentary Secretaries. Whatever may be your powers under the Act, it is evident that as the Chief Minister, I should have the final say in the matter of the composition of the Cabinet and in parliamentary appointments and that except for the gravest of reasons, you should not reject my advice in such matters. In England, it would be unthinkable that the Prime Minister's wishes about the Cabinet should be ignored. But your attitude has been one of definite disregard of my wishes in these respects. You seem to have taken up this attitude, perhaps in the forlorn hope of getting Sir Nazimuddin and his group into the Cabinet. Eight months have now passed and your efforts to placate them have borne no fruit but your reluctance to accept my advice has not been slow to produce the most bitter results inasmuch as it has hampered the administration of the various departments of Government and also thrown a burden on our shoulders which it is physically impossible for us to bear."

#### ORDERS PASSED WITHOUT CONSULTING CABINET

"During the last few days I have discovered that orders have been passed by Secretaries either on their own responsibility or with your approval, explicit or implicit, by totally ignoring the Ministers. For instance, orders have been passed that the Government of India should be requested to send back to Bengal all officers lent to India by the Bengal Government, orders have been passed that the powers exercisable by the Provincial Government under Section 76 (B) of the Defence of India Act Rules be delegated to local officers. I was not consulted in these cases although they affect vital matters of policy. Every day some fact or other comes to light which reveals how orders had been passed in important matters without the cognisance of the Minister concerned. I strongly deprecate and resent this procedure. After all, I and my Cabinet are responsible for whatever action is taken by Government and announced in your name. It is wholly unconstitutional and even unfair to saddle us with responsibility for matters of which we have had no knowledge and with which we have had no concern. Posts are created for officers without our knowledge, and forced upon us for acceptance, under circumstances which leave us no alternative but to agree. I could multiply instances, but I purposely refrain from doing so as I feel that what I have said already is enough to justify my grievance.

I now come to the class of cases in which permanent officials have acted in defiance of Ministers by completely ignoring their authority. Let me begin with the case of the outrages alleged to have been committed on women at Sanam in the district of Noakhali. There was a Deputy Collector at Feni who happened to be the Additional Sub-Divisional Officer at the time, who had sent a telegram to the District Magistrate apprising him of what had occurred and asking for instructions how to proceed. This action on the part of the Deputy Collector was resented by some of the officials, presumably because they thought that the telegram might be a very important piece of evidence against the guilty persons. This officer who had only tried to do his duty, was transferred from Feni by a telegram, at the bidding of the local officials, by the Chief Secretary. And the Chief Secretary passed orders without consulting me who happened to be the Chief Minister and the Home Minister! I came to know of the transfer several days after it had taken place when I went to Feni to find out what the facts of the alleged outrage actually were. I have since seen the papers relating to this transfer. The telegram, of course, is not on the file, but there is a remark by a high official that the Deputy Collector had acted indiscreetly. We know what this means. The Deputy Collector was naturally frightened and sought safety by applying for leave. This leave was refused, and the officer was summarily transferred to Serajganj, because high officials wanted to bundle him out of the Chittagong division altogether.

#### MR. HUQ'S VISIT TO FENI

May I, in this connection, remind you that when you came to know of my programme to visit Feni, you advised me not to go because you thought that my visit would embarrass the local officials? I explained to you that I had no intention of embarrassing anybody, but I considered it my duty to pay a visit to an

area where the people seemed to be so much distressed. When I went there, I found that practically all the officials of the Chittagong division had gathered at Feni with a view to prevent my visit to the place of occurrence. The Commissioner of the division plainly told me that he had received a telephonic message from your Secretary asking him to persuade me to abandon my visit. I did not go to the village because I did not want to quarrel with the officials but met relations of most of the women said to have been outraged and the relations of their deceased husbands. I had also certain documents brought up to me which left no doubt in my mind as to what had happened. The reasons for the telegraphic transfer of the Deputy Collector, and for the anxiety shown by you and the local officials to prevent my visit to the locality are abundantly clear. Even the Chief Minister had to be kept out of the way, because he could not perhaps be trusted to fall into line with the official plans. Further comment is superfluous."

The letter referred to "events leading to the closing down of the Lady Brabourne College in Calcutta" and concluded, "I want you to consent to the formation of a Bengali army consisting of a hundred thousand young Bengalis, consisting of Hindu and Moslem youths on a 50-50 basis. There is an insistent demand for such a step being taken at once, and the people of Bengal will not be satisfied with any excuses. It is a national demand which must be immediately conceded."

"You should act as the constitutional Governor and not as the mouthpiece of permanent officials, or of any political party. In other words, you should allow Provincial Autonomy to function honestly rather than as a cloak for the exercise of autocratic powers as if the province was being governed under Section 93 of the Act."

#### MIDNAPORE AFFAIRS

With reference to his statement in the Assembly of Midnapore affairs, Mr. Fazlul Huq said : "The matter came up before the House in the course of a discussion on an adjournment motion and all sections of the House, except the European party, strongly urged the appointment of a committee of enquiry. The allegations made were of so serious a character and yet so specific, that it was felt that it would be in the interest of the officials themselves to put the accusers to proof of their accusations. I agreed. This amounted to a promise to hold an enquiry into the allegations and when the Governor heard what I had said he wrote to me the following letter :—

15th. February, 1943.

My dear Chief Minister,

I have received information which I have difficulty in crediting in view of your report on Midnapore at your last interview, that you have given to-day in the Legislature an undertaking for an enquiry into the conduct of officials in that district. You are well aware that this subject affects my special responsibilities and you are also well aware of my views on the undesirability of enquiries in this matter. If my information is correct, I shall expect an explanation from you at your interview tomorrow morning of your conduct in failing to consult me before announcing what purports to be the decision of the Government.—Yours sincerely, (Sd.) J. A. Herbert.

"I could not take the situation lying down and wrote to the Governor the following reply :

16th February, 1943.

Dear Sir John,

In reply to your letter of the 15th February, 1943, I write to say that I owe you no explanation whatever in respect of my 'conduct' in failing to consult you before announcing what according to you is the decision of the Government ; but I certainly owe you a duty to administer a mild warning that indecorous language such as has been used in your letter under reply should, in future, be avoided in any correspondence between the Governor and his Chief Minister.

During my last interview I certainly did not convey any impression that the affairs of Midnapore did not call for an enquiry. That interview only lasted for 15 to 20 minutes, and reference to Midnapore in the course of the discussion did not take up more than five minutes. It was for the first time during the last five months that I had been to Midnapore and even that for only six hours. I could only visit two or three villages, which are alleged to have been scenes of some outrages on women. All that I told you was that there had been no regular enquiry and it was difficult to say whether there were no exaggerations or whether these allegations were true. It was obviously impossible for me to give you any-

thing like a report about Midnapore. As a matter of fact, I had been asking the Home Department officials to let me have the Government version about Midnapore. But they utterly failed to do so or at any rate, could not supply me with any report, except a scrappy note which was handed over to me during the course of the debate yesterday.

A perusal of my speech will convince you that what I said was that the Council of Ministers, as distinguished from Government, were agreed that it would be expedient to hold a committee of enquiry if only with a view to exculpating the public servants from the very grave charges such as had been levelled against them. You will thus see that the question whether or not the Council of Ministers should tender to you a particular advice does not come within the purview of your special responsibilities, even if it be conceded that the acceptance of such advice would involve the exercise of your special responsibilities.

It appears from your letter that you are not prepared to give your consent to the constitution of a committee of enquiry. If so, the only course left open to me is to make a statement in the House in which I shall endeavour to explain that my statement made yesterday should not be taken as a commitment on the part of the Government to a committee of enquiry, and that I propose to read out to the House your letter under reply so as to explain my position. I shall not, however, do so without giving you previous notice. My Ministers are responsible to the Legislature and the Legislature has a right to expect a sufficient explanation as to why a committee of enquiry cannot be constituted. The only explanation which I can offer is the letter I have received from you. (Sd.) A. K. Fazlul Haque.

#### BUDGET DEMANDS RULED OUT

6th & 7th. JULY:—Budget demands for the current financial year not disposed of during the last session were ruled out of order by the Speaker in the Assembly to-day. Out of a total of 34 budget demands, eighteen were moved by the last Ministry in March and voted. Owing to the resignation of the Ministry at that stage the remaining demands could not be proceeded with. Section 93 of the Government of India Act of 1935 then came into force in the province till April 24th, when a Ministry headed by Sir Nazimuddin came into office.

The new Ministry sought to move the remaining demands at the present session, expenditure already incurred under them between 1st and 24th April during the period of suspension of the Constitution being covered by Governor's authorisation.

On a point of order raised by ex-Minister, Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, on behalf on the Opposition, the Speaker held the motions out of order on the 7th. Dr. Mookerjee had urged that in accordance with the provisions of the Government of India Act it was necessary that a revised financial statement should be placed before the Assembly in respect of all grants for the entire year. He had also urged that the present demands mentioned no specific sums as required under the Act and rules.

In the course of his ruling the Speaker said that the main question was the propriety or legality of dealing with the budget piecemeal in more than one session. There was no precedent for a case like this. "The presence of saving clauses in the Government of India Act relating to Bills and the absence of similar provisions relating to the budget in the Act or in the rules coupled with the provisions in proviso (b) to Section 84 (1) of the Government of India Act and the rules framed thereunder indicate, to my mind, that far from contemplating that the budget could be dealt with piecemeal in different sessions, the law contemplates that the whole thing should be done in one session within the time limit prescribed by the rules.

That is why there appears to be provision for what is called guillotining. I doubt very much if the budget can be considered piecemeal in more than one session. The provisions of sections 78 to section 84 of the Government of India Act, and Rules 12 to 15 of the Governor's Rules framed under the proviso to sub-section (1) of Section 84 of the Government of India Act seem to indicate this. But it is not necessary for me to give any definite opinion about it in view of my opinion relating to other grounds."

Continuing, the Speaker said that if piecemeal treatment of the budget was permissible under the law, about which he had grave doubts, the Government must either place a new budget for the demands which they new proposed to make for the period from April 1, 1943 to March 31, 1944, or they must totally ignore the authorisation of expenditure by the Governor under these heads during the period

from April 1, 1943 to April 24, 1943, and place the entire unfinished portion of the budget for the consideration and vote of the House. It was not for him now to advise the Government as to what they should do. But there appeared to be no escape from this position.

The Speaker added that there was a good deal of force in the contention of the Opposition that the motions as intended to be moved were too indefinite and vague for the consideration of the House. The Government had not given any indication whatsoever as to the amount of expenditure between April 1, 1943, and April 24, 1943. "They maintain that it is not possible. I am sure that it is not practicable to give the exact figures but I have grave doubts whether or not an approximate amount can be given. In fact, budget means estimates of probable receipts and expenditure. I think there were ways out of the difficulty, but when the Government maintain that it is impossible, it is not for me to give them advice. In this connection it may be mentioned that approximate figures were supplied by the Assam and Orissa Governments when they presented the budget in the middle of the year on the revocation of the Proclamation by the Governor.

The motions as they stand, without the slightest indication as to the amount of expenditure incurred during the period between April 1, 1943, and April 24, 1943, are, I am afraid, inadmissible and not in order. I think, therefore, that I have got no other alternative but to uphold the point of order raised and I rule that the motions for demands for grants are out of order."

#### RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

9th. JULY:—The question of release of detenus and political prisoners came up for discussion in the Assembly to-day on a non-official resolution. Mrs. *Nellie Sen Gupta* (Official Congress) moved the resolution which asked Government to take immediate steps to set at liberty all prisoners detained in prison or restrained under Rule 129 or Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules, or under Regulation III of 1818, for their political views or activities, and release all persons convicted for offences connected with the movement following the arrests of Congress leaders in August 1942. The resolution further asked Government to appoint a tribunal, consisting of at least two persons of the position of High Court Judges to review all cases of security prisoners and convicts after giving full opportunity to the persons concerned to meet the charges against them, if any, in case Government fail to release the persons immediately, and also to appoint a non-official committee composed of representatives of all parties in both the Houses of Legislature to advise Government on the amenities and treatment provided for in the jails and detention camps for different classes of political prisoners and detenus.

By an amendment, Mr. *A. R. Siddiqui*, a member of the Ministerialist Party, asked the Assembly to record the opinion that the efforts of the present Ministry to implement their pledge in regard to the policy of release of political prisoners and the amenities granted to them and their families, were commendable, and also further to express the opinion that considering the present political conditions in the province, Government should expedite the release of political prisoners by reviewing individual cases and grant suitable and generous amenities to those who might not be released at once and to their families.

After the House had discussed the resolution for nearly two hours, the Assembly adjourned till Monday without concluding the debate. Neither the Government spokesman nor the leader of the Opposition participated in it to-day.

#### DEBATE ON FOOD SITUATION

12th. JULY:—The debate on the food situation in the province commenced to-day on special motions moved on behalf of the Opposition. These motions sought to censure the Government in regard to the handling of the food situation and suggested the adoption of certain steps to meet the situation. These included, among others, that export of foodstuffs from the province should be completely stopped and negotiations with other provincial Governments should immediately be undertaken, for importing foodstuffs from those provinces and vigorous steps should be taken for intensifying the grow-more-food campaign. The official Congress Party suggested that the handling of the food situation should be completely entrusted to a central food council consisting of representatives of all major political parties and a few experts.

Rai *Harendra Nath Chaudhuri* (Bose Party) moved the first resolution stating that Government had failed to tackle successfully the food situation in the province, and suggested, as measures to meet the situation, to declare Bengal as a

famine area, to stop all export from Bengal, to negotiate with provincial Governments for importing foodstuffs from those provinces, to abandon Government purchase of foodstuffs through "favoured agents" from other provinces at the sacrifice of provincial funds, to revise the scheme of anti-hoarding drive as to properly define hoarding and protect the interest of growers and not to promote hoarding by big stockists and traders, and to conduct grow more food campaign more effectively.

Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal on behalf of the Congress Party moved :

"This Assembly is of opinion that the Government of Bengal has so far failed to satisfactorily tackle the serious food situation in the province, and with a view to bring about early relief the following measures should be adopted without any further delay :—

(a) the handling of the food situation should forthwith be taken out of the arena of the party politics and should be completely entrusted to a Central Food Council representative of all major political parties and a few experts on production, transport, nutrition and distribution ;

(b) the province of Bengal should be declared as a famine area so that the responsibility for feeding the entire population may devolve upon the Government ;

(c) there should be a complete stoppage of all exports of foodstuffs from the province on any account whatever and there should be no scope left for public suspicion in respect to the same ;

(d) attempt should be made to procure, by negotiation with respective Governments, sufficient quantities of foodgrains from other provinces till the 'Aman' crop of Bengal is harvested ;

(e) efforts should be made to obtain imports of wheat and other available foodstuffs from countries abroad as much to meet the present deficits in the normal requirements of the population of Bengal as to provide for the additional demands on the resources of the province on account of the war situation ;

(f) more vigorous measures should be adopted to promote the "Grow More Food Campaign" through (i) supply of sufficient quantities of good seeds ; (ii) adequate facilities for irrigation ; (iii) increased cultivation of cultivable waste lands ; (iv) conservation of cow dung manures and encouragement for the use of composts and other manures including synthetic fertilisers ; (v) encouragement to fodder crops ; (vi) suitable advances to the cultivators for enabling them to undertake intensive cultivation ; (vii) State guarantee of minimum prices for foodgrains produced by the agriculturists of Bengal for a period of least three years, and

(g) steps should be taken to prevent waste in the consumption of food in any form.

Dr. Sanyal said he was moving the motion with a view to discuss the food situation as a student of economics, and not as a politician. His first complaint against Government was that they had not looked upon the problem as a national crisis but had dealt with it purely on political considerations. The fundamental point for consideration for the solution of the problem was that measures taken by Government should inspire confidence in the people. Dr. Sanyal said that Government had failed in that respect. Continuing, Dr. Sanyal remarked that Government had laid all the emphasis on the question of maintaining adequate supplies to those engaged in the promotion of war effort, without paying attention to the problem of supplies for the civilian population as a whole. This, he said, was a wrong approach to the question. There might have been necessity for maintaining supplies to men engaged in essential services, but it was clear that unless the civil population was also fed it was sheer madness to continue maintaining the supplies to war workers. Dr. Sanyal directed his next criticism to the fact that Government conceived measures for mitigating the situation on a piecemeal or partial treatment of the situation. Thus, while there was no check on the maximum price of foodgrains, Government embarked upon restoring free trade and allowed big merchants and agents of Government to purchase rice in the mofussil at high price. This, Dr. Sanyal remarked, had been an entirely wrong approach to the question and was bound to fail, as it had failed. The measures that Government had taken had been on the assumption that there were plenty of supplies, and it was only the profiteers who were responsible for aggravating the situation. Here again, Government started on an entirely wrong basis. He said that whatever might be the justification for declaring publicly that there was sufficiency, Government ought not to have based their propaganda on such false data. It was criminal on the part of Government to waste their time on measures which could never succeed.

Proceeding, Dr. Sanyal dealt on the question of import of foodgrains from

surplus provinces and said that Government made a grievous error in not coupling the fixation of a maximum price with the restoration of free trade. It was apparent that the neighbouring provinces could never agree to the suggestion for restoring free trade. Dr. Sanyal had a talk with one of the Chief Secretaries of a neighbouring province. The Chief Secretary told him that his Government might agree to allow reasonable supplies to Bengal at reasonable rates while keeping the supplies required for his own province. As a result the Government had failed in that respect also. Continuing, Dr. Sanyal said that there was no denying the fact that food statistics were required for the solution of the problem. But Government failed to make proper arrangements for the distribution before they embarked upon the anti-hoarding drive. The drive meant much more than taking statistics of the food situation. It shifted the responsibility from Government on to the people. The latter were asked to secure self-sufficiency. A food drive based on such an assumption was bound to fail. Then again, there was no restriction put on large purchases by big merchants and industrialists from Calcutta from the rural areas and as a result, whatever stocks there might have been, had been driven in to Calcutta. The food Committees which were set up were formed by magistrates and subdivisional officers who made choice of the Committee members not according to their representative capacity but whether those people were at the beck and call of the authorities. Referring to the Government proposal for opening distributing shops in place of controlled shops, Dr. Sanyal expressed his doubt about the success of the project. He emphasised the need for increasing the number of controlled shops and to increase the number of the inspection staff. Lastly, Dr. Sanyal maintained that a food council having representatives from all parties and groups should be set up and entrusted with the work of solving the problem. The Committee should meet everyday and its recommendations should be adopted by Government. With regard to the stoppage of exportation from Bengal, Dr. Sanyal remarked that despite the repeated declaration from Government to the effect that export had been totally stopped, reports continued to trickle down that exports were going on.

Mr. *Giasuddin Ahmed* (Krishak Proja) moved a resolution complaining that food drive had caused positive mischief by excluding Howrah and Calcutta from its operations.

Mr. *D. N. Sen* moving another resolution said that the food situation in Bengal had entered into its crucial stage. Mr. Suhrawardy had waxed eloquence over the results of the anti-hoarding drive. But what was the acute amount of hoards seized as a result of the drive? Mr. Suhrawardy himself admitted this to be approximately 7 to 8 million maunds—an amount barely sufficient for the province as a whole for not more than a fortnight. Mr. Sen denied that his constituency, the Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, was consulted by Government before they entrusted the purchase of rice for Government from the Eastern Zone to Messrs. Ispahani & Co. Would the Hon'ble Minister explain to the House whether the resignation of Mr. Melnes had anything to do with the appointment of this firm as the sole Food Purchasing Agent?

Dr. *Govinda Chandra Bhowmick*, Rai Bahadur *J. C. Sen*, Mr. *Shamsuddin Ahmed*, *Khonikar*, Mr. *Charu Chandra Roy* and Mr. *Surendra Nath Biswas* also moved resolutions on the question. The House then adjourned.

13th JULY :—Mr. *Dhirendra Nath Dutt* (Congress) said that the statement issued by the Hon. Minister of Civil Supplies on the food situation of the province lacked commonsense. He was of the opinion that deterioration had been checked but just the opposite was the case and the situation was deteriorating from day to day. The speaker could not say what was happening elsewhere in Bengal but he could make a statement that in the Chittagong Division people—men, women and children, famished and sunk to their bones, were dying of starvation. It was a ghastly scene to witness human beings in their skeletons moving about for food goaded by hunger. While that was the actual picture, here was a spirit of complacency pervading the Ministry. The Minister was satisfied with the steps taken. The two steps taken (1) Anti-hoarding drive and the second was the building of a surplus stock. The Minister might be satisfied but the people of the province knew that it was a dismal failure, no proper census had been taken, no representative food committee had been appointed and while the drive was going on the Calcutta merchants through their agents were purchasing the stocks released by ignorant agriculturists through sheer misapprehension. Mr. Dutt also spoke of the absence of controlled shops in mofussil where the only control shops were those where the Government servant at the expense of the people were being provided with essential

commodities at controlled prices. A certain Bar Association in his area applied to be permitted to have their supplies from the controlled shops. The petition was rejected on the ground that lawyers and students were anti-Government. An I. C. S. District Magistrate stated, said Mr. Dutta, that a mule was cent percent more valuable than a non-combatant Indian.

*Khan Bahadur Abdul Wahed Khan* (Government Party) spoke about the distress in Backergunj where from not less than 70 to 80 lakhs of maunds of paddy had been taken away. For want of proper propaganda before, the ignorant and illiterate cultivators did not understand the implication of the anti-hoard drive and in their ignorance and being apprehensive that even their little stocks would be seized, sold away their stocks just before the drive began. The result was disastrous for them. The speaker visited certain parts of the district and saw with his own eyes the distressing scene. It was a fact that girls and women were being taken to Patuakhali side for being sold. Some in despair were divorcing their wives. Not a few were eating unedibles and meat of dead cows.

*Mr. I. G. Kennedy* (European Party) opposing the motions said that as regards remedies for a very serious situation there were many points in the special motions on which all parties could agree. Much criticism have been levelled against the recent anti-hoard drive. Some were pertinent—for they of the European Party believed that it was a mistake to exclude Howrah and Calcutta from its scope. A most useful purpose would have been served if the gap which existed was filled up. In respect of redistribution in the rural areas the main value of the drive had been fulfilled. Government must concentrate on the elimination of hoarding and profiteering and deal mercilessly with black marketeers. It was the big hoarders, those who hoped to profit on a large scale, who must be brought to book.

*Maharajadhiraj Bahadur of Burdwan* said that in spite of the anti-hoard drive and in spite of inter-provincial barrier having been dropped they had not enough to meet their requirements. The whole thing, he thought, was due to the lack of an adequate policy of control by the Government. Big employers were allowed to purchase any amount of foodstuffs and although he did not grudge them being allowed to purchase and stock food grains for their employees there should have been some limit put upon the amount they could buy and stock. Could they call these employers and even the Government hoarders? As the result of the drive whatever little stock the agriculturists had, had been taken over. In the rural area now the pinch would be felt out of this drive. He did not propose to draw hasty conclusions or to cast reflections as to the reasons why this was done.

*Mr. Dharendra Nath Mukherjee* (Congress) said that in spite of showing quickness and dash the Ministry did not take all parties into their confidence in tackling the situation and had failed. Food Committees in rural areas had been filled up with men of independent views religiously excluded. Because one refused to pay bribe his stock was entered as 400 maunds although it was actually 40 maunds.

*Mr. Abul Hashem* (Muslim League) said that Bengal was really passing through a first-class crisis. He felt that no man, however intelligent and powerful he might be, could solve the problem unless he had the backing of the entire people and the Providence helped him. Instead of criticising Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy the members of the Opposition should have come forward to help him in solving the situation. After all, Mr. Suhrawardy was a human being and was open to err. But it should not be their policy to condemn him for one mistake or the other, or to find fault with him at every step. It was necessary that all parties should combine and fight this crisis. If they survived the crisis, they would get time to fight each other on political grounds.

*Mrs. J. M. Sen Gupta* drew the attention of the House to the "very serious" situation in her own constituency. She knew that military had to be fed and the mules of the Army had also to be fed. But Government could not go on feeding the military at the expense of the civil population for all times. People who were starving were being asked to grow more food to feed the mules. Government servants could get  $2\frac{1}{2}$  seers of rice for a rupee. People whose earning was below Rs. 25 could also get rice at controlled price. But they could imagine the conditions of those whose earning was only Rs. 30 per month. The arrangements made for distribution were extremely unfair. People were living on mango leaves and red potatoes. Malaria and cholera were breaking out in epidemic form. She urged that the Government must standardise the system of distribution.

*Mr. Atul Sen* (Bose Group) said that when the last Ministry went out of office there were reports that people were starving. The balance-sheet of the

achievements of the present Ministry showed that from reports of starvation there were now reports of deaths on account of hunger.

Mr. *Pramatha Nath Banerjee*, ex-Minister, after describing how the price of rice had gone up since the present Ministry had assumed office, criticised the statement made by Mr. *Suhrawardy* from time to time on the food situation. The abolition of zonal barriers was not the policy of the present Ministry. They were claiming credit for the policy of the Government of India. The policy of allowing big industrial concerns of Calcutta as also Government agents to purchase rice unfettered from within the province or outside at any price was not a policy of free trade. The ordinary civilian producers and consumers were thereby placed in a position of great disadvantage. "Famine and pestilence", he said, "cannot be solved by big promises and excuses". The establishment of a National Government in India was the only solution. The lawn of Government House might be briskly with vegetables, but the vegetables would not surely be available to the people of Bengal. The cost of living had increased by only 17 p. c. in England as against 286 p. c. in this country. Who would not tell that India was not enjoying peace?

Mr. *Puspajit Burman* (Scheduled Caste, Ministerialist) said that the food situation had reached a stage when people in the rural areas were selling away their last belongings to get food. They had lost their homes, lost everything which distinguished a human being from a beast. Numbers of street beggars in half-naked condition fighting with street dogs for remnants of food in the dustbins were now a familiar sight.

14th. JULY :—Mr. *Anandi Lal Poddar* said that Mr. *Suhrawardy* might very well prove to his colleagues in the League that Pakistan was working in Bengal but it would not satisfy the hunger of crores of his co-religionists in the countryside.

Mr. *Shamsuddin Ahmed*, ex-Minister and leader of the *Krishak-Praja Party* did not deny the necessity for having a food census which was decided upon by the last Ministry and could not be carried out because of the obstructionist policy of the Governor and some officials. But the way it had been executed had only caused havoc to the cultivators. He was of the opinion that the food situation could be handled by an all-parties Government.

Mr. *Bankim Chandra Mukherjee* (Congress), speaking as a Communist member of the Congress block, said that it was not possible for a dependent country like India to arrange import of foodgrains from outside. They would have to depend on their own produce. There was shortage and therefore rationing on a country-wide scale must have to be introduced. This could be done by a united Government in which both the Congress and League must join.

Mr. *David Hendry* said that the food situation had been deteriorating and the fact that at present it was not worse than what it was, almost gave him hope that they might soon be able to see round the corner. He never subscribed to the belief that the grain shortage was so acute as to reproduce the circumstances of previous famines, but scarcity there was and the present fantastic prices for rice had produced a price famine which was having the most disastrous effect upon certain classes of the people.

Dr. *Syama Prasad Mookerjee* stated that the food situation in Bengal had reached a critical stage and the present ministry must bear a very large share of responsibility for this state of affairs. The issue before the House to-day was not a condemnation of the past Ministry. The past Ministry had its good and weak points. It, however, had the courage to say that the policy of interference of a section of permanent officials beginning from the all-highest as also the policy of denial and State purchase of rice forced on Bengal by the Central Government, had greatly aggravated the situation. The Ministry since its assumption of office deliberately played a colossal hoax on millions of suffering people by insisting that there was no real shortage of rice in the province and that the main cause of deficiency was hoarding by private consumer, agriculturist and traders. The previous Ministry in spite of its shortcomings had declared that Bengal was a deficit area in rice. Government of India also was then made to accept this position. Without data or enquiry the new Ministry raised a false cry that there was no shortage. This was what really reactionary bureaucrats desired and strangely enough this also became his master's voice in the House of Commons shortly after the assumption of office by the new Ministry. Strangely enough the real big hoarders, stockists and profiteers were left untouched. Indeed they were allowed to thrive on the patronage of the Ministry itself. No one can object to the taking of proper statistics. This should have been done long ago and indeed the past Ministry was

prevented from doing it by reason of the interfering attitude of the Governor himself. The taking of census is one thing and a drive against private consumers with no intention to make profit was a different thing altogether. Ten precious weeks have been lost on account of the false issue raised by the present Ministry. To-day the Minister dares not disclose the result of the statistics, so far as deficit is concerned. The Minister has already announced that there is deficit in some districts. Bengal is anxious to know the actual detail. The result of the drive has been that on account of panic and possible seizure of small stocks followed by forcible loan without security, many people hurriedly disposed of what they possessed. Another unpardonable activity of the Ministry was the manner in which rice was sought to be brought from the neighbouring provinces under the new free trade scheme. There was no attempt to settle affairs by negotiations. The favoured and fortunate traders and private profiteers went to these provinces and started purchasing rice at prices far higher than the prevailing rates. This resulted in a complete upsetting of those provincial markets and brought their administration into conflict with the Bengal representatives. Here in Bengal the present Ministry is establishing a new convention by granting monopoly of business financed by unauthorised grants from public funds for which even security has been refused in order to favour political allies when death stares the faces of millions of Bengal's famished children. This conduct of the Ministry alone condemned it in the eyes of all-right thinking Indians throughout the provinces. Does the Ministry dare face an impartial enquiry? The present Ministry had bungled the situation and had allowed party and political considerations to dominate the affairs of administration. The Ministry had issued sweet and soothing statements from time to time, had even shown an inordinate consideration for the suffering consumers during the hot weather, thus reducing the quantity sold at the controlled shops but had always failed to increase the supplies! Dr. Mookerjee anticipated some further white-washing statements from the Minister strengthened by the valueless assurance from the Government of India. The Government of India had promised 5 lac tons of rice and other foodstuffs to meet the emergent situation in Bengal after the new Ministry assumed office before the Eastern Free Zone was declared. Dr. Mookerjee asked how much of that promise had been fulfilled. His information was that nothing had come out of this promised stock. The time would not permit him to indicate the details. Bengal must be declared a famine area and Government undertake responsibility for feeding the poor and the destitute. It was clear that there was a shortage of foodstuffs in Bengal. Let us get as much as we can from outside and specially insist on wheat being brought from Australia. But within the province there must be a full control over price, supply and distribution. And this can only be made effective by a Government enjoying the confidence of the people as a whole and representing the major parties and interest. Government must not only feed the troops and those engaged in war efforts directly or indirectly but as part of the war machine must keep the people at large satisfied with minimum food. People were ready to undergo every form of sacrifice and suffering provided this was equitably and fairly done. The province was faced with a real national crisis and no party Government can ever hope to make the right appeal to the people or exercise proper control over supply and prices. Mr. Fazlul Huq stated publicly over the food debate in March that with all the limitations of the present constitution he was willing to help in the formation of a Ministry representing all parties who were prepared to work the constitution. His resignation was obtained on this plea and thereby through the short-sighted acts of the Governor a party Ministry has been forced on the province. It does not represent the Hindus; the six orphans of the Moslem League storm have only kept alive the tradition of Umichand in the provinces of their birth. The province to-day is faced with famine condition. From everywhere are coming agonising reports of deaths, starvation, of suicide for want of food, of sale of cattle and property and even of children and desertion of family. Historians assert that cycle of disaster had visited Bengal with the change of Imperial dynasty. Gour, an a bode of beautiful and luxurious palaces disappeared in one year by nature's hand and the desolate city was then left as the hovering ground of tigers and monkeys. This was just when Bengal had become part of the Mogul Empire. Some centuries later with the advent of British rule came the terrible famine of 1770. Who knows what the third cycle of 1943 is going to bring in its trend. If the war is to be won, concluded Dr. Mookherjee, and Japan is to be kept out of Bengal, it is essential that the people of this province must be fed and kept alive. The war was brought on us not out of our own seeking. Burma fell not on account of Bengal's fault. A famished and

starving Bengal is a source of danger to the cause of the Allied power themselves. Dr. Mookerjee appealed for unity and co-operation at this critical juncture. Let party spirit disappear for the time being. Let there be complete agreement amongst all sections of Indians and if possible Britishers so as to create an atmosphere of service and security which alone can help to ease the present tense situation. The failure of the present Government was obvious but the object of the motion was not merely to condemn but to reconstruct with the co-operation of all parties and groups who should be prepared fearlessly to put people's point of view before the real master of India and demand the fulfilment of their elementary rights if peace was at all to reign in this unfortunate province.

Sj. Kiran Sankar Roy, leader of the Congress Party, said that the Cabinet which wanted to solve the food problem must first inspire the confidence of the people. The present Ministry which had been brought into existence by "questionable" tactics which depended upon the pleasure of the European group for its existence was not one which was likely to inspire confidence of the people.

Replying to an interruption from Government benches, Sj. Roy challenged the party in power to demonstrate that they could carry a majority without the votes of the European party. Proceeding Sj. Roy said that the present Ministry had been in power for over two and a half months. He hoped it would not be pleaded on their behalf as a reason for their failure that they had got very little time to deal with the situation; because when the province was faced with a famine the solution could not wait for an indefinite period. Dr. Mookerjee had placed before the house a picture of what happened during the famine in 1770. They had just to remember what was happening in the country; the price of rice was mounting up, people sold their utensils, cattle and even were now prepared to sell away their children. They had starved and were now dying. That was the picture which had to be remembered in deciding the issue before the House. He criticised the statements of Mr. Suhrawardy from time to time in which he held out promises, and remarked that if Mr. Suhrawardy could not solve the problem he must stop humbugging.

Hon. Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, after referring to the criticism of the Opposition that Government shifted the responsibility on the people, said that Government had never shirked its responsibility, and Government was prepared to bear the burden. He claimed that the anti-hoarding scheme was adopted at a meeting convened by the Muslim League, when it was in Opposition, of all parties in the House and some of the commercial bodies approved of the scheme. He was satisfied with the result of the drive. The latest figure of seizure by Government of rice was approximately 95 lakh maunds. This stock, he said, was neither a surplus stock nor was it going to meet the requirements. It was a stock which was kept back from the market. He further said that the quantities of rice recovered from a particular area would be kept there by the District Magistrate or the sub-Divisional officer.

Dr. N. Sanyal: What is the total deficit?

Mr. Suhrawardy did not give any reply to this question.

Mr. Suhrawardy at this stage claimed that the price of rice has fallen, and it was now available at Rs. 25 per maund. (Voice—Where?)

Mr. Suhrawardy: In Calcutta, to-day.

Dr. Nalinakshaya Sanyal: Would you get me 20,000 maunds at that price?

Mr. Suhrawardy: This is the figure which I have got from the wholesale market in Calcutta.

Mr. Suhrawardy then referred to the allegations made by the Opposition in respect of the appointment of Messrs. Ispahani & Co., as the sole Government purchasing agent, and denied the charge that any money was advanced to this firm. In fact, he said, Government had all along been indebted to the company.

Dr. Mookerjee: Are you prepared to hold an open inquiry?

Mr. Suhrawardy: There is no need for the inquiry. Dr. Mookerjee can easily see the books of accounts and audit it himself.

Mr. Fazlul Huq wanted to have certain information from Mr. Suhrawardy on the point. Mr. Huq said that he had seen papers in which it was definitely stated that about one crore and 80 lakhs of rupees had been advanced to Messrs. Ispahani & Co. without any legal document. Was it a fact or not?

Mr. Suhrawardy: No, definitely not.

The Hon. Minister then referred to the criticism of excluding Howrah and Calcutta from the food drive, and said that it was excluded on administrative reasons. There were too many houses and people did not know each other. How-

ever, orders had already been passed encircling Calcutta and Howrah so that not a single grain of food would be allowed to go out of these two cities. It would not be long before Calcutta and Howrah would be combed. Mr. Suhrawardy denied the charge that he had stated that there was no shortage of rice in Bengal. He admitted that there was shortage.

*Dr. Mookerjee:* Here are the quotations from your speeches. You had definitely stated that there was no shortage.

Continuing, the Minister said that he was going to organize on a famine basis. Then he would adopt test relief work, and then agricultural loan, partly in cash for seeds and cattle and lastly sale of food grains at subsidised price to the poorer section of the people would be organized. As regards the suggestion that Bengal should be declared a famine area, Mr. Suhrawardy did not give any reply. He stated that he had represented to the Government of India the conditions prevailing in Bengal, and the Government of India had fully realised that supplies should be given to Bengal.

*Dr. Mookerjee:* If these things do not happen, if supplies do not come from the expected sources, what happens then?

*Mr. Suhrawardy:* We shall be in great jeopardy.

Continuing Mr. Suhrawardy said: "I am sure, that the members must be anxious to know what are the possibilities of getting food grains from outside, and how I propose to deal with the situation which has arisen after the new policy of the Government of India. It will be realised that the Government of India found itself unable even to send rice according to the emergency plan, and although it has sent us wheat and wheat products continuously from the Punjab, it always fell short of the programme on the basis of which I had organised the distribution of food within Bengal. The Government of India announced that it intended to introduce free trade in India. Violent were the protests and a Conference was held at Delhi. I do not object to the putting up of provincial barriers provided supplies to Bengal are secured, and I am indeed fortunate that I am able to announce to this House that at that Conference we have been able to achieve something which, I trust, will assist us to tide over our present difficulties. Free trade will continue to operate until that time, and more than that the Provinces have agreed that they will honour the contracts which have been or will be entered into until the provincial barriers are put up again. In the meantime, the Government of India will continue to send us supplies. They do not absolve themselves of their responsibilities as they did when they introduced free trade within the Eastern Zone. They are taking every step to rush supplies to Bengal and have realised that immediate supplies are necessary.

Already a military ship has been placed at our disposal for transport of food grains to Chittagang and I am expecting similar assistance for other transits by sea. The military authorities have also agreed to place some road transport at our disposal to send food grains to Bengal and to utilise their own military movements for the purpose. As a gesture they have agreed to cut out the ration of rice which was allotted to the European soldiers. The Government of India, as I have stated, are arranging to send provisions by sea as well in order to relieve the congestion on Railways and they have also agreed that we may buy as much wheat products as we can from the Punjab without any restriction. From this point of view, therefore, Bengal can face the future with a little more hope and a little less despair than that which has enveloped it. More than this, I believe that we have secured the sympathy of our neighbouring Governments, the Governments of Orissa, Bihar and Assam and of the Resident of the Eastern States. I am most anxious to come to separate terms with them, and as soon as I am relieved from the present business of the Legislature, I propose to take this matter up with them separately or jointly. I do not think it will be very difficult. There is no justification for this madness in prices and even if the stock position justified the high prices prevailing in Bengal which I dispute, the helpless position of the poorer section of our countrymen cannot warrant it. I propose, and the other Governments agree with me, that a controlled price should be placed within the region. It will not be the same price throughout the Province but will be in parity, and this controlled price will progressively decrease. Over and over again members of the Opposition have taken up the parrot-cry that nothing can be done without a National Government. I do not know what they mean by it. Our hand of co-operation is always extended, not extended in the manner in which the late Ministry extended its hand in the Legislature and crushed the Muslim League outside, but in a true and friendly spirit. It the other Parties respond, we are prepared to receive them with open arms or stand the test of public obloquy.

The debate on the food situation at this stage concluded. All the resolutions moved by the Opposition were turned down. The Opposition divided the House on two resolutions. The first resolution on which the House divided was that moved by *Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhuri*, and it was defeated by 88 votes for and 134 against. The second division took place on Dr. *Nalnaksha Sanyal's* resolution, and the result was 82 for and 133 against. The three day-debate on the food situation concluded and the Assembly was *prorogued*.

## Autumn Session—Calcutta—14th. to 28th. September 1943

### FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 1943-44

"Bengal once so richly endowed with nature's bounties is today bent double with woe and agony and is a suppliant for neighbourly charity. In the situation in which we find ourselves there is no choice left to the Government but to undertake, in a very large measure, the task of relieving distress, regardless of cost," observed Mr. *T. C. Goswami*, Finance Minister, Government of Bengal in a statement, presenting the budget for 1943-44 in the Bengal Assembly held in Calcutta on the 14th. September 1943.

The estimates for the current year provide for a revenue of Rs. 18,55,00,000 (as against the actual receipts of Rs. 16,50,00,000 in 1942-43) and expenditure on revenue account Rs. 25,80,00,000 (as against the actual expenditure of Rs. 15,73,00,000 in 1942-43), leaving a deficit of Rs. 7,36,00,000 on the revenue account.

This is the third time that the budget estimates for the current year have been before the Assembly once during the normal February budget session towards the end of which the *Fazlul Huq* Ministry resigned and the second time during the last July session when certain budget demands remaining undisposed of in the February session were placed by Mr. Goswami after the *Nazim-ud-Din* Ministry was formed, but were ruled out as out of order by the Speaker. Consequent upon that a fresh budget for the entire year is now presented by Mr. Goswami.

The budget provided for Rs. half a crore for subsidised food accounts, Rs. 3,52,00,000 for famine relief, an increased expenditure of Rs. 66 lakhs under agriculture due mainly to intensification of "Grow More Food Campaign."

Mr. Goswami stated that the cost of rationing which was going shortly to be introduced had not yet been fully worked out, but was expected to be considerable for which a supplementary demand would be made in due course.

The Finance Minister announced that to reduce the startling gap between the expenditure and revenue he would introduce tomorrow an Agricultural Incometax Bill as also a bill, later in the year, enhancing sales tax.

### MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON FOOD SITUATION

15th. SEPTEMBER :—No new measures for improving the food situation in Bengal were announced by the Hon. Mr. *H. S. Suhrawardy* in the statement he made to-day. Mr. Suhrawardy read out a written statement, and took about 45 minutes to read it.

Before Mr. Suhrawardy commenced reading his written statement, Dr. *Syama Prasad Mookerjee* referred to a number of telegrams he had received from various parts of Bengal in which it was stated that no rice was available in the market, and enquired of the Minister to let the House know as to what he proposed to do to meet "this grave situation."

Replying Mr. *Suhrawardy* said that in all 5,71,000 maunds of rice, bajra and dal, (including 27,000 maunds of rice to Midnapore), "have been ordered to be despatched from Calcutta" to different districts of the East and the North Bengal. "These," he added, "are in addition to allotments of wheat products which are now being sent to the Muffasil areas directly from the Punjab and which are fairly substantial and also in addition to food grains being sent for relief measures to the cyclone affected areas of Midnapore and 24-Parganas and the flooded areas of Burdwan and Midnapore."

The House gave patient hearing to what Mr. Suhrawardy had to say on the subject although it was in substance merely a repetition of what he had stated previously, except a frank confession, perhaps for the first time, that "there are areas which are in grave distress," "that without substantial imports of foodgrains from outside we are not in a position to meet the situation," and finally, "is it to be wondered at that there should be a serious shortage of foodgrains in the province?" Mr. Suhrawardy began his statement by attacking his opponents stating that if there was no rice available in the market, the members of the Opposition were responsible for it. Rice has disappeared largely due to the propaganda of

some of the members of the Opposition to the effect that control is not possible without supply.

Dr. *Syama Prasad Mookerjee*: That is perfectly true.

Mr. *Suhrawardy*: That may be true, but you must realise that supplies are there. Rice cannot possibly disappear from the market in course of a day. It has disappeared owing to the mischievous propaganda by certain members of the Opposition.

There were interruptions from the Opposition, and the *Speaker* requested the House to give the Hon. Minister a patient hearing as he was speaking on a subject which was "a momentous one," even if they might not agree with his views.

Proceeding Mr. *Suhrawardy* said that foodgrains had been despatched to the deficit areas which had helped greatly in relieving the situation. "Further despatches are constantly being made but the extent is limited, partly by supplies and partly by the inadequacy of transport facilities within the province. 'Uptill now,' confessed Mr. *Suhrawardy*, 'we have not been able to speed up these transport facilities and our programme for moving foodgrains is always behindhand because we are unable to get the necessary wagons.' Claiming that Government were feeding in rural Bengal about eleven lakhs of people daily from 2,200 kitchens "run almost wholly at Government expense, but with which non-official endeavour are being increasingly associated", Mr. *Suhrawardy* spoke of the recent drive in Calcutta and the results obtained therefrom. "The stocks", stated Mr. *Suhrawardy*, "are neither considerable in the hands of consumers nor of the trader nor the employers." Mr. *Suhrawardy* announced that the Government of India had placed in their hands a sum of one crore and 50 lakhs of rupees to enable Bengal to meet the requirements of the various gratuitous relief through gruel or khichuri kitchens or through doles in kind, test relief works, agricultural loans and cheap grain shops. Replying to Dr. *Mookerjee*, Mr. *Suhrawardy* stated that he hoped that equal amounts would be coming to them in two other instalments. "The amount at our disposal," said he, "is not sufficient and we have had to supplement them by raising money through treasury bills." Mr. *Suhrawardy* repeated what he had been stating about the Aus crop, adding that the six surplus districts had been cordoned.

(Voice. This is all bogus).

Although Mr. *Suhrawardy*, in his reply to Dr. *Mookerjee* at the beginning of his statement, declared that rice was disappearing because of "the mischievous propaganda by certain members of the Opposition," said in his written statement that he was gratified "to note that the price control has been maintained and that rice is re-appearing in our markets, after a period of hesitation, at controlled rates."

Dr. *Sanyal*: Please do not indulge any more in fanciful speculations.

Mr. *Suhrawardy*: I maintain rice is re-appearing. We are not however out of the woods yet. It will take some time before the trade adjusts itself to the falling prices, and we are taking all steps to see that supplies are maintained. Proceeding Mr. *Suhrawardy* repeated his threats to the trade and advised them to put their stocks on the market "at once and play the game by the people of Bengal."

Continuing Mr. *Suhrawardy* said that "distress, even famine conditions still exist in an acute form in many areas.

Dr. *Mookerjee*: How one wishes you stated all these when you assumed office! You stated there was no shortage.

Mr. *Suhrawardy*: I have never said that; Dr. *Mookerjee*.

The price of rice still remains far too high for the average population and undoubtedly this had led to grave distress throughout the province even where foodgrains are available. Although at one point, Mr. *Suhrawardy* stated, that the Aus crop had alleviated the distress "to some extent," at another place, Mr. *Suhrawardy* stated: "Aus is a consumers' crop. It has come after a period of great distress. It has come when the psychology of the people is attuned to caution and where the distress of others has only served to increase the instinct of self-preservation." Therefore "there can be no doubt that without substantial imports of foodgrains from outside we are not in a position to meet the situation," the Food Minister added. Mr. *Suhrawardy* then spoke on the Impressions he had brought back with him from outside Bengal. It was to the effect that he was "amazed at the ignorance prevailing in generally well-informed circles regarding the position of Bengal and the reason why there was a shortage." "There are still people in India", said Mr. *Suhrawardy*, "who suggest that there is enough foodgrains in Bengal and that by false propaganda we are declaring a shortage which does not exist and over-dramatising the situation."

Mr. Suhrawardy then gave 11 reasons for the present food situation in Bengal, such as, "failure of Aus crop in 1942," "failure of Aman in 1942-43," "havoc caused in Midnapore and 24 Parganas," "destruction of paddy by pest," "the boat denial policy," "evacuation of the coastal areas," "refugees from Burma," "influx of industrial labour," "loss of import from Burma," "construction work of various types," "influx of consuming population in the shape of the military," and lastly "great shortage of normal imports from other provinces." After referring to what Sir J. P. Sivastava had been doing and what the Punjab sending, Mr. Suhrawardy repeated that the military department were allotting ships for foodgrains from Sind to Bengal. After praying to God to help him to tide over the difficulties, Mr. Suhrawardy stated "it is only now that after long last we are able to see some light and some hope surges in our breast and that we may, by the aid of the Almighty, be able to alleviate the present situation." Mr. Suhrawardy welcomed the presence of Mr. Kirby, the rationing expert, in Calcutta "to guide them in the operation."

Dr. Mookherjee: Operation may be successful, but the patient will die.

Mr. Suhrawardy then referred to the reflux of the destitute to Calcutta and while "in reverence" mourned the death of some of them, he believed that they had not died in vain, "as they have focussed the attention of India to the terrible conditions prevailing in this province, have roused the Government of India to action which is already bearing fruit and has aroused the sympathy of the Indian peoples to the need for succour." Fortunately Mr. Suhrawardy did not refer to this uprooted humanity as belonging to the begging population as he said on a previous occasion but one "wandering away from their homes, away from the environments which supported them, in a state of economic submersion, with no vitality to bear the inclemencies of the sun and rain in a strange land, some unhappily are bound to succumb and death must take its toll."

After referring to how the situation developed itself, Mr. Suhrawardy again returned to his charges against his political opponents by saying that he found the Delhi and Lahore atmosphere surcharged with falsehood sedulously propagated by Mahasabhaistes against the Bengal Ministry. He defended the firm of Ispahanis after pointing out that he was not a partner of the firm, and if the same charges were made in future they would be made deliberately and knowing that those charges were false. The accounts of the company were being inspected, checked and examined by three officers of the Accountant General's office.

Dr. Mookherjee: Why not have an open enquiry.

Mr. Suhrawardy: There is nothing to enquire about.

Proceeding Mr. Suhrawardy stated that he invited Dr. Mookherjee to personally inspect the books of accounts of Ispahanis and once when he came to him he advised Dr. Mookherjee to go to the office of Ispahanis and look into the papers which Dr. Mookherjee declined.

Dr. Mookherjee: Why should I go there?

Mr. Suhrawardy proceeding said that he also asked Dr. Mookherjee to give him facts and figures and promised him to get them verified by his officers but that proposal too was not accepted by Dr. Mookherjee. He only wanted to repeat what he had stated formerly that if Dr. Mookherjee wanted to look into the papers of Ispahanis he could do that by going to the office of the firm.

Dr. Mookherjee: Why should I go there?

Concluding Mr. Suhrawardy paid his tribute to the premier of Orissa for their generosity.

"While they themselves were in difficulties." He also thanked what the premier and the food minister of the Punjab had done for Bengal. "The Government of India, as I have already stated above," said he, "are taking every possible step to assure us more foodgrains and to transport what is already available and I have it on the best authority to state that imports from foreign lands are also on the way. I have done whatever I could do during the very short time that we have been functioning. We have had a terrible legacy to cope with and if I have been of any service to the people of Bengal and if my efforts have helped at all to alleviate the distress, I can, with some confidence, claim that I have done my duty."

#### DETENTION OF SECURITY PRISONERS

16th. SEPTEMBER :—By 62 to 111 votes the adjournment motion tabled by the Congress Party regarding the detention of security prisoners under Rule 28 of the Defence of India Rules which had been declared illegal by the High Court of Calcutta and the Federal Court, was turned down in the Assembly to-day. The

debate was a very lively one, and there were sharp passage-at-arms between Sir Nazimuddin, Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi, and Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee.

Mr. J. C. Gupta (Congress) moved the following adjournment motion :—  
“The business of the Assembly do now adjourn to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance and of recent occurrence, namely, the failure of the Bengal Government to set at liberty persons purported to have been detained under Rule 26 of the Defence of India Rules, in spite of the decision of the Calcutta High Court and the recent decision of the Federal Court of India declaring the procedure adopted by the Bengal Government regarding detention as contrary to law and improper.”

Initiating the debate Mr. Gupta said that the subject-matter of the adjournment was of the greatest concern to every section of the Indian population. For years together they had been familiar with the arbitrary detention and conviction under lawless laws and at the present this had reached a staggering proportion even according to the Indian standard. After describing the circumstances Mr. Gupta said that the 8 persons were arrested in the absence of the Home Minister and the Governor in the precincts of the Calcutta High Court. Who gave the order for the arrest, enquired Mr. Gupta. As regards other security prisoners detained illegally, Mr. Gupta said they were arrested at the time of the August movement for which the Government were responsible. Because they infuriated the people by arresting the leaders the Government were ultimately responsible for the August movement. If the Home Minister was true to the Moslem League principle, if he was true to his own province, what he should do was not to show any favour but to act in legal manner and release these security prisoners.

Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu enquired of the Home Minister whether the Government had the courage to accept the decision of the Calcutta High Court and the Federal Court of India and to release the prisoners. Why should not the responsible Government of to-day, servants of the Legislature, released those prisoners arrested and detained under Rule 26?

Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee said that the question of the detention of the security prisoners under Rule 26 went before the High Court and the Federal Court. It was true that after the judgments of these two courts, an Ordinance had been passed which the Federal Court had held to be legal. But they were considering the detention of political prisoners under Rule 129 in the first instance which by an ad hoc order of the Bengal Government were converted into cases under Rule 26, and the Federal Court had held detention of such persons under these orders as illegal. The persons were then detained under Reg. III of 1818, and their case had gone before the High Court. The High Court had not yet pronounced judgment. The position was that the High Court pronounced their detention under the Defence of India Rules as illegal, but since they must be clapped behind the prison bars they were arrested within the Court precincts, before they had any opportunity of even feeling that they had been released from illegal detention, under Reg. III of 1818. At that time the Home Minister was probably not present, the Governor of Bengal was not in Calcutta. The question the people of Bengal wanted to put to the Home Minister was a very simple one : Was this order Regulation III initiated and approved by the Home Minister, or initiated and approved by the Governor? If the Home Minister said that he himself took the responsibility of rearresting them under Reg. III, the people of Bengal would like to know the reasons which justified the Home Minister to clap these persons behind the prison bars?

The next question they wanted to put to the Home Minister was this. The Federal Court and the High Court of Calcutta pronounced judgment that not only the detention of these persons were illegal but the detention of all persons under the ad hoc order of 1943 was illegal. There were to-day in prisons in Bengal a large number of persons, and the Federal Court had directed that they were being detained illegally. “Are we living within the frame of a civilised Government?” Dr. Mookerjee inquired.

“We are told,” Dr. Mookerjee continued, “that many things are happening to-day in countries which are under the control of the Nazis. What is the farce that is going on in Bengal? You have to-day your system of administration, you have your judiciary. The highest court in India has already held that the detention of these persons is illegal. You have clapped some of them behind the prison bars under Regulation III. But there are persons—and they constitute the majority—who are still being detained under Rule 26 which has been declared illegal. Why? How is it possible? Is not this deliberate flouting of the highest

court of the land? Does the Home Minister take the full responsibility of the illegal detention of these persons?" Dr. Mookerjee continued that he could well appreciate the difficulties of the Home Minister; there were many difficulties in his way. But if it was that Sir Nazimuddin had no say in this illegal detention, he must take the House into full confidence. As regards the general question of release of political prisoners, Dr. Mookerjee proceeded, he appreciated that these persons were detained at a time when there was a political upheaval in the country and in this province. But times had changed. To-day it was essential that an atmosphere must be created so that the people unitedly could face the terrible catastrophe that was on them. Nobody knew what was going to happen the next day. They needed all resources in men and material pooled together. Dr. Mookerjee was informed that a representation had come from these security prisoners saying that they would unconditionally join in the relief work. Asking the Home Minister to increase the allowances granted to the families of these security prisoners, Dr. Mookerjee said that he was receiving pathetic letters from families. It was the duty of Government to see that the families of these persons did not starve.

Mr. *Abdur Rahaman Siddiqi*, attacking Dr. Mookerjee, inquired why he accepted office when Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose was arrested. Dr. Mookerjee and his other colleagues practically walked over the dead body of Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose.

Dr. *Mookerjee*: He was arrested before we were Ministers.

Mr. *Santosh Kumar Basu*: With Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose's blessing and support.

Mr. *Siddiqi*: If they have any conscience, any sense of honesty, they should never show their faces in this House. This kind of double playing is really disgraceful. We are not playing double: you put them into jails, and you are now shouting for them. You are unfit to utter one word about it.

A voice: Nonsense.

Mr. *Siddiqi* continued that there were people who were more honest, who could get up and say: "I am going to do this." "Our colleagues in the Assembly and other citizens who have lost their liberty are now in safer hands; not in the hands of those who sent them to prison, and maintained their existence by licking the boots of the Government of India."

A voice: You lick the boots.

Mr. *Siddiqi*: I do not lick the boots of Government. I never was a Minister.

A voice: You lick the boots of lesser men.

Mr. *Santosh Kumar Basu*: You lie under the boots.

Mr. *Siddiqi*: Will you allow me to continue. There is no man in this House who would like to deal with this problem with the levity and insincerity as demonstrated by the members Opposite. If Dr. Mookerjee is sincere he will find me as one of his important lieutenants. But if the Mussalmans are rascals. . . .

Dr. *Mookerjee*: I never said that Mussalmans are rascals.

Shouts from the Opposition insisting Mr. *Siddiqi* to withdraw the expression, and the noise was so loud that Mr. *Siddiqi* had to resume his seat.

Mr. *Speaker*: If such a statement has been made by any member in this House I will take all necessary steps to expunge it. I have not heard any member of the Opposition using this expression, and, therefore, I think it was quite improper for Mr. *Siddiqi* to introduce matter which was never uttered.

Shouts: Withdraw, withdraw, rang out from the Opposition benches. It was impossible for Mr. *Siddiqi* to proceed with his speech.

Mr. *Speaker*: I will expunge that expression from the proceedings of this House.

Mr. *Siddiqi*: This word was not used, but the meaning behind the speeches conveyed that. It is within my right, Sir, to say what I like so long as I do not break the rules of the House.

Mr. *Speaker*: Mr. *Siddiqi*, will you sit down, please. It was far from my intention to stop you from speaking. You cannot bring in an expression which has not been used in this House.

Mr. *Siddiqi*: Certainly, I have got the right to interpret the speeches.

Mr. *Speaker*: You know that nobody in this House used the expression that a Mussalman was a rascal. I say with all the emphasis and dignity I command that the whole House will say that nobody has uttered an expression like this. I will never tolerate any expression casting reflection on any community—

Hindu and Mussalman. "Rascals" etc. are expressions which ought not to be tolerated in this House. The *Speaker* added: I am here as the custodian of the rights and privileges of the members of this House, and I have every right to stop interpretation of any speech of any member in that perverse way.

Mr. Siddiqi: I obey your rulings, Sir.

At this stage, time being over Mr. Siddiqi took his seat.

Sir Nazimuddin, Home Minister, said that after the speech of Mr. Abdur Rahman Siddiqi he had very little to add. Mr. Siddiqi had so thoroughly exposed the speakers in support of the adjournment motion that the Home Minister was sure by now that members of this House and the people of the province would realise that this adjournment motion was merely a 'political claptrap.' The persons who had to-day taken the leading part in the debate were those persons who were responsible for the sending in of the major portion of the present security prisoners into jail. The injured innocence of Mr. J. C. Gupta was certainly a matter of surprise. It was his leader who was responsible for the existence of the previous Ministry. Might Sir Nazimuddin remind him that his leader and his party gave consistent support to the Ministry who sent these people to jails.

Cries of 'no' 'no' from the Opposition benches.

The Home Minister continued that very conveniently the leader of the Opposition, Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, had not taken any part in this debate. Various strictures in judgments referred to the action of the Ministry when the present leader of the Opposition was in charge, and who was responsible for giving approval and sanction to the procedure which had so roundly been condemned by them. The Home Minister maintained that there was no previous record, as far as he was aware, where the Ministry deliberately released members of the Opposition before the commencement of the session of the legislature so that those released members might come and attend the meetings.

A voice: How many you have released, and how many are still in prison?

The Home Minister continued that the point was that so far as the Federal Court judgment was concerned, it referred only to the 8 persons against whom Reg. III was applied.

Cries of 'no' 'no' from the Opposition benches.

Sir Nazimuddin: It is no use shouting 'no'.

Dr. S. Mookerjee: Have you read the judgment at all?

Sir Nazimuddin: So far as our legal advisers are concerned they are of the opinion that the judgment of the Federal Court referred to these eight persons detained under Reg. III; and even out of these 8 persons, two have already been released. When we are satisfied that the release can be made without jeopardising the safety of the province (cries of oh! oh! from the Opposition benches), we will do so. So far as other security prisoners are concerned, they have got their right to move *habeas corpus* petitions, and we undertake not only to forward but to give legal facilities for presentation of these petitions before the Court.

Dr. N. Sanyal: Will you bear the expenses?

Dr. Syamaprasad Mookerjee: That does not depend upon you.

Sir Nazimuddin continued that no court, either the Federal Court or the High Court of Calcutta, had pronounced any opinion as regards the merits of the detention of these persons, i. e., there was a technical flaw in the procedure laid down for the detention. But the question he would like to ask to the members Opposite and Dr. Mookerjee was this: Do they realise why these persons are detained (Shouts: No). Do they realise to what risk the province would be exposed if these persons are released?—it meant giving assistance to the enemy who may invade our province.

Mr. J. C. Gupta: They will fight more bitterly than yourself.

Sir Nazimuddin: I am surprised that members of the Opposition are taking this attitude. There would be no justification for their detention if they would not do so. I cannot understand how our members Opposite can say that they (the security prisoners) would not do so, when they (Opposition) themselves were responsible for putting them into the jails. May I ask, if you knew that everyone of these security prisoners is innocent, why you put them into the prisons?

"So far as the Congress workers are concerned," Sir Nazimuddin said, "the major portion of them have been released." (A Voice from the Opposition: It is not a fact.) "So far as members of the subversive organizations are concerned, their activities are there. I maintain—and in this I take the full responsibility (I am not one of those who do not take responsibility). I have had the advantage of discussion, not only with the officials of the D. I. G. and I. B., but with some

of the leaders of the various subversive organizations, and I have gone to a great length in trying to convince myself whether there was justification or not for their detention. I may state that when we first took office in 1937 there were 2500 prisoners, and released everyone of them; and again when we started rearresting some of them, it was done with great care, and whatever may be said about the procedure, at one time arrests were made until previous approval was taken and the cases of the persons discussed. I may state that I have refused to put under arrest members of the *Jugantar* party; and only when I was in Hazaribagh that the then Home Minister agreed to their detention. I maintain that I took particular care, and whenever any case is brought to my notice I try to go into it. The procedure has been declared illegal. And we are taking steps to review all these cases according to the procedure which will be approved by the High Court, and whenever we will find any person innocent, he will be released. We are trying to expedite the release but members of the House must realise that enemy broadcasting from Saigon etc. are calling upon these people to try to be active so far as sabotage is concerned. They must realise they are making continuous efforts. There are persons here like Mr. Jai Prakash Narain who was in Calcutta a few days ago who are trying to organize sabotage.

*Voice from the Opposition:* How do you know? Why did not you arrest Mr. Jai Prakash Narain?

*Sir Nazimuddin* said that information was received after Jai Prakash Narain left Calcutta. He could say this that there were persons, and many Congress members had agreed with the Home Minister, who were trying to be active for subversive work. As an example, Sir Nazimuddin referred to the attacks said to have been made on the members of the Communist party, because the Communist party wanted to fight the Axis.

At this stage the time being up, Sir Nazimuddin resumed his seat. The adjournment motion was then put to the vote, and defeated by 62 to 111 votes. The House then adjourned.

#### DEBATE ON FOOD SITUATION

**17th. SEPTEMBER :—***Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee* moved a special motion to-day stating inter alia that the Ministry had failed to discharge the elementary responsibility of any civilised Government by its failure to save human lives and to procure for the people essential commodities for their bare existence. *Dr. Mookerjee* said that since the Assembly last discussed the food situation, it had dangerously deteriorated and to day it presented problems of a far-reaching character. The statement of the Civil Supplies Minister was utterly unsatisfactory. It was empty-worded and visionless. Judged by actual results, the food policy of Government had miserably failed. *Dr. Mookerjee* would not refer to the personal abuses heaped upon him and others who were trying to alleviate human sufferings by Mr. Subhawardy. Such attacks should be treated with the contempt they deserved. They were the outcome of masterly incompetence and impudence.

To-day Bengal stood face to-face before an unprecedented condition of misery and destitution. Reports of suicide, desertion of families and children, of dead bodies lying uncared for were pouring in from different parts of Bengal. For days and weeks people were allowed to die on the streets of Calcutta and they were refused admission into hospitals, although A.R.P. beds were lying vacant. "In Contal jackals and dogs had been freely feeding themselves on dead bodies, and such animals were ordered to be shot. The sight of destitute and starving people in Calcutta, heart rending as it is, is nothing compared to what is happening in distant towns and villages."

Continuing, *Dr. Mookerjee* said that while the suffering of the poorest classes, the landless, homeless and penniless had been immense, people belonging to the middle class families with fixed income or with reduced income barely sufficient in ordinary times to keep their body and soul together were to-day under-going a tragic process of slow and painful extinction. "I earnestly call upon the Home Secretary of the Government of India," *Dr. Mookerjee* said, "to visit this province and then seek to criticise men on the spot for over-dramatisation of Bengal's woeful tale. After thankfully recalling the sympathy and help which came from all parts of India for the distressed in Bengal, *Dr. Mookerjee* said that his first charge against Government was that its policy of procurement from within and without had been open to grave objection. "The scheme of purchase of 'aus' paddy had been another 'criminal' blunder placing the rural areas in a state of utter helplessness. Proceeding, *Dr. Mookerjee* said that the original quota allotted to this

province by the Government of India regarding supplies from outside was reduced in July last. Why did the Bengal Ministry agree to such deduction? They were told that the Ministry had no option because the Government of India was adamant. Why did not Mr. Suhrawardy resigned as a protest? Sir Jawla Prosad Srivastava had stated at a conference that the Bengal Ministry agreed to the reduction.

Mr. *Suhrawardy*: No. I did not agree.

Dr. *Mookerjee*: The Food Member said you agreed. Why did not the Ministry resist the reduction and if Bengal was unjustly treated resign rather than surrender for the sake of sticking to office? Proceeding, Dr. Mookerjee demanded a clear statement as regards the stocks that had come into the province. It appeared from the statement of the Punjab Minister that while the people of Bengal were starving, the Bengal Government was merrily carrying on a scheme of profiteering by selling wheat at a much higher price than that at which it had purchased from the Punjab.

In this connexion Dr. Mookerjee asked Mr. Suhrawardy to lay a statement before the House on the following points: (1) Total payments or advances made to Isphahani and its dates and amounts of such payments; (2) Copy of an agreement between Government and Isphahani; (3) the dates on which the places from where, the persons or agents from whom and the prices at which purchases had been made by Isphahani from outside Bengal. Dr. Mookerjee alleged that more than 4½ crores of rupees from the public revenue had been paid to Isphahani and Bengal had the right to know specially because of the political connection between the firm and the Minister whether every pice of this colossal sum was properly accounted for.

Dr. Mookerjee then criticised the promulgation of price control orders without arranging for supplies. "Even to-day," Dr. Mookerjee declared, "Rice was being purchased by Government agents both at controlled rates and above and the rural areas are being steadily and deliberately denuded of stocks." Dr. Mookerjee complained that even the Government of India was purchasing sugar at Rs. 50 per maund, a price which was higher than the controlled rate. This had driven sugar to black market. "We are utterly dissatisfied with the system of distribution. Even if foodgrains arrive from different parts of India, we have no confidence in the ability, integrity and honesty of the present Government so as to be able to say that a fair and just and equitable distribution will take place," Dr. Mookerjee said.

"There can be only one solution to save Bengal," Dr. Mookerjee said, "and it is cent per cent control over supply, prices and distributions, to be carried on by an agency, enjoying 100 per cent confidence of the people. This means the trader and the public must be called upon to make sacrifice for the common good of all and they must have implicit faith in the Government of the day. Corruption and jobbery must be ruthlessly suppressed whether among officials, traders or the public." Let us make our position abundantly clear, Dr. Mookerjee went on to say. "We do not want food to be made the plaything of politics. It is not nature's hand alone that is giving Bengal a death blow. Political maladministration lies at the root of the present catastrophe and no lasting solution can come until India is economically and politically free. If there had been a truly national Government enjoying full power and responsibility at the head of the country and the province instead of it being ruled by the iron hand of oppressors and exploiters, the food problem of Bengal and India would have been solved without difficulty. As regards the future they offer a hand of co-operation. Let the policy of Government be determined and carried out in a manner which would be acceptable to all parties and sections, and they, Dr. Mookerjee remarked, should be prepared to do everything possible to save the situation. The supreme need of the hour was unity and oneness of mind.

Dr. *Nalinakshya Sanyal* (Congress) moved the following resolution:—"This Assembly is of opinion that (1) the statement made by the Hon. Minister-in-Charge, Civil Supplies in the Assembly on the 15th instant is extremely disappointing and unsatisfactory, particularly in so far as it does not indicate Government's immediate intention as yet to undertake the maintenance of food supply for the entire population, specially the rural population and the middle classes, during the emergency and in so far as it shows the absence of any comprehensive scheme for the equitable distribution of all available stock of food grains from within or from without the province, with the introduction of necessary rationing scheme for urban areas. (II) immediate steps should be taken to isolate the big consuming areas like

Calcutta and Howrah with their industrial suburb as Chittagong, Dacca, Narayanguing and big evacuee camps from the rest of Bengal with a view to maintain the supplies in such areas with the imports from outside and to retain the supplies in rural Bengal for local consumption as far as practicable, supplementing the same with surpluses of the foodgrains from outside Bengal to relieve specially deficit areas. (III) immediate steps should be taken to prevent the purchase of Aus paddy and rice and also the coming Aman by traders from outside, whether Government agents or others, at competitive prices, and to prohibit the export of such foodgrains to the bigger consuming centres isolated as above. (IV) Immediate steps should be taken to reorganise the village food committees set up during the food drive and to organise union and village relief committees with adequate representation of all progressive parties and organisation and to give effect to a comprehensive scheme of relief for all classes determined in consultation with the leaders of public opinion." Dr. Sanyal said that from the very beginning of the food crisis in the province his party insisted on one approach to the question and that was to act unitedly.

*Maulvi Syed Badrudduja* (Mayor) gave a graphic account of what is taking place in Bengal at the present moment. Such tragic scenes of human miseries might not produce any impression upon the present Government but they had very rightly produced the deepest impressions on the public mind outside. Referring to the ignorance of well-informed people outside about the position of Bengal complained of by Mr. Suhrawardy, the speaker asked, would Mr. Suhrawardy refresh his own memories and try to remember aright that it was his deliberate insistence in season and out of seasons that there was no shortage of foodgrains that had been responsible for this impression outside? It was contended in responsible quarters that owing to deliberate bungling, and indifferent handling of the food situation and most reckless indifference of the present Government to the sufferings of the people that the situation had gone beyond control. It was not for nothing therefore that a Food Commissioner had suddenly been appointed to exercise control and supervision of the food situation in the province. It gave them a sense of relief that under the regime of the new Governor a healthy tone had been introduced into the administration of Bengal.

*Mr. Dharendra Nath Dutta* (Congress) said that if the situation was analysed it would be found that the steps taken by the Ministry were absolutely unsatisfactory. Let them, therefore, sit together and find out the way to solve the difficulty. If it was not solved at least one crore Bengalees would die. As it was difficult to move in Calcutta streets so was the case with the district towns. On Sunday last while he was in the district town of Comilla he found a corpse of a child near the house of the richest man of the locality. Having noticed such corpses here and there their soft feelings were becoming gradually dull. But could they imagine in normal time a full-grown child dying because he could not secure food for sustenance? It appeared to him that their hearts were being steeled. Why the situation had become what it was now? There was no doubt bungling but there was corruption and greed too. It was impossible to check this corruption to their utter shame. This greed was no longer restricted among the traders and shopkeepers but to their misfortune it was to be noticed among the rich agriculturists too. They should unitedly appeal to these people who were their own people to give rice in order to feed the poorer people. There were again the red-tapism and the bureaucratic indifference and if there was the European officer he was drawing the conclusion that the people would have suffered more terribly if there was enemy invasion. There was thus on one side callousness and indifference and on the other greed and this could be fought only if there was united effort made and he appealed to the Ministry to make that possible in the face of death and starvation. If they could not do that, if they could not solve the problem or save human lives and stop the bribery and corruption then the only honourable course left open to them was to resign.

*Mr. Narendra Nath Das* (Hindu Mahasabha) said that in the town of Barisal only the other day a dog devoured a corpse. If that was possible in a town like Barisal, the district capital of the granary of Bengal, everybody could realise what was taking place in the interior. The speaker went to the Sub-division of Bhola, the most distressed spot of the district. There in the year of 1943 in the open markets children and infants were being sold. (Voice from the Ministerialist party: Who are purchasing them?)

*Mr. Das* : Khan Bahadur Abdul Wahab Khan, the Chairman of the district

Board of Barisal would be able to tell you that it was the rich agriculturists who were purchasing them.

Proceeding Mr. Das said that the picture which he saw in the interior of Barisal tallied faithfully the picture given in the *Ananda Math* by *Bankim Chandra Chatterjee*. The greed and corruption had combined to strangle into death the poor. He gave an instance where the issuing of ration cards from 1000 had been reduced to 200 at the instance of the Government officers who were, however careful in incorporating into this 200 cards the names of their own servants and menials and thereby elbowing out the helpless and starved people of the locality. He also thought that the scale of five chatak of food as scheduled by the Government could not sustain the starved for long.

Mr. A. M. L. Rahman gave a graphic description of the tragic situation now obtaining in Nilphamari where he himself went and saw the miseries of the people with his own eyes. The subdivisional town was littered with the dead and the dying and if no succour was immediately despatched the whole area would be affected so much that it would be difficult to save the people. He also saw the hospital where the arrangements for giving medical aid was poor and something must be done in this respect if the people were to be saved.

Maulvi Abul Hashim (Moslem League) said that though he had minor difference with the Ministry, he did not think he had much to say against the general policy they had adopted for the solution of the food problem. The present Ministry, he said, had however signally failed in executing their food policy. Mr. Suhrawardy had become so busy that he had become absolutely immobile. Mr. Suhrawardy was an intelligent person, a man with vision and foresight, but skill he lacked in generosity of heart. There was the flood in Burdwan, but Mr. Suhrawardy did not move out of Calcutta. The execution of the policy had been left, the speaker complained, in the hands of probationer Sub-Deputy Magistrates and junior officers. The District Magistrate or the Sub-Divisional Officer did not come or had no interest about the fulfilment of promises made by the Hon. Minister. Everyone was sitting tight and the execution of the policy left to take care of itself. Government had not been able to open free kitchens, but non-official organizations had already opened a free kitchen. "I beg of you, Mr. Suhrawardy, that you should move out of Calcutta, mix with the masses and see that Executives carried out the policy laid down by you."

Mr. D. N. Sen said that the speech of Mr. Suhrawardy contained much smoke but little fire. There was much thunder against hoarders, stockists and traders. He promised Bengal with a number of promises for the present and the future, just as he had done in the past. Meanwhile, the piteous wailings of the hungry millions were rending the Bengal's sky and men, women and children were dying of starvation in thousands. Mr. Sen said that any scheme of rationing that might be embarked upon by Government should operate through normal trade channels. Government should also set up an Advisory Committee of non-officials and representatives of trade to act as a liaison between Government, trade and the public. The House at this stage adjourned.

#### GENERAL DISCUSSION OF BUDGET

18th. SEPTEMBER:—"Call it famine or call it whatever you like, the economic situation in Bengal to-day had no 'precedence' in history," observed Mr. T. C. Goswami, Finance Minister, replying to the debate on the budget estimates of the Government of Bengal for 1943-44 in the Assembly this morning. Mr. Goswami thought that the Government of India should take responsibility in a very much larger measure for the expenditure that the Bengal Government had been forced to incur owing to conditions arising out of the war. Referring to the question of the release of political prisoners, the Finance Minister said that the pace of release, instead of being accelerated, had somewhat slowed down. There were several causes, but he hoped that in the next few months it would be possible for the Government to release many more prisoners. In this connection, he regretted their inability to do anything in the case of Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose, who was under detention.

Participating in the debate, Mr. A. R. Siddiqi (Ministerialist Party), urged that the United Nation must accept the question of relieving the distress of Bengal as a major responsibility of the war.

Speaking on behalf of the European Group, Mr. D. R. Gladding remarked that the Bengal Government had a strong case for real financial assistance from the Centre and not merely for loans.

Mr. *Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal* (Bose Group in opposition) alleged corruption in the execution of the food policy of Government and remarked that there could be no improvement in the situation unless this was remedied. Speaking about the release of political prisoners, he said that the present Government made a good beginning, but he failed to understand why the case of release had been slowed down. He held the view that there would be no adverse effect on the safety of the province or on the Government if all political prisoners were released. The Assembly then adjourned.

#### DEMAND FOR DECLARATION OF FAMINE IN BENGAL

20th. SEPTEMBER:—The Assembly, by 69 to 115 votes, rejected the cut motion of *Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhury* of Bose group who wanted to raise a discussion about the failure of Government to declare famine in Bengal and organise relief in accordance with the provisions of the Famine Code. The Hon. Mr. *T. N. Mukerjee* stated that even without declaring famine, Government were adopting measures according to provisions laid down in the Code. This statement of Mr. Mukerjee evoked sharp protests from the Opposition, consisting of the Congress, Bose group, Nationalist and the Krishak Praja parties. The motion was then put to vote and lost.

*Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhury* said that he did not think that Government had a clear realisation of the situation; hundreds and thousands were dying. The provision for expenditure under this head was so meagre that it could not even touch the fringe of the problem. Government had stated that 2200 kitchens had been opened and about 500 people were being daily fed from each of the kitchens. In the last session of the Assembly in July, the Opposition pressed the point that Government should declare famine in Bengal and take the full responsibility of feeding the entire population. That suggestion was turned down by Government, and no action was taken with the result that a very large number of deaths had occurred and more were on the verge of exhaustion. Continuing, *Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhury* said that only by the middle of August instructions with regard to relief measures were issued to all local officers by the Revenue Secretary. No mention was made in those instructions either of how to open kitchens or distribution of relief according to the famine code. On the other hand, it was emphasized that stress was laid by Government on the necessity of giving "absolute minimum" relief. Mr. *Suhrawardy* the order day stated that half-hearted measures would meet the most distressing situation in Bengal; Government must give relief in the fullest possible measure, otherwise it would mean death and starvation for many. What was the position? In Calcutta alone up to the 15th of September, 1943, at least 300 persons had died of starvation.

Mr. *Suhrawardy*:—They all came from mofussil.

Mr. *Rai Chaudhuri*:—That may be; but the figures were gradually going up. If action was taken by Government from the very beginning according to the instructions laid down in the Famine Code, so many deaths would not have occurred. Government, he said, was guilty of gross neglect of duty towards the people and was responsible for the deaths of these people. It was due to the failure of relief measures organized by Government that so many deaths had taken place. In the face of this terrible condition prevailing all over Bengal, Mr. *Rai Chaudhuri* asked his fellow legislators to support his cut motion, or take upon themselves the responsibility of the deaths of so many persons if they opposed it.

Mr. *J. W. R. Steven* moved a cut motion to raise a discussion about the necessity for proper central co-ordination and direction of relief measures. Mr. Steven said that there must be central direction of relief measures and there must be a uniform policy. There had been magnificent non-official and official efforts to relieve distress in this province, but they had been often of haphazard and piecemeal character and unrelated to each other. He suggested that the recently appointed Joint Secretary to the Revenue Department should be director of relief measures, an executive touring officer, not a secretariat official who would sit in Writers' Buildings. He should have a touring staff of supervisors, who would co-ordinate and supervise relief efforts throughout the province. Continuing Mr. Steven emphasised the need for a uniform policy as regards the form of relief measures. What was happening now was that in one area grain doles were being handed out and in an adjoining area there were gruel kitchens. The result was that the kitchens were not a success as the villagers preferred the doles. There was no doubt that owing to the scarcity of supplies the method of gruel kitchens must be generally adopted and it was, therefore, important that there should be a

uniform policy of opening gruel kitchens in preference to giving grain or cash doles. Proceeding the speaker dwelt on the need for clear and definite instructions to local officers. "In our opinion the printed instructions dated August 30th issued to all district officers by the Revenue Department are an example of what instructions should not be," he remarked. "We are dealing with conditions of acute food shortage", Mr. Steven went on to say, and instructions should be designed to meet these emergency conditions. What are we to think of instructions when ask union relief committees as their first and most important duty to their degree of distress." In the opinion of the European group it was the job of all local officers to prevent starvation in their areas. All local officers should be relief officers and for that purpose should have necessary power in their respective jurisdiction: It was the job of the local officers to know the position in their respective areas to estimate requirements over and above local resources, and to apply for assistance if local resources were not sufficient to prevent starvation. Unless relief committees should certainly be formed and should be used for assisting in collecting local resources, for providing volunteers for running gruel kitchens etc., and for exposing hoarders and price control offenders. Concluding, Mr. Steven referred to the Central Relief Fund the opening of which was announced by Mr. Suhrawardy. An appeal was issued by the Chief Minister for contributions to this fund, but they were still in the "dark" as to how to be administered. They were given to understand that a representative committee was to be set up. But they would like to know why this committee had not yet been formed and what were the intentions of Government with regard to the administration of this fund and in particular with regard to the allocation of contributions to it. "In fact", Mr. Steven emphasised, "substantial contributions to the Central Relief Fund are being held up owing to uncertainty with regard to its administrations. We would urge that Government should make an immediate declaration of their intention with regard to this fund."

Khan Bahadur A. M. L. Rahman moved a cut motion to discuss about the inadequacy of relief in distressed areas. He said that in spite of all the solemn assurances of Government that relief was being given, the fact remained that people were dying in thousands all over Bengal. He referred particularly to the serious condition prevailing in Nilphamari and said that he had a telegram from the president of a very important relief organisation that there was total scarcity of rice in this sub-division since 11th. of this month. Public organisations stood helpless before a bewailing suffering humanity. In spite of their best intention, in spite of money at their disposal they could not obtain foodgrains to save the dying and the destitute. Endless conferences, deputations and meetings had not succeeded in expediting despatch of foodgrains. It was agreed on all hands that the situation was desperate and required a drastic remedy. They had been told of the thousands of tons of food grains coming in Bengal; they read every day of the magnificent efforts of the sister provinces to send succour to this unfortunate land of theirs, but where were they and why were they not being rushed? If there was a railway accident, a relief train was rushed at moment's notice and was it not a cruel irony of fate that a few wagons were not available now to send relief to places where people had died and were still dying in hundreds, if not in thousands? What was there to prevent Government from sending foodgrains by road either in carts or in lorries and in river districts by boats, if necessary?

Replying to the debate, Hon. Mr. Turak Nath Mukherjee said that suggestions made by the last speaker would receive the immediate consideration of the Government. As regards the cut motion of Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhury that the Government should declare famine in Bengal, Mr. Mukherjee said that according to the Famine Code and Famine Manual, Government had to arrange for the sale of foodgrains at subsidised rate which the Government were already doing. The Famine Code also laid down that for the distribution of clothes etc. in the worst affected areas Government should take recourse to Charitable Funds.

Mr. J. C. Gupta: What has the Famine Code to do with the Charitable Fund?

Mr. Mukherjee: I am placing before the House the implication underlying the declaration of famine by the Government. Proceeding, Mr. Mukherjee said that the Code said that the supply of diet to patients had got to be made from the public funds. But the Government were already arranging that out of the provincial revenue in some of the worst affected areas. He added that Government had also made arrangements for the purchase of cattle etc., from the provincial revenue although the Famine code contemplated that that had to be done from

the Charitable Fund. Replying to the criticisms that stocks of rice seized and hoarded by the Government were not released for public use, Mr. Mukherjee said that a good portion of that rice had been used for giving relief to the famine affected area in Bankura.

Mr. *Dhirendra Nath Dutta* (Congress): We have received letters from our constituencies that rice was not available and that people were dying.....

Mr. *Speaker*: Will you please resume your seat and allow the Hon. Minister to conclude his speech.

Mr. *Mukherjee*: People do not make a distinction between relief and food supply although just at the present moment the two are interlinked. At the present moment we are discussing about the relief work and not food supply is primarily the concern of the Civil Supplies Department.

(Cries from the Opposition Benches: "It is all nonsense".)

Mr. *Atul Sen*: Sir, we mean no disrespect to you, but we do not like to hear "this nonsense".

Mr. *Narendra Nath Das*: He is making a false statement.

The Ministerialist Benches took exception to this and there were shouts and counter-shoutings.

The *Speaker*: You may not be satisfied with what the Hon. Minister is saying but that does not give you the right to create any disturbance in the House. The *Speaker* added that it appeared to him that the House, at least the Opposition, were not in a mood to listen to the Hon. Minister at this late hour. He was giving certain figures and it appeared to him that the statement that the Minister was going to make might be of use to the House. But as the House was not in a mood to listen he was not going to detain the House longer during this month of Ramzan. He would therefore put the motions to vote and would ask the Hon. Minister to conclude his speech in a few minutes' time.

The cut motion of *Rai Harendra Nath Chaudhury* was then put to vote and lost, 69 voting for it and 115 against.

The original demand of Rs. 352,00,000 for expenditure under the head—famine put by the Minister was then carried by the House. Earlier, the House passed the demands for grant of Rs. 51,90,000 for expenditure under the head—Medical and Rs. 39,23,000 for expenditure under the head—Public Health. All the cut motions were lost without any division. The House was then adjourned.

#### DISAPPEARANCE OF RICE FROM MARKETS

21st. SEPTEMBER:—At the outset of the day's proceedings, Mr. *Kiran Sankar Roy*, leader of the Congress Party, demanded a statement from Government on the "complete disappearance of rice from the markets, particularly in the rural areas." He remarked that without an assurance from the Minister in charge that rice would be made available in the markets, the whole proceedings of the legislature became a farce. He said that with the leave of the House he wanted to draw the attention of the House, particularly the attention of Government to the terrible situation which had arisen in the province especially in the rural areas because of the complete disappearance of rice from the market. "I do not want to raise controversial issues as to the reasons of this disappearance of rice and other food grains. I suppose it will be universally admitted that the situation is terrible because of this disappearance. I have received numerous telegrams, and I am sure members of this House have also received such telegrams that the situation is desperate. I would request the Hon'ble Chief Minister and I am sorry that the Hon. Minister for Civil Supplies is absent (he has been very seldom present in the House during this session)—to make a statement on behalf of Government on this situation. I want to know what steps Government have taken to ensure supply of rice and other foodgrains in the market; if no steps have been taken the reason why; and if steps have been taken why then rice is unavailable in the markets. "I am not sure", Mr. Roy went on to say, "if Government would be able to make a statement to-day. It may be made to-morrow (Wednesday). I feel, and I am sure every member of this House will support me, that Government should give us an assurance that rice and other foodgrains will be made available to the people. In the absence of such an assurance and also in view of the fact that deaths from starvation are on the increase the whole proceedings of this House become unreal. I do not mean any reflection on the House, but the whole thing seems to be a farce.....(A voice from the Opposition: Mockery.)

Dr. *Nalinaksha Sanyal*: Give us food or get out.

Mr. Roy having resumed his seat, Dr. *Shyama Prosad Mookerjee* rose to draw the attention of Government to certain points in this regard. Dr. Mookerjee said he wanted to draw the attention of Government to the following facts :

"I have received during the last three days telegrams from the following places : Pirozepur, Hossainpur, Brahmanbaria, Madaripur, Barisal, Khulna, Narsindia, Narail, Nilphamari, Manickgunge, Chandpur and Ghatol and other places reporting that no rice is available and there is terrible suffering. These telegrams are from non-official persons and organizations. We have approached the district magistrates and sub-divisional officers during the last few days inquiring whether relief work should be started within their respective jurisdiction.

Dr. Mookerjee said he had received replies from the district and sub-divisional officers who had stated that "relief" was necessary, non-official efforts would be gratefully appreciated but no foodgrains are available locally.

#### TREATMENT OF SECURITY PRISONERS

Hon. *Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin* then moved that a sum of Rs. 56,74,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "28-Jails and Convict Settlements."

Mr. *Haripada Chatterjee* (Congress) moved a cut motion to raise a discussion about "the general policy of Government in the matter of administration of Jail and Convict Settlements, the failure of Government to deal with the jail officers even in cases when the attention of Government is drawn to their vagaries : treatment of ordinary prisoners as well as of security prisoners in jails ; and the family allowances of the security prisoners." Mr. Chatterjee alleged that the present European jailor of a particular Jail was a man who was not conversant with the jail codes. The Jail authorities could not provide a security prisoner with shirts and clothes and thus permitted to use his own clothes but the jailor assaulted him because he happened to put on ganjis. Mr. Chatterjee also alleged that without any reason and without giving a warning a warder assaulted sleeping security prisoners in the jail. After the incident, however, the jail authorities expressed their regret and apologised to the security prisoners. He knew that the Ministry had no power to introduce any revolutionary reforms, but he only placed these matters before them if they could do anything.

Dr. *Shyama Prosad Mookerjee* drew the attention of the Home Minister to the unsatisfactory nature of arrangements for rendering medical treatment to prisoners. Dr. Mookerjee also complained about "assaults" on prisoners. Dr. Mookerjee then strongly pleaded for increasing the family allowances of security prisoners and asked the Home Minister to issue an "ad hoc" order increasing the allowances.

Replying to the debate, Hon. *Sir Nazimuddin* said that he did not want to take much time in answering to Dr. Mookerjee because with due respect to the speaker he held that he did not consider what Dr. Mookerjee had stated was relevant. He would however make it clear that the policy of the Government was to release all whom Dr. Mookerjee had put in jail, people put into jail not only by Mr. Fazlul Huq alone but by Dr. Mookerjee as well. (There was interruption from the Opposition benches). Referring to the case of assault alleged by Mr. Haripada Chatterjee, Sir Nazimuddin said that the speaker had himself told the House that those cases were amicably settled and that was the reason why they were not brought to the notice of the authorities.

Replying to the policy of granting allowance, Sir Nazimuddin said that the policy had been very clearly enunciated and those who came within that policy received allowances. Even if there was such a security prisoner who never contributed to the maintenance of his family and yet the family was in a desperate condition, in certain conditions the Government were paying the allowances. Government's responsibility to the family was to the same extent the prisoner was responsible to his family. If there was any delay in giving effect to that policy it was because of the previous regime. The arrears accumulated had been cleared and he hoped there would be no more delay on the point. As far as the question of delay in despatching letters to the security prisoners were concerned he had been told by the I. B. department that arrangements had already been made to reduce 15 to two to three days.

Undoubtedly there were rigours of jail life which was never meant to be pleasant but members should realise that they were passing through a crisis. The total number of prisoners inside the jail were 50 p.c. more than the accommodation available. Were the members of the House willing that dangerous elements to the society such as dacoits, burglars etc., to be set free ? He agreed with the

members that the conditions in jails were worse than what they were formerly. Unfortunately they were not in a position to find a solution of the problem. Similarly they did not like the conditions prevailing in hospitals.

In jails they had got to maintain discipline but by that he did not mean oppression and assault. He was prepared when the food situation would ease to seek the assistance of members who were interested in that question to discuss with him about steps to be taken to effect jail reforms to make it possible for the jail life to be more humane.

All the cut motions were then put to vote and lost. The cut motion of Mr. Haripada Chatterjee was put to vote and lost 66 voting for it, 113 voting against.

#### MINISTER'S STATEMENT ON FOOD SITUATION

22nd. SEPTEMBER.—When the House met to-day, Mr. *Suhrawardy* read out a written statement, and left the Chamber almost immediately after. The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. *Fazlul Huq*, wanted an opportunity to make a statement or put questions to the Minister concerned since he considered the statement of Mr. *Suhrawardy* to be "outrageously false". Mr. *Huq* also took exception to the fact that immediately after reading out the statement Mr. *Suhrawardy* "turned his back on the House and went out."

The Speaker, Mr. *Syed Nausher Ali*, found it difficult to allow Mr. *Huq* to make a statement before the budget discussion fixed for the day was over.

Sharp passage-at-arms between the Speaker, Mr. *Fazlul Huq* and other members of the Opposition followed. Mr. *Kiran Sankar Roy*, Leader of the Congress Party, declared that it was a "shameless mockery to continue with the budget discussion when people are dying for want of food."

In the midst of noise and shouts *Sir Nazimuddin* moved his budget demand. The Speaker held that budget discussion should have precedence over everything, and after a prolonged discussion, the Opposition walked out of the Chamber.

Mr. *H. S. Suhrawardy*, in course of his statement, dealt with problems relating to "greater Calcutta" which was a wholly consuming centre. In this city, rice and other foodgrains were still being distributed to more than 2 million people through the industrial organizations, the Government of India and the Government of Bengal employees' shops, the public utility companies, the railways, the Ordnance factories, the A. R. P. organizations and a number of miscellaneous departments and organizations. About a lakh and 80 thousand maunds of rice per month were distributed through Government controlled shops and centres, i. e., an average of 6,000 maunds a day. Food could be obtained in hotels, restaurants, and eating houses, so that no one who had some money need starve. Atta was being sold through Government controlled shops, through shops under the immediate control of mills and through the industrial organizations—altogether 3,60,000 maunds in the last month. A large number of relief kitchens and cheap canteens were in operation in Calcutta and some organizations were even distributing rice free amongst the middle-class people.

To cater for the residue of the people who did not fall among any of the above categories, Government were taking steps to put more rice, atta and bajra on the markets. Mr. *Suhrawardy* could state that there was no dearth of dal and kalai. The other day, the Minister continued, he went to Jagu Babu's bazar and made enquiries and found that arrangements had been made to supply 100 shops with 4 maunds of rice per day per shop and similar arrangements had been made in some other markets.

The position, he added, was definitely improving, more and more stocks were being placed by Govt. at the disposal of dealers who were prepared to play the game. The wheat supplies from other parts of India had been satisfactory, and it was the first time in the existence of the Ministry that they had substantial stocks which Government would place on the market. "There are plenty of other foodgrains, like dal and kalai in the market which are also food. We are also placing considerable amount of bajra. I could flood the market of Calcutta with bajra," Mr. *Suhrawardy* said, and that we do not want chaukis to have sufficient bajra in their possession to adulterate the pure wheat products."

"The railways have been instructed not to allow consigners to take their goods away from their sheds without the permission of the Civil Supplies Department. Everyday they send us an account of the arrivals and for the time being we have decided to take all rice and "arhar" dal and mustard seeds consigned to Calcutta in the name of private persons so as to secure equitable distribution."

"Frankly, Sir," Mr. *Suhrawardy* declared, "the steps which are in operation,

and the steps which we are taking and are about to take in course of a day or two will make the situation satisfactory, and there will be no outcry of lack of foodgrains in Calcutta, except for political reason. But there is one thing that I should like to be well known that the distribution from the shops will not be on a wholesale scale. A person wanting a maund of rice all at once will find it difficult to secure it." As regards moffusil, District Magistrates and Sub-divisional Officers had been instructed to get foodgrains from whatever sources they could.

Voices from the Opposition: From where? From the sky. Will they manufacture rice, or get it from the air?

Mr. Suhrawardy continued that it was to be clearly understood that there was no going back on the price control orders and they would be maintained and severer measures would be taken to enforce them.

In conclusion, Mr. Suhrawardy said: "The amount of rice we have been allotted is very meagre compared to our requirements. Wheat and wheat products and bajra are being sent in larger and larger quantities. We must get accustomed to eating those substitute foods, and we shall not be able to satisfy any person who may claim that he must have his customary undiluted rice diet and in the quantities in which he used to get it.

Immediately, after Mr. Suhrawardy had read out his statement, he left the chamber. Just at that moment Mr. S. N. Biswas wanted to know from the Speaker if he could put a question to the Minister.

The Speaker replied that he could not allow any discussion on the subject. The matter before the House was the consideration of the budget.

Mr. Fazlul Huq said: I claim as a right of the Leader of the Opposition to place the point of view of the Opposition on the outrageously false statement made by the Minister.

Mr. Speaker: I have already said that this was not the opportune moment. Yesterday there was a demand for a statement and that demand has been fulfilled and the matter ends with that. There is before the House to-day a most important matter, namely, the consideration of the budget.

Mr. Fazlul Huq replied that he realised the point stressed by the Speaker. But at the same time the Speaker should also realise that Mr. Huq had a duty to himself and to the people of Bengal.

Mr. Speaker: Who is denying that? But at the present moment I think your duty is to confine yourself to the subject before the House.

Mr. Santosh Kumar Basu: Are you, Mr. Speaker, denying the leader of the Opposition his customary right to make a statement?

Mr. Speaker: I have not the least desire; it is far from me to deny to the Opposition a fair and reasonable opportunity of discussing or even an opportunity to the Leader of the Opposition to make a statement. Now it is desirable to remember in this connection what had happened. If the Leader of the Opposition had been to me yesterday to make this demand, that would have been quite proper. He did not do it. Still I allowed another leader of the Opposition of another group to make that statement and I allowed even another group to make an addition to that statement in spite of the opposition of the Hon. Chief Minister. The Hon. Minister of Civil Supplies had made a statement. Due to the importance of the question of food problem, due to the fact that there was a demand and also due to the fact that the statement made was about scarcity of rice I allowed it. Otherwise, I would not have allowed it. After the Minister of Civil Supplies has made his statement, I am sorry I cannot allow the Opposition to make any further statement.

Mr. Huq: I do not want to make a long statement. I want to put questions to the Minister.

The Speaker: I know what it means. You will put certain questions about the statement in the nature of cross-examination.

Mr. Huq: I will put to him questions regarding the statement which I do not accept as true.

The Speaker: Order, Order.

Mr. Huq: I want to put specific questions. It is not a question "I have done this, I have done that and I shall do this". People are dying in thousands and I want to know if this Government cannot stop what is going on.

At this stage the Speaker called on Sir Nazimuddin to move the demand that stood in his name and Sir Nazimuddin got up when there were loud protests from the Opposition benches.

The Speaker: It appears to me that you are not in proper mood to-day.

Mr. *Hug* : I am sorry to say that we are not. We are in hungry mood, we are in eating mood. We want to eat up.

The Speaker again asked Sir Nazimuddin to move his motion.

Mr. *Sasanka Sanyal* : Please do not stand in the way of the statement being made by the Leader of the Opposition. I have in my pocket here a letter written by the secretary of the Muslim League of my district. People are dying there and everybody, I am sure, is receiving such letters. Considering the gravity of the situation the budget discussion is a mockery. Are you going to allow Nero to fiddle while Rome is burning. If that is your order we of the Opposition will not yield.

The Speaker asked Sir Nazimuddin to move his motion when there were again interruptions from the Opposition Benches.

When Sir Nazimuddin resumed his seat the Speaker asked Dr. *Nalinakshya Sanyal* to move his out motion.

Dr. *Sanyal* : In the present temper of the House, particularly when the Leader of the Opposition wants to make a statement which every one will admit is within his right to make, it would be extremely unfair and improper on my part to divert the attention of the House to any other matter which is much less important to-day in relation to our food problem and I would beg of you to allow the Leader of the Opposition to make a full statement on his question which is so desirable. If the Hon. Minister in charge has any sense of proportion he should rise to the occasion and agree to the proposal.

The Speaker : Dr. Sanyal, I called upon you to move your amendment and you have delivered a sermon. What I want to say is that without minimising the extreme importance of the problem, I think you will agree with me that the budget demands should be passed to-day. If after the budget demands had been passed the Leader of the Opposition wants to make a statement I will allow that. (Cries from the Opposition : No, no, not after but now).

Dr. *Sanyal* : It is our privilege, we will not waive that.

The Speaker : Dr. Sanyal, I call upon you to move your motion.

Mr. *Kiran Sankar Roy* : May I make a submission. I know—we on this side of the House all know—that Government by the foot work of its followers can pass this budget. They have got votes on their sides. But I feel, as I pointed out yesterday, that in view of the unsatisfactory character of the statement, it is no use our taking part in the debate on the budget grants. As a matter of fact if statements, ordinances and promises could have supplied food, then people would have died of overfeeding rather than starvation. I and the party which I have the honour to lead will take no part in the proceedings of to-day. It is a shameful mockery for us to waste our time in continuing the debate."

The Speaker : I do not quite understand why this insistence that this statement should come first and then budget. That is baffling me. I have heard a whisper that after the budget demands are passed members of the Government Party will disappear. That apprehension, I believe, may not be quite correct. I will appeal to you to see that this matter is gone through and then there will be ample opportunities for the Opposition to make a statement.

Dr. *Syamaprasad Mookerjee* said that the Speaker had allowed Mr. H. S. Subrawardy to make a statement because it had something to do with the exceptional circumstance now prevailing; but that statement was considered by the Opposition to be "utterly unsatisfactory." "The constitutional point that we raise is that the Minister having made a statement it is the privilege of the Leader of the Opposition to put any questions or to make a statement as he may consider necessary. It is not a question of favour that we ask from the House or yourself. This is a valued right of the Leader of the Opposition. We want the Hon. Minister to be here; we demand of him to listen to the point of view of the Opposition to be voiced through the Leader of the Opposition and if necessary the Minister to come up before the House and make a supplementary statement. There may be some technical difficulties but the situation in the province to-day is so very serious that we feel that we should not add to the present atmosphere of unreality by continuing the budget discussion on the general administration; we should have replies from Government giving an assurance with regard to supplies and distribution of food grains particularly to the dying millions of Bengal who are not in this fortunate city of Calcutta.

The Speaker : It is better that I should abdicate my position and go out of the office altogether rather than to allow such disorderly conduct in the House. (Hear, hear from the European Benches). I would insist on every member of

this House to help me in maintaining the order of the House. It may be that my ruling is absolutely wrong. It may be that I have not given proper facilities to the Opposition which they under the rules or by conventions, are entitled to. But I think that if any democratic institution is to function I am entitled to the support and co-operation of every honourable member of the House (Hear, hear from the European Benches) as otherwise it will be simply impossible to carry on the administration. It has been said that my conduct is school-masterly. Well, I have been in this House for a pretty long time, and I know that sometimes the conduct of the Speaker has got to be schoolmasterly. If there are boys and students, if there are pupils like honourable members who behave like naughty boys I have got to be schoolmasterly. It is far from me to be harsh to any member. I know the dignity of the members of the House and my dignity is the dignity of the House. If the members of the House are forgetful of that position, I think it is better for the Speaker to leave the Chair. I want to know if the Opposition is prepared to support me in this House.

Mr. A. K. Fazlul Haq : I am extremely sorry to find that you have lost your temper. You are one of those men about whom I have the highest regard and whom nothing can ruffle his temper. Now you have said your dignity is our dignity. Your dignity is the dignity of the House but permit me to point out that my dignity is the dignity of the people of Bengal (Applauses from the Opposition Benches).

"I ask you not in a spirit of temper, to bring back to your mind the scene that was enacted by Hon. Mr. Suhrawardy. He made a statement good, bad or indifferent that is a different matter. But immediately after he made the statement, he put something into his mouth, turned his back and went out. I consider that to be an act of discourtesy to the House and to the Opposition and we took it very much to our hearts that such a thing could happen. You realise that it is not a question of the budget demands. I may tell you that we look upon this budget as the most dishonest budget. We do not care two brass buttons whether this budget is passed or not. The Budget will be passed. People will die in millions but this House will pass the budget. It is not a parliamentary procedure but a colossal humbug. We have nothing to do with it. We are most anxious about the food problem. There is the District Magistrate sitting in the gallery. Let him come out and say whether he is getting foodgrains for the people. It is not a question of passing the budget. If you would have allowed us to speak, we would have economised time and after having concentrated on one or two motions we would have passed the budget without division. Even now we are willing to pass the budget without division if the Government give us an undertaking that it would procure and give food to the starving millions of Bengal (Hear. Hear from the Opposition benches). Mere words and mere promises would not do. The Minister had said that the District Magistrates have been given instructions to unearth the foodgrains and I find that the District Magistrate of a very important district sitting in the gallery, let him say if he can really find food, let him come out and make a statement.

The Speaker : Order, Order. It is not in order to refer to the gallery.

Mr. Haq : So far as we are concerned we submit that we do not want to take any part in this discussion of the budget.

The Opposition members then withdrew from the House led by Mr. Haq.

The House was then adjourned for 20 minutes, and when the House re-assembled the Speaker regretted the absence of the Opposition and after calling out the members in whose names the cut motions stood which were not moved, put the original demand of Sir Nazimuddin that a sum of Rs. 1,30,83,000 be granted for expenditure under the head—General Administration. The House sanctioned the demand, and passed the grant.

#### FOOD CRISIS—CHARGES AGAINST ISPAHANIS

23rd. SEPTEMBER :—Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal moved a cut motion to-day and spoke on the "impropriety and abuses in the appointment of Messrs. M. M. Ispahani Ltd. as the sole Agent of the Bengal Government for the purchase of foodgrains for some time and the payment of large sums of money to that firm without proper scrutiny of their purchases and deliveries and the prices." Dr. Sanyal said that he had no quarrels with the Ispahanis. He alleged that at the time when Ispahanis were appointed the purchasing agent, no contract was made, and an agreement was drawn up only a week ago. In the absence of any agreement, crores of rupees were given to the firm by violating the canons of public finances, and the total amount of such advances was nearly 5 crores. Dr. Sanyal could discover

that less than 3 crores worth of foodgrains had been delivered to the Government agents.—Messrs. Mirza Ali Akbar. About 2 crores worth of rice was purchased in Bengal itself and only 3 crores worth of foodgrains from other provinces. It is not understood why the Bengal Government allowed the prices of rice to be forced up by such purchases. When prices had a tendency to go down Ispahanis purchased rice at any price and thus again forced it up. Dr. Sanyal had reports from a responsible officer of Government who went to Bihar to facilitate the transport of rice purchased by the Ispahanis that he discovered that the Ispahanis were selling rice to the Bengal Government at a price much higher than their cost price. Certain steps were taken by the C. P. Government because the merchants there alleged that huge profits were being made by purchasing the rice at a lower price from them and selling the rice at higher price in Bengal. Dr Sanyal also alleged that during the last food drive the godowns of a certain agent were left out of inspection by ordinary officers, and special officers were appointed to take the stocks. Even then one of the special officers who conducted the stock taking complained that the stock were much larger than what were declared by Mirza Ali Akbar. Dr. Sanyal added that that officer was an I. O. S. officer who brought the matter to the notice of the police and the later sealed the godowns. Then again peremptory orders were issued under instruction from "H. M." prohibiting the stock taking by that officer.

Mr. *Suhrawardy*: I know nothing about it.

Mr *Abdul Rahman Siddiqi* replied that the allegations against the Ispahanis were baseless, and malicious, and contradicted every piece of allegation made by Dr. Sanyal. Mr. Siddiqi said that it was because the Ispahanis were Moslems that such allegations had been made. Every other provincial Government had appointed sole agents, and they were a commercial firm of great repute and there was no necessity for them to make money in the way complained about. Mr. Siddiqi also pointed out that the agents of Ispahanis were not singled out by the C. P. Government for stopping export of rice purchased on behalf of their respective Governments, but all other agents were also served with similar orders.

Dr. *Santosh Kumar Basu* said that he was speaking in the debate because it had been said over and over again that the old Ministry were responsible for the present situation. But they would find that there was a trio in the politics of Bengal: they were Suhrawardy, Ispahani and Siddiqi. Suhrawardy and Ispahani had been always in the forefront and Siddiqi forming the tailhead. Mr. Basu said that he would like to state the reasons why he did not resign previously. It was his (Mr. Basu's) party which asked him not to resign. Mr. Barada Prasanna Pain, who was now adorning the Treasury Bench, wrote to Mr. Basu from Behrampore on 28th November, 1942, to the following effect: Bengal will never forgive you if you resign now. Bengal will never forgive you if you come out and hand her over to the Suhrawardy gang." People, Mr. Basu added, might change their opinion when they joined the ranks of "gangsters" themselves.

Dr. *Shyamprasad Mukherjee* said that charges against the firm had been openly made and there should be an enquiry into it. The other day he enquired of the Ministry to give certain informations and although five days has passed those informations were still not before the House. For the reputation of the Government and also of the firm there should be an open enquiry by a tribunal which might command the confidence of the people of the province. They had received reports from all parts of Bengal, from Hindus and Muslims, stating that their families were starving and no rice was available. The question of questions was how could the Price Control Order be promulgated without making adequate and proper arrangements for supply. That was the specific charge against the Government of Bengal. For this alone the Government of Bengal had forfeited the confidence of the people. Proceeding, Dr. Mukherjee enquired of what was going to be done in respect of the Aman crop (voice: Agents were already making advances). If the Government had no scheme of organisation before December, if they were not going to set up an organisation now, then the whole of the province would be thrown to really bottomless pit.

Mr. *L. G. Kennedy* said that the painful history of food control in Bengal was the story of a handful of men struggling hopelessly with an immense problem. It might be said truthfully that food control had been toyed with and not tackled in the large scale manner which it needed. This was a hopeless state of affairs and could not be allowed to continue.

Hon. *Khwaja Sir Nazimuddin*, replying to the debate, said that the last speaker (Dr. Shyamprasad Mookherjee) had given a clue to the real propaganda

that was being carried on in the province by the Opposition. (Cries of No, No from the opposition benches). (A voice from the opposition benches: what are you doing to prevent death and starvation?).

Sir Nazimuddin said that the firm of Ispahanis were being grounded down merely because that was a means of attack on the Government itself. The real object was to utilise the situation for the purpose of attacking the Government. Ispahanis were the handy target for an attack on the Government of Bengal. He took full responsibility also for the appointment of Ispahanis as the sole agent of the Government of Bengal. That was done after consultation with the Regional Commissioner and His Excellency the Governor of Bengal. He could not say—let the members deny if they could—that the propaganda had been so successful that even the highest in the land had been subjected to it.

Dr. Sanyal: Who is the highest in the land?

Sir Nazimuddin: And the whole thing can be seen by this that even it had been said that the whole illness of the Governor of Bengal was not correct. Could that be denied? Could it be denied that all this was propaganda?

Dr. Mookherjee said that the Hon. Chief Minister had stated that there had been insinuations that the highest in the land, His Excellency the Governor of Bengal, was somehow implicated in connection with the contract being given to Ispahanis and he had also stated that it was rumoured that Sir John Herbert had faked illness. Up till now such reports had not appeared in newspapers. Would this statement of the Hon. Chief Minister be allowed to be published in the newspapers?

The Speaker replied "Why not?"

Sir Nazimuddin remarked that when he said "propaganda", he meant "propaganda".

Dr. Mookherjee: Even the death of people is propaganda?

Sir Nazimuddin continued that they realised at the time of appointing Ispahanis that various allegations would be levelled against the Ministry, but the Ministry were advised by responsible persons that if they wanted rice to come into Bengal the responsibility must be taken. It should be remembered in this connexion that at that time there was stock of rice which was sufficient only for two days for Calcutta. Sir Nazimuddin said that at that time the Bengal Government was prepared to purchase rice at any price, and if the Ispahanis had any desire to make profits they could have easily earned Rs. 35 lakhs by selling rice to the Bengal Government at Rs. 30 or more which was the market price then.

Moreover, Sir Nazimuddin continued, not a single instance had been cited by the Opposition where Ispahanis had purchased rice at a lower price and sold it to Government at a higher price.

Dr. Sanyal: Bihar.

Sir Nazimuddin retorted that times and times again offers had been made to inspect the books of accounts of Ispahanis. But they could not do that.

The Home Minister referred to the price control orders and said that instead of trying to co-operate with the Government in seeing that control was rigidly followed, in seeing that controlled price was maintained in the markets, the Opposition had taken up an attitude which encouraged the traders to hold on their stocks. (Shouts of protests from the Opposition were heard). Dwelling on the criticism that it was not proper to enforce control order without ensuring supplies, Sir Nazimuddin said that if there was supply, the question of controlling prices would not have arisen; the normal economic law of supply and demand would have functioned. Because there was deficit, there was the need for controlling prices.

"We knew", Sir Nazimuddin continued, "that we were taking a grave risk by trying to control price of rice. We knew that there was likelihood of rice disappearing from the market. By the Grace of God, however, we have not had the thing which might have happened". (Cries of oh, oh, from the Opposition).

Actually, the Chief Minister said, Dr. Mookherjee had read out letters from 8 or 9 districts.....

Dr. Mookherjee: Here is the file. I can read out the rest if you like to hear.

Sir Nazimuddin: But in the rest of Bengal, in the major part of Bengal rice is being sold at controlled price though not in the quantities you wished to have; but 5 seers, 2 seers or 1 seer you can get.....

Voices from the Opposition: We do not want to listen. It is no use to waste time in hearing such a speech.

Sir Nazimuddin: You can go to Calcutta, Howrah, Bogra.....(Shouts from the Opposition drowned his voice).

Sir *Nazimuddin* : I am naming the districts where you can get it.....

Dr. *Sanyal* : There is no use for his speech. Let the question be put to vote.

Sir *Nazimuddin* : Every possible step is being taken and Government are doing everything humanly possible to meet the situation.

The cut motion of Dr. *Sanyal* was then put to vote and lost by 116 to 78 votes. The other cut motions were also lost, and the main grant was passed. The House then adjourned.

#### CONDUCT OF CHIEF JUSTICE CRITICISED

24th. SEPTEMBER :—Hon. Mr. *Barada Prosanna Pain* moved that a sum of Rs. 48,13,000 be granted for expenditure under the head—Irrigation. Mr. *Adwaitya Kumar Maji* by a cut motion discussed the failure of the Government to maintain the Damodar Embankment. Dr. *Nalinakshya Sanyal* by a cut motion discussed the failure of the Government to prevent the havoc created through the recent flood of the Damodar. Mr. *Pramatha Nath Banerjee* by a cut motion raised a discussion about the policy underlying the demand and the failure of the Government to formulate or execute well-considered policy. Replying to the debate, the Minister said that the natural calamity like flood in the Damodar was not preventable. The Committee appointed had been specifically requested to submit their report covering all the points suggested by the speakers. The latest report that he had received was to the effect that the river was showing the tendency to flow through the old course and the breach was closing. Defending the policy of the present Government Mr. Pain said that as the war progressed, they would require more agricultural produce and necessarily there was the need for more cultivation and more irrigation schemes being put into operation. It was mostly earth work that was required to be done. They had the sympathy of the India Government and expected substantial grant from the Central Government. The Government of India had also promised to release the provincial officers to put the schemes into operation. The cut motions were put to vote and lost without division. The original motion was then carried by the House.

The House also sanctioned the sum of Rs. 1,06,16,000 demanded by Mr. Pain for expenditure under the head—civil works, a sum of Rs. 17,83,000 demanded by Mr. *Sahabuddin* for expenditure under the head—Industries ; and a sum of Rs. 12,25,000 demanded by Mr. *Premhari Barma* under the head—Industries (Cinchona).

The demand for grant of Rs. 75,12,000 under head "Administration of Justice" moved by the Hon. *Nawab Musharuff Hossain* was passed. Dr. *Nalinaksha Sanyal* sought to move a cut motion to raise a discussion about the conduct of Sir *Harold Derbyshire* who holds the office of the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court in so far as he indulged in certain observations regarding Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, the ex-premier and Mr. Syed Badruddoja, the Mayor of Calcutta, not at all required in the discharge of his duties. Dr. *Sanyal* contended that the Government of India Act clearly contemplated criticisms by the public and also by the legislature of even the conduct of a person occupying the highest position in the judiciary in the land if that person did something which did not seemingly and apparently come within the function and duty of his office. The wording of section 86 of the Government of India Act prohibited discussion in the legislature on the conduct in the discharge of his duties of any judge of a High Court or the Federal Court. The question therefore which arose in determining whether his cut motion was in order or not was a question of fact, namely, whether in this particular case the observations made by the Judge concerned really arose in course of the discharge of his judicial duty. This question had to be approached from different angles. The ordinary citizens outside, the public and the Press had the right to criticise and examine judgments delivered by courts. So long as the cases remained sub-judice they could not discuss them because that would be infringing the rules and laws regarding contempt of court. But after judgments were delivered, the public had the right to criticise them. It was never contemplated that the members would have privileges much less than possessed by the public outside.

The Speaker, Mr. *Nausher Ali* in giving his ruling said : "The motion seeks to discuss the conduct of Sir *Harold Derbyshire* who holds the office of Chief Justice. Therefore, his conduct is the conduct of the Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court in so far as he indulged—I must stress upon the word 'indulge'—in certain observations regarding Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq and so on. But Dr. *Sanyal* contends that this conduct of Sir *Harold Derbyshire* was out of the mischief of section 16 ; and he wanted to prove that it was not necessary in the discharge of

his duties as the Chief Justice of the Calcutta High Court. I am sorry I cannot allow a motion of this nature. Because, if I allow it, the result would be that every member will come forward and say that this part of a particular judgment was not necessary in the discharge of his duty as a judge. I regret that such an interpretation is not permissible under section 86 of the Act, and therefore I regretfully disallow the second part of this motion." The Speaker however added that it was open, in his opinion, to every member of this House to discuss judgments once pronounced, the merits, the procedure having relation to that judgment except casting reflection upon any judge.

#### MR. POLLARD'S CASE

Dr. *Nalinaksha Sanyal* then moved a cut motion to discuss the situation created "through the setting aside of the conviction of Mr. R. C. Pollard, Superintendent of Police, Murshidabad, on a charge of assaulting one lawyer at Berhampore and through the issuing of orders for the re-trial of the accused in what is known as the Jagannj rice-looting case." Dr. Sanyal alleged that the entire public opinion in the district was against this officer. This officer, he alleged, did what he liked, and did not care even the district magistrates or sub-divisional officers. The situation had deteriorated so much that every decent man in the district was under constant fear.

Mr. *Atul Chandra Sen* moved another cut motion to raise "a discussion about the recent pronouncement by Sir Charles Harold Derbyshire, Chief Justice, Calcutta High Court, about Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, ex-Chief Minister, Bengal, in connection with what is known as the Jagannj Rice-Looting Case." Mr. Sen said that the observations made by the Chief Justice were uncalled for. The offence of Mr. Fazlul Huq was that he wrote certain letters to the district magistrate in which he asked the trial magistrate not to be influenced by the brow-beating of the police. Mr. Huq was not on trial; he had no opportunity to defend himself. Yet the strictures were passed against him. Mr. *Syed Badruddoja* said that Mr. Huq wrote those letters since Mr. Huq had information in his possession from reliable quarters that attempts were being made "to pile up evidence." Instead of trying to interfere with the administration of justice, Mr. Huq tried to maintain the flow of justice. Mr. *Abdur Rahman Siddiqi* said that there was nothing wrong in Mr. Huq's writing letters to the district magistrate. But that must be done in his capacity as the Chief Minister and not in his personal capacity as he had done in the present circumstances. That was a bad administration and give rise to suspicion. Hon. *Nawab Musharuff Hossain* said that he did not find what fault could be found with the High Court judgment. The judgment simply said that if the officer had committed an offence he must be prosecuted after sanction had been obtained from the Government of Bengal. The cut motions when put to vote, were all lost and the entire grant was passed.

#### ALLEGATIONS OF HIGHER PRICES OF FOODSTUFFS

25th. SEPTEMBER :—Hon. Mr. *Tamizuddin Khan*, Minister for Education, moved for a sum of Rs. 1,67,56,000 for grant under head "Education—General."

Rai *Harendra Nath Chaudhuri* moved a cut motion to raise a discussion about the failure of Government to provide for sufficient aid to non-Government Secondary Schools to enable them to grant dearness allowance to their teachers. Mr. Rai Choudhury pointed out the very distressing situation in which the teachers of the province were placed owing to the high price of rice and other commodities. The last Ministry of Mr. Huq did something to give them relief, and spent about a lakh and 75 thousand for alleviating their distress. But there was no provision in the present budget to that purpose.

Dr. *Syama Prasad Mookerjee* urged Government to go to the aid of the teacher in non-Government institutions of the province. Reports were coming to him about the miserable plight of teachers which were indeed heart-rending. He feared that unless some immediate arrangements were made, the teachers as a class would go into oblivion and with them would also go into oblivion the entire educational system of the province. A principle was adopted by the last Minister to give some temporary relief to the teachers in non-Government schools and colleges. At least Government could give these teachers a lump sum in aid. It might be that a few lakhs more would be spent; but when Bengal could afford to have a deficit budget to the extent of 7-1/2 crores, this sum could easily be provided. Dr. Mookerjee also pointed out the extreme difficulty the students residing in hostels were experiencing in getting rice. It was absolutely necessary, Dr. Mookerjee said, that Government arranged to supply rice to these hostels.

Mr. W. C. Wordsworth wholeheartedly associated with the suggestions made by the previous speakers. He did not blame the present Government or any other Government for the distressing condition of the teachers; for, that was due to the fault of every Government of this province. Teachers were never fairly paid. Perhaps, it was considered that because they were doing valuable public work it would be improper to consider their case.

Mr. P. Bannerji also moved a cut motion about Government's failure to provide for adequate relief to the teachers of non-Government institutions. Mr. Radha Nath Das by a cut motion attacked Government for the lack of any policy to educate the people belonging to the scheduled castes of Bengal. He pointed out that although there were three Ministers and a few parliamentary secretaries there was nothing in the budget which showed that they were going to improve the condition of education among the scheduled castes. Maulvi Idris Ahmed Mia also moved a cut motion for the failure of Government to introduce Primary Education Act in Malda which was most backward educationally in Bengal.

Replying, Mr. Tamizuddin Khan said that it was admitted that the condition of teachers was very serious. He formed a comprehensive scheme to give relief to teachers. He placed his scheme before the 'Government as a whole' with the hope that something should be done for these tottering institutions and starving teachers. "It was found," he said, "that it was not possible to do anything for this deserving people. I think it will be admitted that the question of saving the general mass of people from starvation is far more important than that of helping these distressed teachers. Therefore, whatever money was available, it was decided, must be spent towards the general relief of the starving people. The only part of my scheme that was accepted was to give dearness allowance to teachers of primary schools under district school boards." Dealing further with this question the Minister said that Government had controlled the price of rice and Government expected that price would come down soon. That would be giving relief not only to the teachers but to the people as a whole. "The situation", he said, "has improved to a very great extent, and even teachers are getting rice at much lower price than they previously used to get. In Faridpur rationing has been introduced, and teachers of secondary and primary schools are getting rice at controlled price from Government shops."

The cut motion of Mr. Rai Chaudhury was put to vote and lost by 110 to 73 votes. The other cut motions were also lost, and the grant was passed.

Hon. Khan Bahadur Saiyed Muazzamuddin Hossain moved that a sum of Rs. 1,33,23,000 be granted for expenditure under the head "Agriculture."

Mr. G. Morgan moved a cut motion to draw the attention of Government to the dangerous seed position not only for the coming winter season but the position which was looming in front of them as regards the 1944 Aus and Aman paddy crops. To give a specific instance of the present hopeless situation, he cited an instance which occurred at Rajshahi. An application was made to the district agricultural officer at Bilmaria who replied that he had been unable to buy any 'chaitali' seeds. The agricultural officer at Berhampore said that they had no seeds for disposal. This means that large areas would remain fallow or at best be sown with inferior seed. The same lack of foresight affected Bhadol sowing when cultivators in Murshidabad were obliged to sow vast areas of good paddy land with inferior crops. If this is happening in Rajshahi, Nadia and Murshidabad, it surely must be happening in other districts in Bengal. If the 1943 crops showed no surplus and people all over Bengal were starving, then how could the Government expect to get the paddy and other seeds sufficient to sow over 26 million acres next year? And if the quantity required,—150 lakhs of maunds of paddy,—was not procurable from the 1943 crops at harvest time, how would the province fare as regards the 1944 'aus' and 'aman' paddy and foodgrains sowings? "Are we faced with complete starvation a year hence?", said Mr. Morgan. He urged Government to purchase aus paddy seed now for next season's sowings, and advertise the price they would give for really sound seed.

Replying, the Minister said that Government could not be expected to supply seed for the whole of Bengal. This would mean an expenditure which Government could not undertake. Government were supplying seeds in the areas where they were absolutely required. He had taken up the reorganisation of the Agriculture Department. The pressure on land was very heavy, and the number of landless labourers was also increasing. Government was under correspondence with the appropriate authority for the promulgation of an Ordinance whereby all lands which would not be cultivated by the landlords would be cultivated by the Government.

Mr. Morgan wanted to withdraw his cut motion. Leave was however given by the House by a majority of 110 to 75 for withdrawal of the cut motion. The remaining 47 items of budget were then placed before the House without discussion since time was up, and were passed. The House then adjourned till the 27th.

#### DEBATE ON THE FOOD SITUATION

27th. SEPTEMBER :—The adjourned debate on the food situation commenced to-day. Dr. Nalinaksha Sanyal's resolution characterised the statement of the Food Minister as extremely disappointing and unsatisfactory, particularly in so far as it did not envisage Government intention to undertake as yet the maintenance of food supply for the entire population, especially the rural population and the middle class, and in so far as there was the absence of any comprehensive scheme for equitable distribution. Dr. Sanyal urged that big centres like Calcutta and suburbs, places of military quarters or aerodrome construction etc. should be isolated from the rest of Bengal with arrangements for food supply to such areas from outside Bengal, and leaving the rural areas with the crop for their consumption. He also urged the abandonment of the scheme of 'aman' paddy and rice by outsiders in various districts, and passed for an immediate reorganisation of the village food committees and setting up of union and village relief committees representatives of all sections and organizations.

Mr. J. R. Walker said that the position was bad enough in Calcutta but they had reason to believe that the position was even worse in areas outside Calcutta, for example, in certain areas in East Bengal and in the Contai and Tamluk subdivisions of Midnapur. Figures of mortality from starvation in Calcutta had been published but there were no complete official figures regarding deaths in other areas. That should be done in order that the facts might be known. They felt strongly on the point that the Government had not collected the destitutes in Calcutta and removed them to camps prior to repatriating them to their own villages. They demanded that Government took vigorous action immediately in removing the destitutes. He contradicted the suggestion in Delhi circles that the situation had been over-dramatised. He held the view that the Government of India must assume the responsibility for seeing that there was an equitable distribution of rice and other foodgrains as between the provinces. They should like to be assured that food supplies as they came to Bengal were supplied speedily to mofussil places. In normal circumstances they would have agreed but it was certainly not desirable that one firm should be appointed as the sole Government agents, and they trusted that Government had that point in view in regard to their 'aman' crop policy. The criticism against the firm of Isphahanis he considered to be unfair and was inspired by political motives.

Mr. Mukunda Behari Mullick said that the food situation was undoubtedly a serious one and for its solution determined action was urgently required. There was hardly any room to raise any acrimonious discussion over the unfortunate situations. Everybody had to admit that the present Ministry were trying their very best to meet the situation.

Dr. Sanaulla said that although he had moved from pillar to post and from post to pillar he had not yet been able to secure rice for relief purposes in Chittagong where at the present moment rice was not available. The present Ministry were supposed to be hankering for the co-operation of the Opposition but when the speaker approached the Khan Bahadur Jalaluddin Ahmad he was politely told that he could not agree to be associated with their non-official relief work.

Mr. Anandilal Poddar maintained that Mr. Subhawardy could not explain away the gap in the Punjab price of Atta at Rs. 10-8 and the Bengal price at Rs. 17-8 and wondered why the exorbitant milling charge at the rate of Rs. 3 per maund was allowed.

Mr. Samsuddin Ahmad did not know on whose advice the district of Nadia had been declared a surplus district. He enquired of the agriculturists of his constituency as to why they were selling their stocks of rice when they knew that they could not be in a position to meet their own family demands. They in reply told him that they sold their stocks as otherwise they were apprehensive that the Government would seize their stocks and confiscate the same. That was the type of propaganda that was being adopted to make the peasants part with stocks that were required for their family consumption.

Mr. A. K. Fazlul Huq, leader of the Opposition, said that it was no use putting forward charges and counter-statements. Let them take their stand on solid facts. Bengal was in the grip of famine; not only there was scarcity, but

rice had totally disappeared from the province. A member had alleged that rice was sold at Dacca at Rs. 80/- per maund. But Mr. Huq was of the opinion that that question did not arise, since rice was unavailable the cost of it did not matter. That was the position in Bengal to-day. Was that the legacy his Government left for the present Ministry? Mr. Huq's Government left office towards the end of March 1943 when rice was selling between 15 and 20/- per maund. The present Ministry took office on April 24. As soon as Mr. Suhrawardy took charge, he went into the files and made all sorts of enquiries. After having carefully surveyed the food position in the province, Mr. Suhrawardy issued statements asserting that there was no shortage of rice, and the price prevailing at that time was purely speculative and bore no relation whatsoever to the true stock position in the province as a whole. According to Mr. Suhrawardy's own admission, there had been bumper 'boro' crop, there was last year's carry over, and the Government of India were sending foodgrains which would meet Bengal's needs to the full. (Cries from the Opposition benches: Ganja, ganja). By a dispassionate reading of the statements issued by the Minister for Civil Supplies, Mr. Huq continued, it would be evident that he came to the conclusion that there was no shortage but that there was difficulty in the distribution. Not a single word was then said about the "tremendous deficiency" left to him (Mr. Suhrawardy) by his predecessor. When Mr. Huq was in office, Mr. Walker condemned his Government for the high price of rice which was only Rs. 15 to 20. What now was their stand when the price went up to Rs. 80 - in Dacca?

There was an interruption from Mr. *Abdur Rahman Siddiqi* which could not be heard from the press box.

Mr. *Huq* was heard saying: You take all the money from Bengal, but let me allow to say a few words.

There was a system of Hindu philosophy, which perhaps was not known to the European members of the House, according to which everything in this world was nothing but illusion (*Maya*). "You see a picture before you; but you cannot say it is a picture, it may be a rope or something else—it is purely illusion. So, there is no rice in Bengal; but that is not correct, rice is there but it is illusion. The price is Rs. 80/- per maund; that is nothing—why don't you take it to be Rs. 4/-, for everything is illusion! The famine is purely speculative. What nonsense? People are dying—that is also illusion—for the people are not dying, but they are reborn." According to non-officials people were dying of starvation; no, that was not correct, for according to Government people were dying not because of starvation, but because of exposure and cold. "I say all this is propaganda," the Minister exclaims, "there is no distress in the country." The position, therefore, was, Mr. Huq continued, so far as the scarcity was concerned, it was not the legacy of the past Government. As regards high price of rice, that was also not the legacy left by the previous Ministry.

It had been said that the firm of Ispahanis had done a great service to the country by undertaking the sole purchasing agency of the Government of Bengal. Mr. Huq knew the circumstances under which the firm was given the task. When the denial policy was decided upon, the Governor of Bengal, Sir John Herbert asked the Joint Secretary to arrange for the removal of rice from coastal areas. The Joint Secretary to the Commerce Department made certain telephonic enquiries from four or five firms asking them if they could undertake the job. He then reported to Sir John that no firm was agreeable to undertake the task, and then it was stated there was no other firm with agencies all over Bengal who was willing to remove the surplus rice from the coastal districts. In the circumstances, Mr. Huq was told, there was no other alternative but to give the job to the Ispahanis. Mr. Huq said that his Ministry was not asked in the matter, subsequently they lodged strong protests against it. Mr. Huq's objection was not to the appointment of the firm of the Ispahanis. His objection was to the manner in which the agents of Ispahanis had been allowed to go about in the mofussil disturbing the economic condition of the people, purchasing rice and creating panic. "We demand," Mr. Huq said, "a thorough public inquiry." Mr. Huq went to Khulna and was told that the agents with permits of Government were telling the people that they could not sell rice to anybody but to them. They purchased rice at Rs. 3/- or 4/- per maund and sold it to Government account at Rs. 30/- per maund. He had also received such stories from other places. Mr. Huq also alleged that rice was requisitioned, but no compensation was paid for the requisitioned rice. Was that justice, was this the way to protect the rights and liberty of the people? Was it not criminal? The European group professed that they supported the Ministry

because it was honestly attempting to solve the problem. If they were sincere in their profession, the European group should support the demand of the Opposition for an inquiry into these allegations. If there was an inquiry, Mr. Huq declared, the European group would find what dirty things had been and were being done in the name of justice? What, after all, was wrong in an enquiry? It was admitted that crores of rupees had been given to the Ispahanis. This was public money, and public had the right to know how the money had been spent. All public organizations, even organizations for relief work, published their accounts to satisfy the people. The Ispahanis had been given money out of public Exchequer, and various allegations had been made against the firm. In the circumstances, why they fear an inquiry—for, an inquiry would give them the opportunity to clear the firm of the charges levelled against it. Mr. Suhrawardy had issued an appeal for co-operation. "It must be understood," Mr. Huq said, "that confidence breathes confidence, and co-operation breathes co-operation. A Government which is not merely a sectional Government, but which carries on its Government only to favour a few of their friends and relations do not deserve any co-operation." Mr. Huq alleged that even some members of the Opposition were approached by Government party with offers to induce them to go over to the Ministerialist party. That was the kind of Government they had in Bengal to-day. "I hope my friends of the European Group," Mr. Huq concluded, "will excuse me if I refer in this connexion to the fact that this Ministry which during the past six months has been able to bring the province to such a pass is getting unstinted support not merely from my friends opposite but from the European group: for the support given to this Ministry by the European group and my friends opposite come from the same psychological source, although the approaches may be slightly different. The European group supports this Ministry because it was their founding, and they know that this ministry is so very amenable to their advice that they would be ill-advised to throw this Ministry out of office. They are acting under the apprehension that once the Ministry goes out of office it is not known what catastrophe may befall them. The position of my friends of the European group was that it is better to have the devil we know than the devil we do not know. My friends opposite (referring to the Ministerial party) are supporting this Ministry, because they have placed all their hopes for future in this Ministry; it is through this Ministry that they have amassed fabulous wealth which will last for generations to come."

Hon. Mr. *H. S. Suhrawardy*, replying to the debate, said that he refused to be agitated by the taunts of members of the Opposition from whom not a single constructive suggestion had come. Dr. Shyamaprosad Mookerjee's speech was political stunt.

Dr. *Mookerjee*: Give the people food and stop this stunt.

It did not matter what he said formerly, said Mr. Suhrawardy. What mattered really was that on the assumption of office he took all possible steps to persuade the Government that there was shortage of rice in Bengal and that they must come to the assistance of the province. It had been stated that no adequate steps had been taken to send supplies to the deficit areas. But the real fact was that for five months these deficit areas were being supplied by the Government. He made it quite clear that no rice was taken away from deficit areas. As soon as he heard that the situation in Midnapur had deteriorated he had sanctioned to double the amount of rice that was being sent to that place.

Replying to the second charge of Dr. Mookerjee, Mr. Suhrawardy said that he had lodged protests that the quota allotted to Bengal must not be reduced. As regards the controversy regarding the Punjab wheat, he could say that he had explained the whole position to the satisfaction of both the Government of India and of the Punjab (Voice: They had refused to be convinced).

Mr. Suhrawardy: No. The Punjab Government is now convinced. The Sardar Sahab himself had stated that he was now convinced that the Government of Bengal were not profiteering. The position was that at the very start some profit was made. It was due to the fact that a considerable amount of wheat and wheat product was promised to them. They had to make arrangements for handling charges. But subsequently they did not get the promised quantity. He was also prepared to admit that they were inexperienced in handling the same. (A voice: After the Punjab Government had disclosed the whole affair).

From his return he was determined to bring down the price of wheat and its present price was annas seven per seer. A political capital was sought to be made of the fact that the firm of Ispahanis had been made the sole agent of the Government. The whole thing had been fully explained by the Chief Minister to the

House. Dr. Mookherjee wanted him to state the total advances made to the firm. He could say in reply that no advance had been made to the firm; and whatever amount had been paid had been paid after the purchase had been made and vouchers submitted. (Voice: This is not true).

Mr. *Suhrawardy*: That is absolutely correct. No money is paid to the firm unless vouchers are submitted. Proceeding, Mr. *Suhrawardy* said that in all four and half crores of rupees to five crores of rupees had been paid to the firm. He could not say the exact figure. It appeared to him that Dr. Sanyal and Dr. Mookherjee knew everything about his department and they therefore knew what was the position. (Voice: Not a clear answer).

Mr. *Suhrawardy*: I am however of the opinion that Bengal stands indebted to the firm of Isaphanis (Cries of "Oh", "Oh" from the Opposition benches). As regards the agreement entered into between the Government and the firm, Mr. *Suhrawardy* could have no objection to the members inspecting the same. He had already stated to the House that the whole figures could not be placed before the House but there was no reason why his offer previously made and which could be repeated again that members were welcome to go to the office of the firm and inspect the same. He besought that this offer should be accepted and this controversy should be stopped once and for all. He on behalf of the Government was anxious that if there was anything wrong it should be brought to the notice of the Government. Proceeding Mr. *Suhrawardy* said that there was no political connection between the firm and the Ministry (cries of Oh, Oh, from the Opposition benches). Mr. *Suhrawardy* stated that Mr. Mookherjee sent telegrams to the unsuspecting district and sub-divisional officers as to whether any relief centres ought to be opened there and they, anxious to get what the Government were doing supplemented, replied that there was the necessity for opening such centres. That did not mean that there was no supply available. The House would readily realise the position that at the present moment about 4000 kitchens had been opened in the province (Voice: On paper only). He was prepared to admit that Dr. Sanyal and Dr. Mookherjee could not appreciate the efforts of the Government, anxious as they were to make a political capital out of the food situation. But he could assure them that even if his bitterest enemy would come to relieve the distress of the people of Bengal he would be prepared to give him all help. Concluding, Mr. *Suhrawardy* said that Mr. Mookherjee had spoken of co-operation. They of the Ministry were anxious to accept that co-operation. Let them come with clean hands.

Dr. *Mookherjee*: As if you are talking with the murderers.

Mr. *Suhrawardy*: Come and let us sit together to solve the problem of Bengal. Come with the desire to serve the people and not with any other idea.

The resolution of Dr. *Nalinakshya Sanyal* was then put to vote and lost, 88 voting for it and 128 against. The resolutions of Dr. *Syamaprasad Mookherjee* and Mr. *Surendra N. Biswas* were lost without any division. The House then adjourned.

#### NON-OFFICIAL BILLS

28th. SEPTEMBER:—After the announcement was made by the Hon. Mr. T. C. *Goswami*, Finance Minister that the budget had been authenticated by His Excellency *Sir Thomas Rutherford*, Governor of Bengal, the House proceeded with the business of the day, namely, non-official members' Bills. The House quickly disposed the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Bill, 1910 of Mr. *Magbul Hossain* by refusing it to be sent to a Select Committee. The second Bill—the Bengal Rent Reduction Bill, 1941 of Mr. *Amrita Lal Mandal* was allowed to be circulated for the purpose of eliciting public opinion thereon. Similarly, Mr. *J. N. Gupta's* Benthall Housing Bill, 1942 was also allowed to be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion.

The House then allowed about ten members to introduce their Bills, namely, the Bengal Fisheries Bill, 1941, the Bengal Close Season of Fishes Bill, 1941, the Bengal Steamer Khalasia Bill, 1941, the Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Bill 1941, the Bengal (Rural) Primary Education (Amendment) Bill, 1941, the Bengal Hindu Women's Rights to Agricultural Land Bill, 1941, the Bengal Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 1943, the Advocates Robes Bill, 1941, the Bengal Hindu Women's Rights to Agricultural Land Bill, 1941, the Bengal Village Self-Government (Amendment) Bill 1941, and the Bengal Money-Lenders (Amendment) Bill 1941.

The House was then prorogued.

# The Punjab Legislative Assembly

Autumn Session—Lahore—1st, to 9th November 1943

MR. JALALUDDIN AMBER'S DEATH

The Punjab Legislative Assembly, which met at Lahore on the 1st. November 1943 for its autumn session, adjourned for the day as a mark of respect to the memory of *Chaudhri Jalal-ud-Din Amber* (Indian Christian), a member of the House, who passed away recently.

## CONGRESS DETENUS AND SECURITY PRISONERS

**2nd. NOVEMBER :—**The Premier, Lt-Col. *Malik Khizar Hyat Khan* made an important statement on the floor of the Assembly to-day regarding the policy of his Government in the matter of answers to be given to the questions regarding Congress detenues and the security prisoners. The premier announced a change in the practice followed heretofore and said that the Government would be prepared now to give as much information as possible on the floor of the House.

The statement which was made by the Premier before the question hour says:

"In view of the large number of questions about what are termed political prisoners, I think it would be convenient if at this opening stage I make a general statement on the position. In the last session, following the policy of my predecessor, I declined to answer on the floor of the House questions relating to persons arrested in connection with the Congress movement of August 1942, but offered to supply information privately for the personal information of the member putting the question. The reason for this policy was that it was clear that the question hour was being employed, not as a genuine medium for eliciting information but as a method of sustaining and later reviving interest in the activities of an illegal organisation. That there was justification for this view is shown by the fact that I do not recollect any occasion on which advantage was taken of my offer to supply information privately. I think it is now possible to modify this attitude and I will endeavour to provide such information as is readily available in records at headquarter offices in Lahore but I am afraid I am not now able to undertake to get from district officers highly detailed information. It is not in the public interest to do this in the conditions created by the war. The amount of time, labour and correspondence which is involved in connecting and checking detailed information from district officers is not perhaps realised, but I think it is impossible to throw this extra heavy burden on the already over-worked officers or to justify the very considerable consumption of paper involved. This is the general rule, but if I am convinced that a question raised a matter of great importance, I will, of course, direct the collection of information."

## RELEASES

"As a background to this change I will first of all give some figures. We are constantly reviewing cases of civil disobedience detenues, and more than half of the total number who were arrested since August 1942 have already been released. The most recent review was a general one of those detained under the orders of district officers and began last August and is now practically complete. Seventy-five persons have already been released as a result of this review and orders are under issue for the release of 8 others and few more may also be expected. The total number of civil disobedience detenues in jail on October 26, 1943, was 304. Of these about one-third are of more than local importance, and their release will be governed by the general all-India policy towards the Congress movement. In some cases of course it has been necessary to impose certain restrictions after release and the number of such orders in force is 96. Further reviews of the cases of these prisoners will take place later as the prevailing conditions permit in accordance with the all-India policy governing the attitude to this movement. Other persons detained as security prisoners by the Punjab Government for reasons not connected with the civil disobedience movement itself numbered 181 on October 26, 1943. Their cases are also reviewed from time to time, and in fact 23 have been released in the last three months as a result of examination by Government. The cases of those persons, who have been detained for more than one year, are reviewed by a Committee consisting of two non-officials, including one of the status of a Judge of the High Court, together with the Inspector General of Police. This Committee sat last year and over 50 persons were released as a result of its recommendations. The

Committee is about to sit again to examine further cases that are now ripe for consideration.

#### CONCESSION TO C. D. PRISONERS

"The conditions of detention of civil disobedience prisoners are also continually under review, and many modifications and concessions have been introduced from time to time. The diet allowance has been raised on two occasions and now stands at Rs. 1/4/- per head per day, and Superintendents of Jails are authorised to meet the wishes of detenus in the matter of diet as far as possible. I have also ordered that supplementation of diet up to Rs. 10/- per mensem may be permitted. As a result of recent orders the number of letters that may be written has been raised to two per week and the number to be received has been increased to four per week and a certain amount of correspondence on business matters is permitted. They have also been allowed to wear their own shoes and clothes and use their own bedding, and are supplied with various newspapers in English, Urdu and Gurmukhi. Apart from the use of the jail library which has always been at their disposal, and the keeping of religious books which has always been allowed, five books per month are now permitted to be sent in to each prisoner and the stipulation that such books should be first presented to the jail library has been withdrawn. Indoor games, cards and so forth are allowed. So far, except in special cases, interviews have not been permitted in accordance with the general policy of the Government of India with regard to their own prisoners. In the case of serious illness of detenus or their near relatives, release on parole have been permitted. Government are criticised in the press for not releasing more prisoners on parole and not making such release quicker, but each case has to be carefully considered and due enquiry has to be made, as I regret to say that many such applications appear to be based on a quite unwarranted pessimistic view of the alleged illnesses.

"I hope this statement will serve as a background to the many questions pending; as I have said, answers to particular questions will be given where the information is readily available provided, of course, it is not contrary to public interest, and I think this policy should satisfy hon'ble members who are genuinely seeking information."

#### ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS RULED OUT

A number of adjournment motions of which notices had been given by *S. Sohan Singh Josh* and *Pandit Bhagat Ram Sharma*, were ruled out in the Assembly to-day. Through these motions the members wanted to raise the question of the continued detention of the Leader of the Opposition and some other members of the Punjab Assembly, the internment of *L. Duni Chand Ambalvi*, *Pt. Muni Lal Kalia*, and *S. Hari Singh* on account of which they were unable to attend the Assembly and the failure of the Punjab Government to release the detenus.

#### MATERNITY BENEFIT BILL

*Sir Manohar Lal*, Finance Minister, then presented the report of the Select Committee on the Punjab Maternity Benefit Bill and moved that the Bill as reported be taken into consideration.

*S. Sohan Singh Josh* moved that the Bill as reported by the Select Committee be circulated for eliciting public opinion. He felt that the Bill as it stood was not adequate and more facilities should be provided for women workers in factories.

The circulation motion was negatived and the Bill was taken up clause by clause.

*Mian Nurullah* moved an amendment to clause 3 to provide that no woman shall be employed in any factory during the 40 days immediately following the day of her delivery. Government's provision was for 30 days.

*Mian Nurullah*, who was supported by *Sir Gokul Chand Narang* and *S. Santokh Singh*, said that the maternity period after delivery should not be less than 40 days as was the practice among the Hindus and the Muslims.

*S. Santokh Singh* said that he had no doubt—and he hoped that *Sir Gokul Chand* would support him—that no factory owner would have any objection to the amendment being accepted.

*Sir Manohar Lal*, in the course of his reply, maintained that the Bill before the House was a most liberal measure of its kind in the country. In Bengal, when they put on the statute a similar Bill they provided for 28 days. He could not understand how 30 days were inadequate.

*Mr. Few* opposed the amendment.

*Opposition Member* :—It does not lie in your mouth to oppose this amendment.

The Premier said that if no factory owner had any objection, then the matter was easy and it could be done as desired on a representation being made to the Government.

The amendment was, however, rejected by 15 votes against 62 in the first division of the session.

Sir Manohar Lal accepted another amendment moved by Mian Nurullah, who wanted that 12 annas a day should be paid as maternity benefit during the days preceding and following the delivery to the woman employed in a factory.

The Bill was then passed within a few minutes, clause by clause, and then adopted as amended.

#### TRADE EMPLOYEES BILL

Sir Manohar Lal, who is also Minister in-charge of the Industries Department, next presented the report of the Select Committee on the Punjab Trade Employees (Amendment) Bill and moved for its consideration.

S. Teja Singh Swatantra moved that the Bill be circulated for eliciting public opinion thereon. His main complaint was that in spite of the Bill, trade employees continued to suffer from injustices. The Select Committee had not given its full and due consideration to the various provisions. Even now trade employees had to work for long hours, without getting any rest, and the interval allowed by the Act was often not allowed by shopkeepers. For this he apportioned blame on shopkeepers and the Inspecting Staff who were hoodwinked by the employers. In the new amended Bill the hours for which shops could remain open had been increased. He wanted more pay for boys of younger age. His grievance was that there were a large number of loopholes in the Trade Employees Act: employers were able to evade the provisions successfully. He wanted the Inspecting Staff to be more active, vigilant and wide awake.

S. Sohan Singh Josh said that unless the Government could enforce at least one close day the Bill would be of no avail. The object of the Act was to provide a day of rest for trade employees.

Sir Manohar Lal, replying to the remarks made by the Opposition members, said that they seemed to be unconscious of the fact that the Bill before them was only an amending Bill of an Act which had been in force since 1940. He had no doubt that the amending Bill carried matters further in the interest of trade employees. It was a travesty of facts to say that there was no close day. It was a surprise how could any responsible member make such a statement. To see that there was a close day and trade employees were having a holiday one had only to walk to the Lawrence Gardens and see a mass of these gentlemen enjoying their holiday on Sundays. Of course, Muslim shops mostly closed on Fridays. The Trade Employees Act had certainly done a great deal for ameliorating the condition of trade employees. Referring to the speech wherein the Select Committee had been criticised, the Minister in-charge described it as a "completely irresponsible" statement. He pointed out that the amending Bill had been considered fully and adopted unanimously by the Select Committee who gave their full consideration to the Bill and reached a unanimous decision regarding it. He was sorry that any one should have attacked the members of the Select Committee.

The circulation motion was rejected and on the motion of Sir Manohar Lal the amending Bill, as reported by the Select Committee, was passed without a dissent.

#### DISTRICT BOARDS BILL

Major Shaukat Hyat Khan next moved that the Punjab District Boards Bill as reported by the Select Committee be taken into consideration.

Mr. Bhagat Ram Sharma's motion for recommitment of the Bill to the same select Committee for re-consideration was ruled out.

S. Sohan Singh Josh moved that the Bill be re-circulated.

Mr. Bhagat Ram Sharma and Mr. Josh criticised the provisions of the Bill especially the right which the Government wanted to retain for removing any member of a District Board in "public interest."

Major Shaukat Hyat Khan, replying, said that the Bill had been before them for long and had passed through a Select Committee consisting of very able men. The best possible public opinion was in their possession and that public opinion was surely reflected by the House which had been elected by popular vote. The power to remove a member was being taken by a popular and democratic Government which was the custodian of the people's rights and it could certainly be trusted with the task of seeing that no misuse of that power was made.

*Mian Abdul Aziz* maintained that such a power would be used against popular members and in order to establish and increase the strength of the party now in power.

*Mian Nurullah* observed that several provisions of the new Bill cut at the root of local self-Government. Why should the Government, for instance, want to have the right not to notify the election of a member, even if he was elected by a majority. If a person could command majority and the electors wanted him to represent them, why should the Government stand in his way. He further asked why the Board should not be given the right to elect their own Executive Officer. He also wanted the number of nominated members to be reduced because he apprehended that nominated members would always influence the decisions of the Board.

*Kh. Ghulam Samad* wanted nominations to the District Board to be abolished altogether. He voiced the grievances of his community in the District Boards in his Division. He was opposed to the appointment of a non-official chairman of a District Board.

*Ch. Muhammad Abdul Rehman*, in a humorous speech, said that British diplomacy had succeeded in managing things in such a manner that even though the Britisher remained the ruler, the blame for any failures or wrong doings went to the 'black Indian.' The provision for the appointment of the Executive Officer was a most retrograde one.

*S. Teja Singh Swatantra* supported the circulation and ironically said that "public interest" meant "interests of the party in power." The circulation motion was lost and the House proceeded to discuss the Bill, clause by clause.

A few formal amendments moved by *K. B. Sheikh Faiz Mohammad*, Parliamentary Secretary, were adopted.

Replying to *Mian Nurullah*, *Major Shaukat Hyat Khan* said that the appointment of the Executive Officer was not a new provision. It had been first introduced by *Sir Gokul Chand*, in municipal committees. He gave an assurance that the Executive Officer would not be imposed upon any Board without reason or necessity. The Executive Officer, he said, would be like the head of a court of wards whom the Government would always be too glad to withdraw as the conditions in the District Board concerned improved.

*Mian Nurullah* had to put up a battle single-handed against *Major Shaukat Hyat Khan*, who defended the District Board Bill, which had been passed on to him in legacy by the Premier. A number of amendments moved by *Mian Nurullah* were rejected and discussion was proceeding when the House adjourned till November 4.

#### SIKH GURDWARA (AMEND.) BILL

4th. NOVEMBER :—Immediately before the Assembly proceeded to take up the agenda for the day, *Pt. Bhagat Ram Sarma* raised a point of order regarding the short notice given to the members. The objection was ruled out.

*Gyani Kartar Singh* asked for leave to introduce the Sikh Gurdwara (amendment) Bill which sought to amend the present Act.

*Mian Abdul Haye* stated, on behalf of the Government, that they would be prepared to allot a day if *Gyani Kartar Singh* would make a circulation motion on that day. In that event, the Government would support the motion.

*Sardar Uttam Singh Duggal*, who had arisen in his seat to oppose the introduction motion, wanted to speak, but the *Speaker* said that leave had already been granted. The *Sardar* maintained that he stood up in time to oppose the motion.

The *Speaker*, who said that the member had not stood up in time or anyway had not said that he wanted to speak, declared a little later that the Chair had committed an error in as much as the motion for leave to introduce the Bill had not been put to the House. The *Speaker* wanted to rectify his mistake. The *Speaker*, therefore, called upon *Gyani Kartar Singh* to ask for leave to introduce his Bill.

The *Gyani*, in making the motion, said that certain amendments were being proposed on the basis of experience gained by the working of the Gurdwaras Act. He now wanted to give representation to the Sikhs of the areas outside the British Punjab and to the Depressed Classes. He also wanted to raise the term of the Gurdwara committees from three to five years and further wanted to let the *Shromani Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee* spend Rs. 20,000 a year on *Dharam Prachar* instead of Rs. 3,000 as at present allowed.

*S. Uttam Singh Duggal*, opposing leave for introduction, said that the Akali Party wanted to so manage that all opposition may be kept out of the Gurdwara Committee so that there may be no check on the doings of the Akali Party. The

party had been abusing its powers and there were several cases of embezzlement, etc. as the reports showed. The amending act was unwanted and suicidal and he asked the Government not to support the Bill simply because the Akali Party wanted it.

The motion to introduce the bill was accepted and the bill was introduced.

#### DEBATE ON FOOD SITUATION

*Sardar Mal Singh* moved the following resolution on the food situation :—  
"This Assembly recommends to the Government to convey to the Government of India the emphatic opinion of this House that any attempt to control the price of wheat will result in very keen resentment and discontent among the agricultural classes."

In moving the resolution, *Sardar Lal Singh* protested against the propaganda which, he said, was being carried on against the Punjab peasant not only in India but in England also where the question had been discussed by the Lords on the basis of misleading reports. *Sardar Lal Singh's* case was that the Punjab grower was the victim of propaganda. It was the lowest price which the Punjab grower was getting as compared to the increase in the prices of other commodities which he had to buy. The difficult situation in Bengal was not the creation of God but that of man. Happily, however, the situation had attracted the attention of the whole country and the Houses of Parliament, but it was regrettable that in their attempt to explain away the circumstances responsible for the situation, even highly placed people had blamed the Punjab and its grower. He maintained that the Punjab had made no money while some other provinces had taken full advantage of the present circumstances.

When *S. Lal Singh* referred to the White Paper which was presented to the House of Parliament, *K. B. Mushtaq Ahmed Gurmani*, *Raja Gazanfer Ali* and *Sayed Amjad Ali* shouted: "That is Black Paper, not White Paper." He further said that there had been heavy despatches of wheat from the Punjab. He wanted that there should be no price control in the Punjab. He asked if the Government of India would be willing to undertake to come to the rescue of the Punjab grower in the time of slump which was bound to follow.

The Premier, *Lt. Col. Malik Khizar Hyat Khan*, who intervened in the food debate in this stage, in order to give some facts and figures, cautioned the Government of India against trying again something which had been tried and found wanting. Control of price of wheat, he said, would not be feasible and if they wanted to enforce the control, they must control the prices of all necessary commodities. The Punjab was not greedy. They in the Punjab wanted justice and fairplay. They had been hearing of the Central Government's intention to control the prices of other commodities for a couple of years now and he hoped that the price control ordinance would be enforced. The premier did not want control of prices at present because he feared that it might result in many difficulties and create awkward situations. The Punjab Government had not made any profits. He felt sorry to have to say that the people who discussed the food situation in the House of Parliament seemed to be semi-informed people: anyway, they had not been in possession of facts.

The Punjab was a selling province and the sole purchasers were the Indian Governments through their agents and everybody knew that the relations between a seller and a sole purchaser were not always happy. The Premier said, amidst cheers, that the Punjab should have been given an opportunity to have their say before any minister of His Majesty's Government went up to make a statement on the food situation and the Punjab's responsibility. He wanted a convention to be established in future of letting the provincial Government have their say before an accusation was made against them. Referring to what he called the "sufferings of the silent sufferer"—the Punjab grower—the Premier said that the silent grower suffered because he had no support of the Press or any propaganda machinery. The Premier hoped that the myth against the Punjab peasant would explode. He referred to the condition before war when wheat was sold at Rs. 1-4 to Rs. 1-6-0 per maund. The plight of the Zamindars at that time was indescribable and the Punjab Zamindar was under a debt of Rs. 200 crores. Yet the Punjab grower did not grumble and when the war started the prices of commodities began shooting up. The Government of India enforced control of wheat and, ultimately, the price of wheat was decontrolled not in order to satisfy the grower but as the Central Government had to pay even Rs. 2 more than the control price. When the new harvest came to the "mandies," wheat was sold at

reasonable prices but then started what the Premier called "rumours propaganda" started by interested people. The Premier defended the advice which some leaders of the Zamindars in the Punjab gave to the Zamindars to get high prices for their wheat. That advice was justified and it never meant an advice for hoarding which was amply proved by the fact that arrivals in the "mandies" were 35 percent more than before. He said that there was no reason why U. P., for instance, should be allowed to sell wheat at Rs. 3 per maund more than the Punjab.

*K. B. Gurmani* : The Punjab grower enjoys the benefits of democracy : he must, therefore, pay for it.

*Premier* : That is another way of looking at it.

The Premier proceeded to refer to the part the Punjab had now played in connection with the 'Grow-more-food' campaign. Thirty-three lakh acres of land was under cultivation. The Punjab Premier referred to the fact that the Punjab gave its full quota of 9,50,000 tons of food-stuffs to the deficit provinces. In the present year of the total quota of 10 lakh tons which the Punjab had to give, three lakh tons were meant for the civil needs and the Punjab had already given that quota and over and above that 72,000 tons. For the military needs only two lakh tons of wheat remained to be supplied of the total quota but that was only due to the fact that there was only just one agent for that purpose who was not able to have wheat milled. The Premier declared, amidst cheers, that the Punjab was prepared to do its utmost to help Bengal. They were prepared to cut their own rations to help Bengal. But they did not want Bengal's tragedy to be enacted in the Punjab. The Premier was sorry to say that in the committee of experts which made recommendations regarding the price control did not include even one representative of the growers. But when a representative of the Zamindars had an opportunity to have his say he presented an answerable case. He was prepared for fixing ceiling prices provided it was done in case of all the commodities.

*S. B. Ujjal Singh* said that there was no justification for controlling the price of wheat and he criticised the freezing order.

*Sardar Teja Singh Satanttra* described the resolution as a result of narrow-mindedness and narrow vision of the mover. The results of the situation in Bengal were of a far more serious nature. Mr. Swatantra felt sorry to say that the present central machinery employed was corrupt. He had no hesitation in saying that wheat at present was not with the poor Kisan but with the big Zamindars and the stockists and now it were they whose interests might be injured. Why could they not put up an efficient machinery for carrying out the rationing scheme. When the Government wanted to arrest and throw people in jails they did it and procured money for the purpose without any difficulty but when asked to do something really good they put in the excuse that they had no money for setting up any machinery.

*Sardar Baldev Singh*, Development Minister, quoted figures to show that the Punjab had exported the quota they had to give. In fact, they had met their obligation for exporting their quota for the civil needs 5 months ahead and even sent more than the fixed quota. There had been some difficulty in the matter of getting wagons from some railways.

*Sardar Santokh Singh* said that he did not think the control of the price of wheat was a necessary at all. There had been a bumper crop this year and he was glad that sufficient wheat was being sent out and he congratulated the Premier on it. He said that, if any control was enforced at this stage, as was done unwisely last year, there would be less of sowing and, therefore, the next crop would be lesser than it had been this year. He suggested, however, that ceiling prices of wheat should be fixed at present so that the price of wheat did not go very high.

He further suggested that the wheat which had been kept in store by the provincial Government should be sold to poor people in the urban areas in times of necessity and not make any profits as they did last year. *Sardar Santokh Singh* criticised *Sir Chhotu Ram* for having said that the Zamindars should not sell wheat at anything less than 13 rupees per maund. He wished *Sir Chhotu Ram* would contradict it.

The Premier at once contradicted that the statement in the Press was wrong. He criticised the freezing order which he wanted the Punjab Government to oppose with as great vehemence as any attempt at the control of wheat prices.

*Sardar Santokh Singh* further stated that things in the Punjab had been moving fairly well and there should be no control of wheat price, specially when wheat ships from outside had already arrived which would certainly result in lowering the price of wheat.

K. B. Mian Mushtaq Ahmed Gurmani, who counselled a moderate course, said that if the price of wheat could be fixed on parity with the prices of other commodities and the Government of India would undertake to intervene in the matter of prices even after the war and would take the responsibility of helping the grower, probably no one would have any objection to the enforcement of the control price.

Sardar Sohan Singh Josh, who opposed the resolution with vehemence, referring to the debate in the House, said that it seemed to him that it was the day of the stockists. He was sorry to find that the vision of those supporting the resolution was limited. People here seemed to have no idea that there was something higher also. There was not the Punjab alone. There existed a country—India—and then the whole world beyond. He contended that figures had been quoted to mislead people. In his view the Government of India committed a folly in asking for less quota from the Punjab Government. There had been a bumper crop—much more than any previous crop—and surely the Central Government could have asked for a higher quota of wheat for exports to the deficit provinces. He accused Sir Chhotu Ram of having advised zamindars to hoard and asserted that he had heard such speeches himself.

Sir Chhotu Ram asserted that since April last he had been telling zamindars that the price of wheat between Rs. 10 and 13 per maund was not unreasonable.

Ch. Sahib Dad Khan :—What did you say at Bhiwani?

Sir Chhotu Ram retorted that the Hon'ble member must have tried to misunderstand him for purposes best known to him. His position was that he could not possibly tell one thing to the zamindars outside the legislature and say another thing here because that would shake the very foundation of the confidence which he enjoyed : that confidence was his real mainstay. It was on the strength of the confidence of the zamindars that he had outlined the whole sea of opposition of such a strong press, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress (cheers).

Mr. Josh :—You are right ! You enjoy the confidence only of the zamindars ; of course, not of the Kisan (laughter).

Resuming his speech Sir Chhotu Ram said that he was a greater friend of the Kisans than Mr. Josh and Swatantra who had become "Partantra", who once used to cry hoarse that British must be turned out, but to-day, through some unknown process, they had changed to such an extent that they were now seen rebuking the Punjab Government for not having done enough for the war effort. He was surprised why strange things were being said merely in order to please the Government of India. Sir Chhotu Ram, referring to the defence which Josh had put in for the rationing system, said that the British Government was paying Rs. 138 crores yearly from its coffers for helping the rationing purpose but the Government of India was not prepared to pay even a spurious coin. The Revenue Minister further said that they were prepared to agree to the control if the Punjab grower could be given at least 15 per cent profit as had been promised for other commodities. Failing that the Government should agree to let the Punjab grower have a price for a maund of wheat as many times high as the price of necessary commodities has arisen, whether they were three or four or even five times. If that was done, there would be no need for controlling the price of wheat.

Mian Nurullah moved an amendment to the resolution : That for the words "price of wheat" the following be substituted :—

"Prices of wheat and other agricultural produce in the Punjab until and unless proper and effective control is achieved on all articles an agriculturist has to purchase."

Mian Nurullah thought that inflation should have been checked and the exchange should have controlled. If you go on printing currency notes, you can't solve the problem.

At the suggestion of Mr. Abdul Rab, the Premier agreed to give two-hours on the next day for the debate on the resolution. Mian Nurullah was still on his legs when the House adjourned.

6th. NOVEMBER :—Discussion was resumed on the wheat control resolution in the Assembly this afternoon. Mian Nurullah, who concluded his yesterday's incomplete speech, said that unless inflation was checked no ceiling prices could be fixed.

K. B. Sardur Mohd. Hassan Khan Gurchani, who supported the resolution, said that they were loyal people and the Government should not control the price of wheat against their wishes.

Mr. *Abdul Rab* opposed control and said that there was indirect control already with the result that the prices had not gone high.

*Sir Gokul Chand Narang*, who wanted information from the Minister in charge of Food, was told by *S. Baldev Singh* that the Punjab has a surplus of one million tons of wheat which they could afford to send away without endangering the needs of their own province, in any manner.

*Sir Gokul Chand* :—Supposing the Government of India would like to purchase all your surplus for Bengal or other needy parts of the country, what do you think would be a reasonable price which you would be prepared to accept ?

*S. Baldev Singh* :—We have so far received no such proposal from the Government of India but if one is made we would consider that favourably.

*Sir Gokul Chand* :—Thank you very much for your offer (laughter).

*S. Jagjit Singh Mann* :—This is a matter that concerns the agriculturists and they alone should be allowed to speak.

*Lala Sita Ram Mehra* opposed the resolution. He agreed that the cost of production had increased but that did not mean that the price of wheat should be allowed to go high to any extent. He suggested that some maximum price must be fixed. The price of wheat had risen very high and if it was allowed to go higher still how could people who earned their daily wages or got fixed monthly salaries make their two ends meet ? After all, the Government had, at the most, given 10 per cent dearness allowance to its employees. An increase of pay by Rs. 10 to Rs. 25 could, in no way, help the poor men in various civil services when prices had gone up by 300 per cent to 400 per cent and even to 500 per cent. The men in civil services, whether of the Punjab Government, or private concerns, certainly required consideration. He suggested the formation of a committee of officials and non-officials to consider the increase in prices and then decide after mutual discussion some maximum price of wheat.

*Sardar Jagjit Singh Mann* supported the resolution and warned the Government of India against controlling the price of wheat.

*Ch. Suraj Mall*, while agreeing that Government servants should be given more salaries in the present difficult times, did not like that that should be done at the cost of the Zamindars. The Punjab had made no profits and he quoted an instance to show that the province did not make a profit of Rs. 16,50,000 when it could easily do so. A Calcutta firm had offered to purchase 1,50,000 maunds of rice at Rs. 28 per maund but the Director of Civil Supplies wrote back to say that they were selling rice at Rs. 17 per maund and they would not charge anything more than that. He was prepared to agree to control of the wheat price provided the prices of all the commodities, especially those which the Zamindar had to buy, were fixed. If reasonable prices were fixed the Zamindar would be prepared to sell all his wheat.

*Pandit Bhagat Ram Sharma* maintained that at present the tendency was to hoard or, at any rate, keep back wheat in the hope of getting high prices. He suggested the fixing of price for wheat. Mr. Sharma expressed surprise that a person like the Premier of the Punjab, who had not hesitated to carry out the behests of the Central Government and had shut up behind prison bars a large number of Congressmen without any reason, had threatened not to tolerate rule under Section 93 of the Government of India Act.

*Raja Gazanfar Ali*, Parliamentary Secretary, said that the Government of India constituted as it was does not enjoy the confidence of the people of this country. If a Government did not enjoy the confidence of the people, how could it enforce any orders or ordinances ? The largest political organisation in the country was shut up behind the bars, and the second largest organisation in the country was dissatisfied with the present Government of India. The Punjab Government was the only Government which had stood by the Central Government but now it was also getting disgusted with the policy that was being pursued by it. The remedy for all ills from which India at present suffered was, in the speaker's view, the establishment of National Government with Congress, if possible, and without it, if necessary.

*Raja Gazanfar Ali* maintained that the present Government of India was the most inefficient Government in the whole world. The members of the Government of India did not enjoy the confidence of the people. They represented no one and no one was prepared to attach any importance to what they said. It would be unwise and dangerous, he said, for the Central Government to pick a quarrel with the Provincial Government. People were taking pride evading the orders of the Government of India. Kerosene oil and many other necessities

were not available to the poor villager. If the Central Government enforced control against the wishes of the Punjab Government there would be troubles, much more than they had experienced in the past, Raja Gazanfar Ali's interesting conclusion from the present situation was that the centre should have nothing to do with the provinces. India, he said, was too big a country to be controlled by one Centre.

*Ch. Ahmed Yar Khan*, maintained that the Zamindar was not getting an adequate return for his labour. He thought that control of the wheat price would entail unnecessary hardship on the zamindar.

*Sodhi Harnam Singh, Raja Farman Ali and Pir Akbar Ali* supported the resolution.

*Maulvi Mazhar Ali Azhar (Ahrar)* said that inspite of the non-enforcement of control of wheat price, conditions, like those in Bengal, might appear in the Punjab. They knew that the former Premier of Bengal did not want rice to be taken away from Bengal, yet rice was taken away from that province. He cautioned against distressing conditions arising in the Punjab inspite of the fact that there were large stocks of wheat because circumstances could arise wherein it might become impossible to get sufficient wheat in big district towns. The Punjab Government should see that this situation did not arise. He referred to the difficulties of the employees in the Government Press where the subordinate employees were getting very little pay. Things were already bad and might become worse. No doubt conditions just at present were not terrible but poormen were selling whatever little gold or silver ornaments they possessed.

*Bibi Raghtir Kaur* opposed the resolution and criticised the administration which, she said, was corrupt. She said corruption was responsible for the failure of the control system.

*Ch. Mohd. Abdul Rahman (Ahrar)* blamed the foreign administration for their present difficulties. Poverty and nakedness could not be put an end to and if they wanted to do that they must become free. He criticised those in-charge of sugar distribution and said that only the favoured ones could get sugar. In some cases only a few bags were distributed, the rest disappearing.

*S. Lal Singh*, replying to the debate, urged the adoption of the resolution by the House unanimously.

The Minister in-charge of Food, *S. Baldev Singh* explained the position of the Punjab Government. He said that while the Punjab Government had readily accepted many restrictions and had not objected to the limited control which already existed, it would not accept any statutory control of wheat prices. They in the Punjab, could accept wheat price control only if the prices of other commodities were also brought down and controlled. They were not unaware of the fact that the Government of India had promulgated an ordinance to stabilise the prices of other commodities by fixing the profit, but it yet remained to be seen how that ordinance worked and whether in actual practice prices came down. Sardar Baldev Singh wanted to make it clear that the Punjab Government had no intention to blame any Provincial Government or any party. But he had no hesitation in saying that whatever the Punjab Government's representatives had said with regard to the Government of India and profiteering indulged in by some provincial Governments had remained unanswered. Sardar Baldev Singh contradicted Mr. Josh and claimed great credit for the Punjab Government for its having carried out with great success the "grow more food" campaign. While some other provincial Governments had been given from Rs. 5 lakhs to even Rs. 20 lakhs by the Central Government for propaganda etc. to encourage people to grow more food, the Punjab Government had not got any thing. In spite of that 33 lakh acres had been brought under cultivation with the result that the Punjab today produced one million ton of foodgrains over and above the crop for the year 1942. While last year they could export only 7,50,000 tons of foodgrains, this year they had been able to give over 15 lakh tons of foodgrains for export to the deficit provinces and to the Government of India for military purposes. Dealing with the plea put forward by the Communist members for rationing, *S. Baldev Singh* said that the Punjab Government was not opposed to rationing. In fact, they were already working on rationing basis. If the unit, which had been adopted in Bombay, was adopted here, every adult would have to be given 1 lb. of foodgrains and a child 1/2 lb., while a labourer would have to be given 1 1/2 lbs. The population of the Punjab according to the 1941 census was 2 crores and 84 lakhs of which the rural population was 2,41 lakhs and the urban population 43 lakhs. The population on the above ration basis would require 53,14,000 tons of foodgrains (47 lakh tons for the rural

areas where the basic unit is of a labourer and 6,14,000 tons for urban population). The Punjab had produced a little over 74 lakh tons of foodgrains of which 10 lakh tons were grams and these were mostly used for the cattle and according to the figures available about 7 lakh tons of grams were used for that purpose. In all about 60 lakh tons of foodgrains were required both for the human and the animal population in the Punjab. About 15 lakhs tons of foodgrains were left as surplus and that was what the Punjab had agreed to give to other deficit provinces and the Government of India." In view of the above facts, the Minister said, it was clear that the Punjab was already living on the rationing basis and there was no need, in the opinion of the Punjab Government, to undertake additional expenditure for establishing and running a machinery for working the rationing scheme. There was no need of such a machinery as the Punjab had fulfilled its obligations towards everyone. Referring to what he choose to describe as "wrong reports in a section of the Vernacular Press," S. Baldev Singh asserted that it was wrong that Sir Chhotu Ram and the Speaker had any stocks of wheat. He added, "I have no stocks of wheat and Sir Chhotu Ram has much less". He pointed out that the arrivals in the 'Mandis' this year were much more than during the previous years. How could that have happened if the Zamindars had been advised to hoard?

*Malik Barkat Ali*.—That was in spite of you. (laughter).

*Sardar Baldev Singh* quoted figures to show that during the last 3 months 1,58,000, 1,41,000 and 63,000 tons, respectively, of foodgrains, which were part of wheat was actually brought for being exported undespached at the godowns or at some of the godowns or at some of the railway stations.

*Mr. Josh*.—Is the railway to be blamed?

*S. Baldev Singh*.—No one is prepared to accept the blame. Continuing, *Sardar Baldev Singh* said that everybody had sympathy with the people of Bengal in their distress and the Punjab would always be willing to render whatever help it can. He added that they had kept no secrets and they were prepared to accept the blame for any wrong done by them.

The Minister-in-charge of Food, *S. Baldev Singh* repeated the Punjab Government's opposition to statutory control and declared that under the present conditions if control of wheat prices was enforced it would result in chaos and that no one would like it. No control would be effective unless they would requisition all the wheat. Did *Mr. Josh* want that wheat should be requisitioned?

*Mr. Josh*.—Yes, all those who pay more than Rs. 200 as land revenue, their stocks should be requisitioned.

*S. Baldev Singh* maintained that dealers and District Magistrates, in fact everybody excepting 2 or 3 members here, were opposed to control.

*Mr. Josh*.—Don't quote the District Magistrates, they are your henchmen.

*S. Baldev Singh* said:—"The Government of India had to pay on an average Rs. 10-4 per maund and undoubtedly that was not an unreasonable price. When wheat was sold at Rs. 8-8 which was the lowest price the Government of India failed to make heavy purchases as they had no adequate arrangements. The Punjab which had rendered great service in war had also helped in the matter of growing more food."

*S. Baldev Singh* was pained at *Mr. Amery's* statement in Parliament and said that he had ignored the huge stocks of wheat which the Punjab had given to deficit provinces. Of the one million tons of wheat quota 7 lakhs had been supplied already and the remaining would be sent in 5 months time still ahead. Concluding, *S. Baldev Singh* referred to the freezing of stocks by orders of the Central Government and said that the Punjab Government had as much responsibility to protect the rights of the dealers as that of the growers. They would see that the dealers do not suffer. He was one of those who believed that trade and agriculture must go hand in hand and the interests of both must be safeguarded.

*Pt. Bhagat Ram*.—Have you consulted Sir Chhotu Ram? (laughter).

The resolution moved by *S. Lal Singh* was adopted without a division.

*Gyani Kartar Singh* moved for the circulation of his Gurdwara Amendment Bill till January 15, 1944 without a speech.

*Pikka Jagjit Singh Bedi* moved an amendment that the Bill be circulated till March, 1, 1944. The amendment was accepted. The House then adjourned till November 8.

#### SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS VOTED

8th. NOVEMBER. —In about half an hour the Assembly voted today supplementary demands presented by the Finance Minister, *Sir Monohar Lal*, for an amount of Rs. 1,04,32,110 for defraying the charges in respect of various depart-

ments. All the cut motions moved were rejected and the demand on which a division was claimed by a Communist member was voted by 53 votes against 8.

#### PUNJAB LAND ALIENATION (AMEND.) BILL

*Sir Chhotu Ram*, Revenue Minister, introduced the Punjab Alienation of Land (Amendment) Bill and asked that the Bill be referred to a select committee consisting of the following members:—*Raja Gazanfar Ali*, *Sh. Faiz Mohd.*, *Ch. Sumar Singh*, *S. Lal Singh*, *K. B. Mohd. Hussain*, *R. B. Hari Chand*, *M. Abdul Rab*, *S. B. Gurbaksh Singh*, *Mian Mumtaz Daulatana*, *S. Teja Singh Swatantra*, *R. B. Mukand Lal Pari*, *R. B. Gopal Das*, *S. Santokh Singh* and *Sir Chhotu Ram*.

The statement of objects and reasons of the Bill says: "This legislation is being promoted with the object of removing a number of defects in the Act which have been brought to light by the judgment of the Lahore High Court in the case "*Malawa Mal versus Punjab Province*" [ *L. R. (1942) Lahore 758* ] and the judgment of the Federal Court in the case "*Punjab Province versus Daulat Singh*" (1942 F. C. R. 37). Opportunity has also been taken of removing a number of defects which have been revealed in the actual working of the Punjab Alienation of Land Act, 1900, and of making a number of consequential amendments which were not carried out when the Amending Acts of 1935 and 1940 were passed.

*Sir Chhotu Ram*, while commending the Select Committee motion to the House, said that the Bill was being introduced with a view to make up certain shortcomings. By the decision of the High Court the Commissioners had been deprived of their revisional jurisdictions in respect of appeals arising out of the orders of the Deputy Commissioners which defect was intended to be set right. Another part of the Bill relates to removing the disadvantages which the agriculturist money-lender suffered as against a non-agriculturist money-lender. All the provisions for appeal were now sought to be consolidated. The Bill was intended to steer clear of all loopholes, and in the light of the experiences they had gained they had hammered out the new Bill.

*Sir Gokul Chand Narang*, who moved that the Bill be circulated for eliciting public opinion till March 31, 1944, was the solitary voice of protest in the House. *Dr. Narang* said that he knew the fate his motion would meet but he was making the motion as a matter of duty. *Sir Gokul Chand* said that amendments had been made in the Alienation of Land Act from time to time before also but the late *Sir Fazal-i-Hussain* gave an assurance in the then Provincial Legislative Council that they would not go either backward or forward in the matter of that Act. The late *Sir Sikander Hyat Khan* had also given a similar assurance before the amending Act of 1938 was brought up. But *Sir Gokul Chand* was sorry to say that none of those assurances were being kept. Then again, when the *Sikander-Baldev Singh Pact* was entered into, they were told that no controversial measures would be brought up for the duration of war. The non-agriculturist members of the Punjab Assembly declared at a representative meeting, where representatives of *Sir Chhotu Ram's* group were also present, that they would cease to carry on any agitation against the Land Alienation Act. That showed their readiness to forget the wounds which had been inflicted upon them and the injustices which had been done to the non-agriculturists. They did so in order to show their goodwill to the agriculturists. They had hoped that the measure would leave them alone as they had wanted to leave it alone. It seemed, however, that the measure would not leave them.

*Sir Gokul Chand* referred to his opposition to the previous amending Bills which he criticised in the House and in the Press and how he had pointed out that the amending Bills were 'ultra vires' of the legislature. He was glad that the highest court of law in India had given a decision by which his view was supported. He was sorry to say that the Punjab Unionist Ministry seemed to have taken a vow to carry on a fight against the civil courts in the province. The Government would not allow any opportunity to be lost to clip the wings of those courts and they had made serious encroachments upon the powers of the civil courts. The Bill would go far ahead and would have far-reaching effects on the rights of proprietorship of lands, it would upset the whole thing, and result in declaring the transactions void and would thus cause heavy losses to the persons who might have entered into those transactions and would also ruin the children and grandchildren of those whose fathers or grand-fathers had committed the 'folly' of entering into such transactions. The Deputy Commissioners were now being given powers to upset any transactions made. Supposing a land which had been mortgaged to someone 30 years back now comes to be greatly improved or in view

of the locality in which that land is situated its importance increases and along with it, its price, the mortgager would have only to go to the Deputy Commissioner and by paying a small proportionate amount he would be able to get back the land from mortgagee or the lessee, no matter when and for how long the transaction was made. If, however, the mortgager could pay all the money he had received the mortgagee could be rejected at once by orders of the Deputy Commissioner who would not have even to go into the formalities of law. At present the sanction of the Deputy Commissioner once obtained regarding the sale of a land was considered final and the mortgagee or the lessee could proceed to build anything on the land, but according to the amending Bill the mortgager may go and apply to the Commissioner at any time and have the sanction set aside. The mortgager would at any time—to which there would be no limit—be able to go to the Financial Commissioner on revision. The result would be that in future no purchaser would be able to begin putting a plot of land to any use without having to wait for a very long and indefinite time even though he might have spent a lakh of rupees on that land for building a factory. Any sanction obtained may be upset and then in the event of a sanction being upset the mortgager would not get even his whole amount and interest thereon but just a small amount as a retainer. The Unionist Government had lost all sense of proportion in dealing with such a matter. They seemed to have no sense of decency.

*Speaker :* Will the Bill have retrospective effect ?

*Sir Gokul Chand :* Yes, Sir.

*Sir Gokul Chand* added that it was sheer injustice which was being done without any regard to the principles of justice and equity. In the old days when the Kings wanted to have anything belonging to any individual they used to take it at the point of bayonet. The Unionist Government was just now acting in that manner and managing to get everything by force of a Bill with the support of a majority. Concluding *Dr. Narang* said that it was but proper that the class of persons who were affected by the Bill should be given an opportunity to have their say. The Judges, the members of the Bar, the Deputy Commissioners and persons competent to say should be given an opportunity to express their views.

*Mian Nurullah*, who supported the Select Committee motion, made a few suggestions which, *Sir Chhotu Ram* said, would be placed before the Select Committee if the member would send those in writing to him.

Replying to *Sir Gokul Chand Narang*, *Sir Chhotu Ram* maintained that the arguments which had been advanced by *Sir Gokul Chand* were by no means new. The subject of 'Benami' transactions had been before them for the last 5 years. People competent to express any opinion on the matter had expressed their opinions and these had been considered by the Government earlier.

*Sir Gokul Chand :*—Did you circulate your Bill even then ?

*Sir Chhotu Ram :*—We had the opinions of the persons competent to express opinions. The previous amending Bills had been considered and passed by the House after due deliberation. *Sir Chhotu Ram* then referred to the assurance which according to *Sir Gokul Chand* the late *Sir Fazal-i-Hussain* had given.

*Sir Gokul Chand :*—Is that assurance also dead with the late *Sir Fazal-i-Hussain* ?

*Sir Chhotu Ram* replied that the assurance had been given for the period of existence of the Government of which *Sir Fazal-i-Hussain* was a member. A democratic person like the late *Sir Fazal-i-Hussain* could not have given any assurance which would bound down every successor to that Government which was not responsible to anyone.

*Sir Gokul Chand :*—We were not aware of any such mental reservations.

Continuing *Sir Chhotu Ram* said that the late *Sir Sikandar's* assurance must have been an assurance of a similar nature and not for all times but for the time of the Government of which he was a member also.

*Sir Chhotu Ram* controverted *Sir Gokul Chand* and declared that as a result of the *Sikander-Baldev* Pact there had been no understanding by which it was undertaken by *Sir Sikander Hyat* that no controversial measure would be brought up before the legislature for the duration of the war. If there was an impression to that effect it was an erroneous impression and should be removed. No such understanding was given by anyone to anybody.

*Sir Gokul Chand :*—But that is what was published in the press.

*Sir Chhotu Ram :*—I am not responsible for what the press publishes.

*Sir Chhotu Ram* maintained that what was said by *Sir Sikander Hyat Khan* was that no fresh taxation measure affecting one class only would be brought up or the duration of war. That assurance they were honouring.

Sir Gokul Chand :—Will it be adhered to ?

Premier :—Yes.

Concluding, Sir Ohhotu Ram asserted that by the new amending Bill the Government merely wanted to restore what was lacking and there had been no encroachments.

The circulation motion having been rejected, the amending Bill was referred to a Select Committee, there being a solitary voice of dissent. The House then adjourned.

#### ADJOURNMENT MOTIONS RULED OUT

9th. NOVEMBER :—An adjournment motion to raise a discussion on the "treatment being meted out to Mr. Jai Parkash Narain, General Secretary of the All-India Congress Socialist Party, arrested recently somewhere in the Punjab and at present reported to be in the Lahore Fort under the direct supervision of the Punjab C. I. D." which stood in the name of Mr. Bhagat Ram Sharma, was ruled out by the *Speaker* in the Assembly to-day.

Similar motions of Mr. Sharma to discuss the failure of the Punjab Government to release Dewan Chaman Lal, Maulana Daud Ghaznavi and S. Atma Singh of Sheikhpura who were lying seriously ill in detention were ruled out.

S. Sohan Singh Josh asked for permission to move an adjournment motion by which he wanted to raise a discussion on the recent restriction imposed on tickets being issued by the N. W. Railway for Nankana Sahib during the days of the Mela. This restriction he regarded as an interference with the people's rights of worship.

The Premier read out a statement in which it was stated that the restriction had been imposed by the Government of India in pursuance of their general policy of restricting big Melas on account of their inability to afford transport facilities due to war. The Punjab Government merely issued the notification of the Central Government and now the Premier had written again to the Central Government impressing upon them the inconvenience caused to the Sikh community.

The Premier added humorously that he was glad and thankful to God that Mr. Josh—a communist—still thought of Nankana Sahib and rights of worship.

Mr. Josh warmed up and protested against the remarks made by the Premier and the "mischievous insinuation contained in them." He said that he, like every communist, stood for the protection of rights and privileges of every citizen.

Lt. Col. Khizar Hayat Khan, replying, assured Mr. Josh that he never meant to attack him nor had he done so. Amidst laughter, Lt. Col. Khizar Hyat added : "After all, you know I am a Jat and supposed to be semi-educated ; and if I say anything which appears to be harsh, do not mind it."

The adjournment motion was not pressed.

#### TOBACCO VEND FEES BILL

The Punjab Tobacco Vend Fees (Amendment) Bill which was introduced by Sir Manohar Lal, Finance Minister, was passed without any discussion. The Bill had been brought up to effect certain amendments in the Act which had become necessary as a result of the imposition of a central excise duty on tobacco.

#### IMMOVABLE PROPERTY TAX BILL

The Punjab Urban Immovable Property Tax (Amendment) Bill, which was introduced by Sir Manohar Lal, Finance Minister, was taken into consideration and passed at once.

The statement of objects and reasons of the Bill says : "An assessing authority is required under subsection (1) of section 18 of the Punjab Urban Immovable Property Tax Act, 1940, to call for a return not only when a new valuation list is to be made but also when the current valuation list is to be amended. It was never intended that this elaborate procedure should be followed in the case of casual amendments for which a separate procedure is laid down in section 9 of the Act. The Bill is designed to enforce the real intention of the Act."

#### SUGARCANE BILL

Sardar Baldev Singh, Development Minister, moved that the Sugarcane (Punjab Amendment) Bill as reported by the Select Committee be taken into consideration.

Mian Nurullah moved an amendment, which was supported by Sardar Santokh Singh and Sir Gokul Chand Narang. The amendment was intended to secure the deletion of the provision laying down that no sugar factory or extension of a sugar factory could be built without a licence being taken.

*Sardar Santokh Singh* felt sorry to say that the Punjab Government was following a policy of killing industries. The task of taking a licence was not easy. So far there was no overcrowding in the sugar industry in the Punjab and the 'wise' Government of the Punjab should not be in a hurry to injure it.

*S. Teja Singh Swatantra* said that by the provision which was desired to be deleted it was clear that the myth of the Punjab Government being opposed to control was exploded.

*Sir Gokul Chand Narang*, who supported *Mian Nurullah* in a neat little Punjabee speech, felt constrained to say that those sitting opposite seemed to be a family of mad men who knew not what they were doing.

He pitied *Sardar Baldev Singh*, who, he said, was carrying some body else's baby and asked him to realise what folly was being committed by attempting to kill an industry.

*S. Baldev Singh* :—You know whose baby it is (laughter).

*Sir Gokul Chand* :—Why have you taken up this damnable "Siapa."

*S. Baldev Singh* :—"Siapa gul paigaya hai" (laughter).

*Sir Gokul Chand* pointed out that there was no need of such a provision as there were hardly two sugar factories in the Punjab and there was no excess of sugar. In the States, all sorts of facilities were being actually given for putting up factories and he wondered why the Punjab was following an unwise path.

*Sardar Baldev Singh*, replying, said that it was not at all the intention of the Punjab Government to close down any sugar factories. The Punjab Government was not opposed to industrial development and he could say that they would be prepared to render all help in this matter. But they could not forget to protect the rights of the agriculturists and if any industry in a particular area would become a burden to the agriculturists, they had to be protected. Had not *Sir Gokul Chand* experienced the hardship by the opening of another sugar mill at Hamira, he asked.

The amendment moved by *Mian Nurullah* was rejected.

#### CESS BURDEN ON GROWERS

*Mian Nurullah* moved another amendment through which he wanted that instead of six pies per maund being charged as cess on sugarcane from the producer as proposed, it should be 3 pies per maund if the price was 6 annas per maund or over and not exceeding six pies per maund if the price was 8 annas per maund or over. The mover pointed out that he was making a very humble demand to save the sugarcane grower.

*Sir Gokul Chand*, who supported the amendment of *Mian Nurullah*, quoted figures in support of his contention that the new cess would mean a further burden on the poor sugarcane grower. He wanted no cess to be imposed at all. *Sir Gokul Chand* addressed the Ministerialists particularly and told them that at the proposed rate of 6 pies per maund, every sugarcane grower would have to give Rs. 12-8 per acre as an additional tax to what he had to pay already in the form of land revenue etc. He said that Rs. 250 would have to be paid by the sugarcane grower per season to the Government before entering a factory. He based his calculation on 400 maunds being the production of one acre and the average land for production being 20 acres. *Sir Gokul Chand Narang* declared that the sugar factory owners in the Punjab were prepared to pay Rs. one per maund for sugarcane, provided, of course, the price of sugar was raised proportionately. *Sir Shri Ram*, he added, had even offered, in an article, that the factory owners were prepared to pay Rs. 1-2 per maund. But the Government of India stood in their way. That Government would not agree. Sugar was being sold at Rs. 12 per maund but *shakkar* at Rs. 20 per maund. He asked why the Punjab Government was not taking up a strong attitude in this matter also against the Government of India and prevail upon them to agree to let the factory owner pay more i.e. Rs. 1-2 per maund to the grower. The Punjab was growing sugarcane in 417,000 acres of land and the increase in price of sugar to Rs. 1-2 per maund would bring Rs. 75,00,000 more to the grower.

The Punjab Government was a bad and incompetent copyist. In the present case, the Punjab Government seemed to be following what the U. P. Government had announced that whatever amount they would get would be utilised for the good of the grower. Would the Punjab Government use the money for building any roads or getting better seeds and helping the grower to grow better sugarcane as the U. P. Government was doing? In the U. P., such an Act was enforced be-

cause there were as many as 150 sugar mills and in the Punjab there were only 2 mills. He asked the ministerialist members to ponder over the situation before voting.

*S. Santokh Singh* supported the amendment.

*S. Baldev Singh*, Development Minister, replying, said that the cess of 6 pies per maund was to be collected from the factory owner.

*Sir Gokul Chand* :—That cess would be charged from the grower.

*S. Baldev Singh* maintained that the burden of the cess would not fall on the agriculturist. If the Government of India stood in the way of paying Rs. 1-2 per maund of sugarcane, as suggested by *Sir Shri Ram*, no one stood in the way of increasing the price to 13 annas per maund. He asked why was not that being done.

The amendment was rejected by 12 vote to 55. *S. Baldev Singh*, however, accepted one amendment of *Mian Nurullah*. The clauses were passed as amended.

The Bill was opposed at its third reading stage by *S. Sohan Singh Josh*, *Ch. Mohd Abdul Rehman*, *L. Sita Ram* and *Pt. Bhagat Ram Sharma* who accused the Government of burdening the poor zamindar, even though it always claimed to be their friend.

*Sir Chhotu Ram* refuted the charge and said that the responsibility of not having exempted all the zamindars who paid Rs. 5 or less as their land revenue was his. But he was sure that the zamindars had accepted his reasons, because the money thus available was to be spent by the Government for the benefit of the smaller zamindars themselves.

The Bill was passed and the House adjourned 'sine die'.

## The N. W. F. Pr. Legislative Assembly

Budget Session—Peshawar—17th, to 27th August 1943

FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR 1943-44

*Mr. Sardar Bahadur Khan* (Muslim League) was elected Speaker of the Frontier Assembly when the Budget session opened at Peshawar on the 17th. August 1943. The Opposition (Congress) benches were empty. Twenty-three members of the Ministerialist Party were present.

On taking the chair the new *Speaker* thanked the House for the honour done to him and assured members of all parties of his sympathy and co-operation. He regretted that the members of the Opposition were not present in the Assembly and requested the press to convey to them his message that he had now ceased to be a member of any party.

### BUDGET PRESENTED

*Sardar Abdur Rab Khan Nishtar*, Finance Minister, presented the budget estimates for the year 1943-44. While doing so he made an appeal to all parties and communities in the province to unite and help the poor people through these difficult times. The Finance Minister revealed that the revenue for 1943-44 was estimated at Rs. 206.94 lakhs including a subvention of Rs. 1 crore from the Centre and it was anticipated that the year's working would leave a net deficit of Rs. 7.73 lakhs to be met from the accumulated surpluses of previous years. This deficit was due almost entirely to the provision made for expenditure on the civil defence organization which would disappear when the war ended. The Finance Member pointed out that their revenues consisted of a fixed subvention from the Centre and other items which were mostly inelastic. Government could not hope to achieve much from the latter source and therefore their main hope lay in persuading the Government of India to increase their subvention. This, he said, we propose to do when we have settled down in office and have made a comprehensive survey of the whole position, to enable us to take in hand those essential schemes, so long neglected, for the benefit of the people of this province. The Finance Minister explained at length the measures for the supply of foodgrains, sugar, standard cloth and kerosene oil in the province and assured that Government was taking every step to supply wheat at a reasonable price. Concluding, the Finance Minister said : "We have entered upon our duties at a very difficult time. The war has upset the living conditions of all of us and in order to achieve any

improvement the full co-operation of all is necessary. Our constitutional and financial limitations make our task difficult but where there is a will there is a way and we shall endeavour to provide the people with the necessities of life and to see that they get these at reasonable rates.

#### INTRODUCTION OF OFFICIAL BILLS

18th. AUGUST :—The Assembly met this morning with Khan Sardar Bahadur Khan, the new Speaker, in the chair. Before the House started to transact the business of the day, *Sardar Ishar Singh* (Congress) was sworn in as a member. Immediately after the oath-taking ceremony, *Sardar Ishwar Singh* left the House.

Like yesterday, the opposition members absented themselves and only members of the League Party were present.

The Finance Minister, *Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar* moved two official bills, the N. W. F. P. Ministers' salaries (second Amendment) Bill, 1943, and the N. W. F. P. Speaker's and Deputy Speaker's Salaries (Amendment) Bill, 1940, which were passed without opposition.

*Sardar Aurangzeb Khan*, Chief Minister, moved four bills, the N. W. F. P. Pre-emption (Amendment) Bill, the N. W. F. P. War Services (exemption) from Disqualification Bill, the N. W. F. P. Motor Vehicle Taxation (Amendment) Bill and the N. W. F. P. Village Council (Amendment) Bill, which were passed.

The fifth Bill, namely the N. W. F. P. Trade Employees Bill, was circulated for eliciting public opinion thereon by February 1, 1944.

The Speaker read out the Bills which were passed during the time of the Congress Ministry and assented to by His Excellency the Governor. The Speaker declared that only the Goondas Bill had been rejected.

To-day was the official business day and the whole work was finished in 30 minutes. The House then adjourned.

#### CONDOLENCE TO DECEASED MEMBERS

19th. AUGUST :—Tributes were paid to the memory of *Khan Allah Dad Khan*, *Sardar Jagat Singh*, *R. B. Chamanlal* and *R. B. Kanwarbhan Bagai*, late M. L. As., when the House met this morning.

Speeches were delivered by *Sardar Aurangzeb Khan*, Chief Minister, and *Sardar Ajit Singh*, Minister for P. W. D. *Sardar Bahadur Khan*, the Speaker also made a short speech and adjourned the House for 15 minutes as a mark of respect to the memory of the deceased members.

#### SIKH RELIGIOUS ENDOWMENTS BILL

*Sardar Ajit Singh*, Minister of Public Works, moved that the N. W. F. P. Sikh Religious Endowments Bill, 1939, which was being piloted by him as a member of the opposition, be referred to another select committee, consisting of the Chief Minister, the Finance Minister, the Advocate-General *Nawab Zafar Khan* (Muslim League), *Rai Bahadur Ishwar Das* (Hindu Independent), *Sardar Ishwar Singh* (Congress), *Peer Kamran* (Muslim League) and the mover. *Sardar Ajit Singh* said that the bill had been designed to provide for better management of the income of Sikh Gurdwaras, Dharamsalas and religious endowments in the N. W. F. Province. He assured the Sikh organisations and *Guru Singh Sabhas* that the bill would not undermine their status and functions. The House referred the Bill to a select committee.

The House, after finishing the business in five minutes, adjourned. As usual, the Opposition was again absent from the House.

#### GENERAL DISCUSSION OF BUDGET

20th. AUGUST :—For the fourth day in succession, the Opposition members were again absent from the House. However, it was a day for general discussion of the budget.

Replying to the speeches, *Sardar Aurangzeb Khan*, Chief Minister justified his action in forming a ministry in the province. With the help of his colleagues, he was able to have a people's government in the province. The Chief Minister also announced in the House that adequate steps had already been taken by the Ministry to end the Frontier Crimes Regulation. Replying to *K. B. Saadullah Khan's* demand for the Pakistan resolution to be moved in the House, the Chief Minister said that their policy was well known that they stood for Pakistan and the Sikhs stood for Azad Punjab.

The Education Minister, *Khan Saminjan Khan's* speech was heard by the House with rapt attention. Referring to the absence of the Opposition, he said that the ornament of the august House was missing and appealed to them (the Opposition) to attend the next session and benefit the House by their healthy

criticism. While dealing with the budget estimates, Khan Saminjan Khan referred to the grant that amounts to one crore of rupees as subsidy by the Central Government. He said that the grant was a slur on the name of the Frontier province: it was on account of that grant that they depended on the Central Government, which was directly ruling the Provincial Government. It was wrong to say that their province, like other Provinces, was enjoying full autonomy. As a matter of fact, their province was a creation of imperialist necessity: they made it because they wanted it. Khan Saminjan Khan asked the Central Government not to give the money in the form of a grant but resources should be pooled so that the N. W. F. P. should have independent income of the same amount, in order that the province might get rid of dependency on the Centre.

Winding up the debate, the Finance Minister, Mr. Nishter in a forceful speech, criticised the Congress policy of not accepting offices and creating a deadlock in the country. By leaving the ministries the Congress had done what the British Government actually wanted.

Replying to the Education Minister, the Finance Minister said that the grant of a crore of rupees from the Centre was not charity, but it was their right.

Sardar Ajit Singh, in a short speech, said that theirs was a ministry of comrades, based on coalition. He also criticised the Congress policy of absenting themselves from the Opposition Benches.

#### NON-OFFICIAL RESOLUTIONS

21st. AUGUST :—The Assembly met to-day to discuss non-official resolutions.

It was significant to note that Khan Abdul Rashid Khan, who until yesterday absented from the House along with the Congress Party as a member of the Opposition and who, before the beginning of the session, was a member of the Muslim League Party, attended to-day's session and took his seat on the Treasury benches. He, however, played a very interesting role, sometimes opposing and sometimes supporting the Government. When interviewed by the "United Press" representative in the lobby, Khan Abdul Rashid Khan evaded the question of ever leaving the Muslim League Party or leaving the Opposition at present.

The House first took up the resolution moved by Khan Attai Khan, demanding the establishment of an Intermediate College at Abbottabad, which was passed. The Education Minister assured the House on behalf of the Government to give the fullest consideration to the proposal.

The resolution of Arbab Sher Ali Khan for controlling and utilising inundation water in Bara River for the benefit of the peasants was withdrawn after an assurance from the Minister for P. W. D. that the same scheme was already under the consideration of the Government.

Khan Bahadur Saadullah Khan's resolution to restore "Inams" and other stipends abolished by the Congress Government was opposed by Mr. Abdur Rashid and subsequently withdrawn.

Peer Kamran Khan's resolution about settlement in Hazara District was withdrawn.

The resolution about the Peshawar Islamia College was rejected by the House. Moving his resolution, Mr. Abdur Rashid protested against anglicising the college staff. He wanted only Indians and Muslims to be appointed as Principal and professors of the college.

#### VOTING ON BUDGET DEMANDS

24th. AUGUST :—After two days' holiday the Assembly met this morning. As decided by the Party, four Congress M.L.A.s viz. Dewan Bhanju Ram Gandhi, Mr. Tek Chand Dhirra, Khan Abdullah Khan of Potah and Khan Akbar Ali Khan came to the Assembly and just avoided disqualification of their membership. They sat in the House for some minutes and then left. R. B. Mehrchand Khanna, Dr. C. C. Ghosh, Arbab Abdur Rehman Khan, and Syed Qaim Shah were present in the lobby but did not enter the House.

Quite a stir was caused in the House when Khan Bahadur Saadullah Khan, a member of the Muslim League Party, opposed the Government grant for demand under a sub-head 'General Administration.' Speaking, the Khan Bahadur demanded that a resolution on Pakistan be moved immediately. He recalled several speeches of the Chief Minister assuring that the Frontier Province stood for Pakistan. Why, the Khan Bahadur asked, was now Sardar Aurangzeb Khan hesitating to fulfil his promise?

Replying to Khan Bahadur Saadullah Khan, Sardar Aurangzeb Khan, Chief Minister, thanked him and said so far as the policy of the Muslim Members of

this House was concerned, he assured him that all Muslim members stood for Pakistan.

The cut motion of *Khan Bahadur Saadullah* was defeated and the original demands passed.

Later the House passed all the Government demands for grants put by the Ministers and then adjourned.

#### NON-OFFICIAL RESOLUTIONS

26th. AUGUST :—When the Assembly meet this morning three members of the Congress Party, *Sardar Asadjan Khan*, *Arbab Abdur Rehman Khan* and *Khan Mohd. Abbas Khan*, ex-Minister, were present in the House but immediately after the Speaker took his seat they quietly walked out. Later *Nawabzada Allah Nawaz Khan*, ex-Deputy Speaker and a member of the Congress Party, appeared on the Opposition benches and left the House after some time.

To-day was the non-official business day and all the five resolutions were moved and withdrawn after proper assurances from the ministers concerned had been given. Mr. *Abdur Rashid Khan*, who was to move the resolution demanding the release of political prisoners, gave a surprise when he announced his decision to withdraw the resolution saying that he had been assured by the provincial Government that the question of the release of politicals was under the serious consideration of the Government.

Speaking on a resolution, *Khan Bahadur Arbab Sherali Khan* urged upon the Government to introduce compulsory primary education in the province. *Khan Saminjan Khan*, Education Minister, admitted that the high rate of crimes in the province were a direct outcome of general poverty and ignorance. He assured the House that education in the province was a national necessity and his government would leave no stone unturned to educate the Pathans. He told the House that he would appoint a committee for this purpose.

#### INTERPELLATIONS

27th. AUGUST :—To-day was the last day of the Budget session of the Assembly. The whole business was finished in 15 minutes. Before announcing the adjournment of the House 'sine die', *Khan Sardar Bahadur Khan*, Speaker, in a short speech referred to the absence of the Congress Party during the session and said that he was sorry for that. He expressed the hope that the friends of the Congress Party would persuade them to attend the House in the next session.

Replying to a question of *Khan Abdur Rashid Khan* (League) whether (a) *Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan* was injured at the time of his arrest, and (b) the Government were prepared to disclose the details of injuries sustained, *Sardar Aurangzeb Khan*, the Chief Minister, said that information in this regard was being collected and would be communicated to the Hon'ble member in due course of time.

Replying to another question of the same member asking for the number of persons arrested under the orders of the Central Government and the Provincial Government, the Chief Minister said that the necessary information was being collected and would be communicated to the member in due course of time.

The House passed the N. W. F. P. Legislative Assembly (Members' Allowance) (Amendment) Bill, 1943 and then adjourned *sine die*.

# Laws Passed in 1943

Provincial Acts passed by Legislatures, Governors' Acts, Bills introduced by Provincial Governments and Ordinances promulgated by Governors.

*Title of Act or Bill and date of Assent or Introduction in Italics.*

## The Government of Bengal

*The Workmen's Compensation (Bengal Amendment) Act, 1942 (Ben. Act VI of 1942) (November 6, 1942):*—To amend the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923 in its application to Bengal to provide for the appointment by the Commissioner for Workmen's Compensation from the list of medical referees prepared by the provincial Govt. of official medical referees to whom any medical questions in dispute between employers and workmen may be referred by the said Commissioner for a report and whose report shall be binding on both parties.

*The Bengal Land-Revenue Sales (Amendment) Act, 1942 (Ben. Act VII of 1942) (December 3, 1942):*—To amend the Bengal Land-Revenue Sales Act, 1859 in order to allow the defaulting holder of an estate or share of an estate, which has been sold under the said Act, an opportunity to apply to the Collector to have the sale set aside on his depositing the dues with the Collector within a specified period.

*The Bengal Agricultural Debtors (Second Amendment) Act, 1942 (Ben. Act VIII of 1942) (December 22, 1942):*—To amend the Bengal Agricultural Debtors Act, 1935 in order to extend the period of five years during which an application can be filed before a Debt Settlement Board, to seven years.

*The Calcutta and Suburban Police (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Ben. Act I of 1943) (April 6, 1943):*—To amend the Calcutta Police Act, 1866 and the Calcutta Suburban Police Act, 1866 for the purpose of ensuring proper control of seamen's lodging houses and thereby to protect the seamen who take shelter therein.

*The Bengal Land-Revenue Sales (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Ben. Act II of 1943) (April 7, 1943):*—To amend the Bengal Land-Revenue Sales Act, 1859 in order to provide for the issue of notice of sale of estates to the proprietors individually or where the number of proprietors is more than five to at least five of them by registered post informing them of the particulars of sale.

*The Bengal Local Self-Govt. (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Ben. Act III of 1943) (April 10, 1943):*—To amend the Bengal

Local Self-Government Act of 1885 in order to provide Government with power to abolish any Local Board without the consent of the District Board.

*The Bengal (Rural) Primary Education (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Ben. Act IV of 1943) (April 10, 1943):*—To amend the Bengal (Rural) Primary Education Act, 1930 in order to provide for the representation of ladies in the Central Primary Education Committee and for the representation of special interests in any areas and also to remove certain other minor defects in the said Act.

*The Bengal Finance Act, 1943 (Ben. Act V of 1943) (April 12, 1943):*—To raise additional revenue for a certain period by varying the rates of the following taxes—(1) Entertainments Tax, leviable under section 3 of the Bengal Amusements Tax Act, 1922; (2) Totalisator Tax, leviable under section 15 of the said Act; (3) Betting Tax, leviable under section 18 of the said Act; and (4) Electricity Duty under section 3 of the Bengal Electricity Duty Act, 1935.

*The Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Act, 1943 (Ben. Act VI of 1943) (August 8, 1943):*—To extend the operation of the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1940 for one year more from the 29th May, 1943 pending the introduction of permanent and more comprehensive legislation on the subject.

*The Bengal Vagrancy Act, 1943 (Ben. Act VII of 1943) (October 23, 1943):*—Is to provide Government with powers to collect all genuine vagrants and place them in homes and in these homes to provide (a) food, shelter and clothing for all; (b) medical treatment for the sick; (c) work for the able bodied; and (d) education for the children and also for such adults as appear to be likely to benefit by it.

## Bills

*The Calcutta and Suburban Police (Amendment) Bill 1942:*—To amend the Calcutta Police Act, 1866, and the Calcutta Suburban Police Act, 1866 for prohibiting the use of cycle-rickshaws in Calcutta.

*The Bengal Agricultural Income-Tax*

**Bill, 1943 :—**To provide for the imposition of a tax on agricultural income derived from land and buildings situated in Bengal.

**The Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Extending Bill, 1943 :—**To extend the operation of the Bengal Non-Agricultural Tenancy (Temporary Provisions) Act, 1940, for one year from the 20th May, 1943.

## Government of the Punjab

### Bills pending before Assembly

**The Sugarcane (Punjab) (Amendment) Bill :—**To amend the Indian Sugarcane Act, 1934, in its application to the Punjab with a view to protecting the growers of sugarcane, to provide for the better organisation of cane supplies to sugar factories and to prevent unhealthy competition between them.

**The Punjab District Boards Bill :—**To repeal the District Boards Act, 1933. The proposed Bill gives full liberty to the Boards to elect non-official Chairman and extends their life to five years. A provision has also been made for prompt discharge of duties by the executive authority.

**The Punjab Electricity Duty Bill :—**To levy a duty on electrical energy consumed for lights and fans and other appliances.

**The Punjab Court of Wards (Amendment) Bill :—**1. To make it obligatory for a decree-holder to file a certificate of his having notified his claim under section 26, in order to continue a suit or resume or institute execution proceedings against a ward. 2. To make it clear that no suit or execution proceedings shall be maintainable to set aside or modify the order of a Deputy Commissioner affixing a date for payment of a claim or regulating the order in which claims are to be paid.

**The Punjab Trade Employees (Amendment) Bill :—**To remove certain difficulties brought to light in the working of the Punjab Trade Employees Act, 1940, by amending the Act, so as to empower the employer to take overtime work from his employees subject to certain restrictions and by omitting sections 11 and 14(2) which empower an employer to impose fine and require notice from the employee before quitting service, respectively.

**The Punjab Maternity Benefit Bill :—**To regulate the employment of women in factories for certain periods before and after confinement and to provide for the payment of maternity benefit to them.

**The Punjab Land Preservation (Chos)**

**(Amendment) Bill :—**To apply the principles of the Land Preservation (Chos) Act II of 1900, to the whole Province and to empower the Government to require landowners to take positive measures necessary to arrest erosion, failing which the Government shall have the power of executing works themselves.

**The Punjab Cotton Ginning and Pressing Factories Bill :—**To provide for the licensing of ginning and pressing factories in order to eradicate the malpractices of mixing, watering, adulteration with seed etc., prevailing among cotton producers.

**Legislative Measures passed by the Punjab Assembly from Oct. 28 1942 to Oct. 11, 1943**

**The Press and Registration of Books (Punjab) Amendment Bill (November 3, 1942) :—**To remove doubts arising out of the absence of time limit for the validity of declarations under the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, and making the filing of a fresh declaration obligatory if a press is restarted, after having ceased to function.

**The Punjab General Sales Tax (Second Amendment) Bill, (November 3, 1942) :—**To amend the Punjab General Sales Tax Act, 1941, so that the tax shall become payable by the dealer in the year immediately following the year for which it has been charged.

**The Punjab Land Preservation (Chos) (Amendment) Bill, (November 3, 1942) :—**To extend the Punjab Land Preservation (Chos) (Amend.) Act, 1900, so as to bring the whole of Kangra District within the scope of its application.

**The Punjab Local Authorities (War Service) Bill (March 26, 1943) :—**To remove such disqualifications as may arise from the employment on war service of members or office holders of local authorities.

**The Punjab Urban Immovable Property Tax (Validation of Lists) Bill (March 26, 1943) :—**To validate certain draft valuation lists prepared under section 8(1) of the Punjab Urban Immovable Property Tax Act, 1940, before the expiry of the full period of 30 days allowed for the delivery of returns.

**The Punjab Urban Immovable Property Tax (Amendment) Bill, (March 26, 1943) :—**To set at rest doubts by providing that the term "local authority" as defined in Section 2(b) of the Punjab Urban Immovable Property Tax Act, 1940, includes municipal committees superseded under Section 238 of the Punjab Municipal Act, 1911.

**The Punjab Urban Rent Restriction**

(Amendment) Bill. (March 26, 1949):—To make it clear that the Punjab Urban Rent Restriction Act 1941, is enforceable in a municipality, even when its committee has been superseded and to set at rest all doubts in that connection.

*The Punjab Restitution of Mortgaged Lands (Amendment) Bill* (March 26, 1949):—To amend the Punjab Restitution of Mortgaged Lands Act, 1938, so as

(i) to permit an officer other than the Commissioner to be invested with the latter's powers;

(ii) to give the right of appeal before the Financial Commissioner to the party against whom the Commissioner accepts an appeal and

(iii) to recognise clearly the revisional jurisdiction of the Financial Commissioner.

### Government of Orissa

*The Orissa Local Authorities Extension of Office Act 1942* (Orissa Act III of 1942) (December 24, 1942):—To provide for extension of the term of office of Local Authorities in the province during the continuance of present hostilities and for a period of six months thereafter.

*The Orissa Legislative Authorities Extension of Office Act 1942* (Orissa Act III of 1942) (December 27, 1942):—To prevent membership of any of His Majesty's Forces or employment directly concerned with the present war being a disqualification for membership of the Orissa Legislative Assembly.

*The Orissa Tenancy (Amendment) Act 1943* (Orissa Act IV of 1943) (March 27, 1943):—To place the Sub-Deputy Collectors on the same footing as Deputy Collectors in regard to trying of suits under the Orissa Tenancy Act, 1943.

*The Bihar and Orissa State Aid to Industries (Orissa Amendment) Act, 1943* (Orissa Act V of 1943) (March 31, 1943):—To ensure quick disposal of applications for State aid so that Director of Development may sanction small loans without reference to the meetings of the Board of Industries.

*The Orissa Stamp (Amendment) Act, 1943* (Orissa Act VI of 1943) (April 10, 1943):—To unify the rates of Stamp duty chargeable in the province.

*The Orissa Weights and Measures Act, 1943* (Orissa Act VII of 1943) (April 22, 1943):—To fix a scale of standard measures with reference to the standard weights for the province.

*The Bihar and Orissa Municipal (Orissa Amendment) Act, 1943* (Orissa Act XI of 1943) (July 24, 1943):—To exempt Dharmasalas, where pilgrims are allowed accommodation for limited periods

free of charge from payment of water, lighting, latrine and drainage taxes.

*The Utkal University Act 1943* (Orissa Act XIII of 1943), (August 2, 1943):—To establish and incorporate a University in the province.

### Bills

*The Hindu Women's Rights to Property (Extension to Agricultural Land in Orissa) Bill, 1942* (November 24, 1942):—

To give Hindu women the same rights in respect of agricultural land as they enjoy under the Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act, 1937 in respect of property other than agricultural lands.

### Government of Assam

*The Assam (Temporarily-Settled Districts) Tenancy (Amendment) Act, 1943* (Act I of 1943). (March 26, 1943):—To amend the Assam (Temporarily-Settled Districts) Tenancy Act, 1935 in order to remove difficulty in realising rents and in paying Government revenue by Managers of lands pertaining to temples or other religious institutions, etc.

*The Assam Forest (Amendment) Act, 1943* (Act II of 1943) (March 30, 1943):—Further to amend the Assam Forest Regulation 1891 in order to remove unnecessary harassment and inconvenience and to penalise any Forest officer or Police Officer who vexatiously and maliciously arrests any person on the pretence that he is suspected in any forest offence or otherwise as provided by Section 60 (1) of the Regulation.

*The Assam Land and Revenue Regulation (Amendment) Act, 1943* (Act III of 1943) (March 30, 1943):—Further to amend the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation 1886 in order to empower Government to frame rules for the custody of attached movable property.

*The Goalpara Tenancy (Amendment) Act, 1943* (Act IV of 1943). (May 29, 1943):—Further to amend the Goalpara Tenancy Act 1929 to provide relief for all classes of tenants by reducing the rate of interest, abolition of damages on arrears of rent and facilitating the division of tenancies and distribution of rent etc.

*The Sylhet Tenancy (Amendment) Act, 1943* (Act V of 1943). (May 29, 1943):—To amend the Sylhet Tenancy Act, 1936 in order to provide relief for all classes of tenants by reducing the rate of interest, abolition of damages on arrears of rent and facilitating the division of tenancies and distribution of rents, etc.

*The Assam Money Lenders' (Amendment) Act, 1943* (Act VI of 1943). (June 25, 1943):—To amend the Assam Money Lenders' Act, 1934 with a view to give further relief to the debtors.

*The Assam Finance Act, 1943 (Act VII of 1943). (July 2, 1943):*—To fix the rates at which agricultural income shall be taxed under the Assam Agricultural Income-tax Act, 1939.

*The Shillong (Attachment of Salaries) Act, 1943 (Act VIII of 1943). (July 2, 1943):*—To amend the Rules for the Administration of Justice in the British portion of Shillong, in order to secure uniformity in the matter of attachment of salaries.

*The Assam Court of Wards (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Act IX of 1943). (July 16, 1943):*—To amend the Bengal Court of Wards Act 1879 in its application to Assam, to make provisions of Section 10C of the Court of Wards Act 1879 applicable in respect of execution of decrees or orders passed by the High Court in regard to all pending suits or proceedings.

*The Assam Court of Wards (Delegation of Powers) Act, 1943 (Act X of 1943). (July 16, 1943):*—To amend the Bengal Court of Wards Act 1879, in its application to Assam, in order to enable the Collector to delegate such of those powers as the Court approves to a Special Officer appointed to assist him in the management of the Estates under the Court of Wards.

*The Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Act XI of 1943) (July 16, 1943):*—Further to amend the Assam Legislative Chambers (Members' Emoluments) Act, 1938, in order to fix the daily allowance for members of the Legislature in accordance with the upper category of First Grade officers.

*The Shillong (Execution of Decrees) Act, 1943. (Act XII of 1943) (September 14, 1943):*—To provide the Civil Courts having Jurisdiction over the British portion of Shillong with the power to send decrees for execution to the Civil Courts having jurisdiction in the Khasi States, and also power to execute decrees sent to them for execution by the Civil Courts having jurisdiction in the Khasi States.

### Government of Sind

*The Bombay Entertainments Duty (Sind Amendment) Act, No. I of 1943 (March 25, 1943):*—Increased the rate of entertainment duty to 25% of the payment for admission and altered the method of levy by prescribing recovery of the duty at 20% of the gross amount received by the keeper of the entertainment.

*The Bombay Finance (Sind Amendment) Act, No. II of 1943 (March 25, 1943):*—Increased the rate of electricity duty and discontinued certain exemption

and increased the stamp duty on certain classes of instruments executed in the City of Karachi.

*The Ratodero Municipality (Extension of Term) Act, No. III of 1943 (March 25, 1943):*—Extended the term of the Ratodero Municipality by six months so as to allow time for holding the election.

*The Karachi Joint Water Board Act, No. IV of 1943 (March 26, 1943):*—Constituted a Joint Water Board, to implement the Haleji Water Storage Scheme for supplying a permanent source of water to supplement the existing supply for the City of Karachi.

*The Bombay Weights and Measures (Sind Amendment) Act, No. V of 1943 (March 26, 1943):*—It made an enabling provision that a trader or agent in possession of a weight, measure or weighing or measuring instrument should be presumed, until the contrary is proved, to have been in possession of it for use for trade.

*The Sind Consumption of Intoxicants Restriction (Amendment) Act, No. VI of 1943 (March 26, 1943):*—Provided that appeals from the orders passed under section 21 by the Collector should lie to the Revenue Commissioner and by the Assistant or Deputy Collector to the Collector.

*The Sind Opium Smoking (Amendment) Act, No. VII of 1943 (March 26, 1943):*—Removed the limitation imposed by section 31 that the payment of rewards for detection of offences under the Act should be made available out of the fines.

*The Bombay Village Sanitation (Sind Amendment) Act, No. VIII of 1943 (March 26, 1943):*—Validated the nominations by Government in certain cases where the nominations at the general elections were less than the seats allotted.

*The Hindu Women's Rights to Property (Sind Extension to Agricultural Land) Act, No. IX of 1943 (March 30, 1943):*—Extended the provisions of the Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act, 1937, and the Hindu Women's Rights to Property (Amendment) Act, 1938, to agricultural lands in the Province with retrospective effect restoring the presumed intention of the Legislature nullified by the Federal Court of India in their decision in case No. 1 of 1941.

*The Bombay Land Revenue Code and the Government Occupants (Sind) Amendment Act, No. X of 1943 (March 30, 1943):*—Permitted the occupants to lease or mortgage their lands held by them on restricted tenure under the Land Revenue Code or Government

Occupants (Sind) Act, 1938, for a period not exceeding ten years without the sanction of the Collector.

*The Bombay Irrigation (Sind Amendment) Act, No. XI of 1943 (March 30, 1943) :—*Postponed (i) the date for the recovery of water-courses expenses without interest from the due date and (ii) the recovery of instalments towards such expenses without charging penal interest.

*The Sind Medical Practitioners' (Repeal) Act, No. XII of 1943 (April 8, 1943) :—*Repealed the Sind Medical Practitioners' Act, 1940, regulating the qualifications and providing for the registration of practitioners of Indian systems of medicine.

*The Bombay Primary Education (Sind Amendment) Act, No. XIII of 1943 (April 8, 1943) :—*Fixed the minimum age for admission to primary schools at six years;

Made it eligible for ex-Chairmen and ex-Presidents for election to the Provincial Board of Primary Education; Prescribed some educational qualifications for the representatives of women, minorities and backward communities on the School Board;

Made some other unimportant changes in the Act of 1923.

*The Sind Legislative Assembly Members' Salaries and Allowances Act, No. XIV of 1943 (April 8, 1943) :—*Supplied the omission of not providing for the return fare after the close of the session or meeting;

Put some limitations on the subsistence allowance during the period of adjournment.

*The Sind Nurses, Midwives, Health Visitors and Dais Registration (Amendment) Act, No. XV of 1943 (April 8, 1943) :—*Substituted the expression "trained-dai" into "assistant midwife" and omitted the provision with respect to "nurse-dai."

Withdrew the application of the Act in certain areas; and

Made changes in the constitution of the Council.

*The Bombay Co-operative Societies (Sind Amendment) Act, No. XVI of 1943 (April 10, 1943) :—*Introduced the definition of "Financing Bank" in the Act and provided inspection of books of societies by the Financing Banks;

Made special provision for membership of Resource Societies;

Made provision on the lines of the Arbitration Act empowering Registrar to modify or correct an award without affecting the decision on the matter referred to arbitration;

Gave finality to certain orders passed

by Government in appeal or revision; and

Gave arbitration awards or orders of liquidator status of a decree to enable to proceed against persons leaving British India and going to Indian States.

Enabled the appointment of a single person to administer the affairs of a suspended society.

*The Sind (Police) Rifles Force Act, No. XVII of 1943 (April 15, 1943) :—*Provided for the constitution of a force on a semi-military lines.

*The Cotton Ginning and Pressing Factories (Sind Amendment) Act, No. XVIII of 1943 (April 18, 1943) :—*Made it an offence for admixture of cotton produce of two or more seasons.

*The Sind Agriculturists Relief (Amendment) Act No. XIX of 1943 (April 23, 1943) :—*Amended the definition of an 'agriculturist' by increasing the limits of the qualifying holding; Took away the period of 90 days provided for application for amendment of a decree and revived applications dismissed on that account. It provided for one right of appeal against order passed under section 13.

*The Bombay Abkari (Sind Amendment) Act No. XX of 1943 (May 15, 1943) :—*Empowered Government to issue orders in respect of grant of licences and to revise orders passed by the Abkari Officers; Made a provision similar to that contained in the Madras Prohibition Supplementary Act.

*The Sind Legislative Assembly (Prevention of Disqualification) (War Service) Act, No. XXI of 1943 (July 17, 1943) :—*Provided that holding of offices certified by Governor to be office concerned with the prosecution of the present war will not involve disqualification under section 69 of the Government of India Act, 1935.

*The Temporary Postponement of Execution of Decrees and Orders Act, No. XXII of 1943 (July 15, 1943) :—*Provided that owing to large tracts of lands having been damaged by floods on the right bank of river Indus and cultivation affected by Hur trouble and damage to crop by locusts execution of Civil court decrees and orders under the Co-operative Societies Act, 1925, be postponed up to the 31st January, 1944.

*The Bombay Weights and Measures (Sind Second Amendment) Act, No. XXIII of 1943 (July 17, 1943) :—*Restricted within reasonable limits the scope of the presumption of possession for use for trade drawn under the Explanation added to section 34 by Sind Act No. V of 1943.

*The Bombay District Municipal and*

*Local Boards (Sind Amendment) Act, No. XXIV of 1943 (July 17, 1943):*—Empowered the President or Vice-President to call a meeting of a Committee when the Chairman of that committee was absent from the local limits for a period exceeding 15 days;

Empowered Government to invest a District Municipality with power to control effectively the nuisance caused by milch cattle stables;

Removed certain restrictions on a town being declared as a notified area.

*The Special Commissioner's Powers Act, No. XXV of 1943 (July 17, 1943):*—Provided for the appointment of an officer as Special Commissioner to maintain effective control of law and order in the Hur area after the withdrawal of martial law and for investing that officer with the powers of a Commissioner under the Bombay District Police Act.

*The Bombay Local Boards (Sind Amendment) Act, No. XXVI of 1943 (July 17, 1943):*—Empowered the local boards to contribute a sum not exceeding Rs. 300 in a year to the Wakf Administration Fund under the Mussalman Wakf Act No. XLII of 1923.

#### BILLS

*The Sind Money-Lenders Bill, No. VII of 1943:*—Provides for the regulation of money-lending transactions in the Province by registration and licensing of money-lenders and regulating the accounts.

*The Sind Alienation of Agricultural Land (Restriction) Bill, No. XVIII of 1943:*—Proposes to impose certain restrictions on alienation of agricultural land with the object that small landholders should preserve their holdings and that transfer of land from agricultural to non-agricultural classes should be restricted within certain limits.

*The Sind Rat Pest Bill, No. XX of 1943 (published in Sind Government Gazette, dated June 17, 1943):*—Proposes to carry out the operations of rat-killing in the Province for a period of five years to remove the evil of rat-pest.

*The Bombay Town Planning (Sind Amendment) Bill, No. XXVII of 1943 (Published in Sind Government Gazette, June 24, 1943):*—Proposes to remove certain defects in the Bombay Town Planning Act which came to notice in the working of the Act.

*The Sind Deti Leti (Amendment) Bill, No. XXVIII of 1943 (Published in Sind Government Gazette, June 24, 1943):*—Proposes to remove certain defects in the Sind Deti Leti Act observed in the working of the Act.

*The Sind Hakims and Vaidas Bill,*

*No. XXIX of 1943 (Published in Sind Government Gazette, July 15, 1943):*—Provides for the registration of qualified Hakims and Vaidas in the Province to raise the standard of practice in the Indian systems of medicine and formation of a Council for that purpose.

*The Sind Boll-Worm Bill No. XXX of 1943 (Published in Sind Government Gazette, August 19, 1943):*—Provides for the eradication of Boll-worm insectpest causing damage to cotton crop in the Province.

*The City of Karachi Municipal (Amendment) Bill, No. XXXI of 1943 (Published in Sind Government Gazette, September 15, 1943):*—Provides for reducing matter for publication in the Sind Government Gazette of quarterly accounts of the Karachi Municipal Corporation as a measure of economy.

#### Government of Bombay

*The Bombay District Municipal Local Boards and Municipal Boroughs (Amendment) Act, 1942 (Bom. XIX of 1942), November 6, 1942:*—To remove the deadlock resulting from the detention of presidents and vice-presidents of certain local bodies in prison under the Defence of India Rules by empowering the Collector in such contingencies to authorise a member of the local body or the Chief Officer to perform all functions of the President or Vice-Presidents.

The life of the Act is up to April 1, 1944.

*The Bombay Ferries (Amendment) Act, 1942 (Bom. XXI of 1942). (December 2, 1942):*—To institute better control over vessels plying on any river, stream, creek, tank, lake or other collections of water affording passage for a vessel so as to prevent recurrence of accidents like the boating tragedy that occurred at Surat in August 1938 as far as possible.

*The Bombay Power Alcohol and Petroleum Act, 1942 (Bombay XXIII of 1942). (December 17, 1942):*—To regulate the manufacture of power alcohol and for the admixture of power alcohol with petrol for use as motor fuel in the Province of Bombay and for certain other purposes.

*The Coroners (Bombay Amendment) Act, 1942 (Bombay XXV of 1942). (January 4, 1943):*—To preclude inquests by the Coroner in cases of deaths resulting from enemy action as this procedure is likely to cause great inconvenience and delay in the disposal of bodies.

*The Bombay Small Holders Relief (Second Amendment) Act, 1942 (Bom. XXVI of 1942) [January 6, 1943]:*—To protect persons in the Defence Services of the Crown who cannot cultivate lands

themselves from eviction on account of subletting of the lands in contravention of the conditions of their respective leases.

*The Bombay Tenancy (Amendment) Act, 1942 (Bom. XXVII of 1942) (January 6, 1943):*—To safeguard the interests of persons in the Defence services of the Crown whether they be landlords or protected tenants. Section 23 and Section 5, sub-section (2) (d) of the Bombay Tenancy Act, 1939, intended to safeguard the interest of protected tenants and landlords operate harshly against persons joining the military naval and air services of the Crown during the War.

*The Bombay Land Improvement Scheme Act 1942 (Bom. XXVIII of 1942) (January 25, 1943):*—To provide for the making and execution of schemes relating to the construction of tanks, embankments and other works, the prohibition and control of grazing for the purpose of preservation of soil erosion, improvement of water supply and other matters in order thereby to protect and improve lands and crops in the Province of Bombay.

*The Bombay Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Act, 1942 (Bom. XXIX of 1942) (February 11, 1943):*—To legalise the practice mentioned below. Members taking loans from salary earners' co-operative societies sign an agreement authorising the officer disbursing the salary to deduct from it the amount of instalment due on the loan and to remit the amount deducted to the society. It is also usual, by the same agreement, to undertake not to revoke the authority thus given so long as any part of the loan and interest thereon remains unpaid.

The Bombay Co-operative Societies Act, 1925, did not contain any provision in this behalf.

*The Bombay Cotton Control Act, 1942 (Bom. XXX of 1942) (March 2, 1943):*—To maintain the quality and reputation of the cotton grown in certain areas, and for that purpose in these areas, to fix the variety of cotton to be grown, to prohibit the cultivation of any variety of the prohibited variety of cotton with any other cotton and to prohibit or restrict the possession or use of, or trade in the prohibited variety of cotton, in the best interest of the growers of cotton in these areas in the Province, the cotton trade and economic prosperity of the Province.

1943

*The Bombay Rationing Preparatory Measures Act, 1943 (Bom. I of 1943).*

*January 8, 1943):*—To provide for the (numbering of premises and collecting information about persons as measures preparatory to the rationing of articles or things essential to the life of the community.

*The City of Bombay Municipal (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Bom. II of 1943). (March 3, 1943):*—To invest the Municipality with the power to control the keeping and rearing of dogs on private premises by providing for licensing of dogs kept in the City.

*The Bombay Finance Act, 1943 (Bom. III of 1943) (March 30, 1943):*—To extend the life of the Act of 1932 by one more year.

*The Bombay Rent Restriction (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Bom. IV of 1943) March 30, 1943):*—To extend the life of the Act of 1939 by one more year.

*The Bombay Small Holders Relief (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Bom. V of 1943) March 30, 1943):*—To extend the life of the Act of 1938 by two more years.

*The Bombay Prevention of Prostitution (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Bom. VII of 1943) (May 6, 1943):*—To make landlords punishable for the repeated and continuous letting out of their premises to prostitutes and to enable the Police to clear specific areas effectually.

*The City of Bombay Municipal Corporation (Extension of Term) (Amendment) Act, 1943, (Bom. VIII of 1943). (June 11, 1943):*—To extend the life of the Corporation for a further period of one year, i.e. till the 1st April, 1945.

(In view of Section 93 conditions in this province, no Bill has been introduced since November 13, 1943).

## Government of Madras

*The Madras City Municipal and District Municipalities (Amendment) Act, 1942, (Madras Act XXVII of 1942). November 22, 1942):*—To empower the municipal executive authority to require owners of buildings to construct house drains not only where a public drain or outfall has actually been provided but also in cases where one is about to be provided or is in the process of construction.

*The Madras Hereditary Village-Officers (Amendment) Act, 1942 (Madras Act XXVIII of 1942). (November 22, 1942):*—To provide that the ordinary presumption applicable to service inams namely, that they consist only of the assignment of revenue, should not extend to inam lands actually in the possession of artisans on or after the 14th July, 1942 that the nature of the inam should be determined in each case

with reference to the facts thereof and that the minor heir to a village artisan officer may sue at any time within three years from the date of attaining his majority.

*The Madras University (Fourth Amendment) Act, 1942 (Madras Act XXIX of 1942). (December 5, 1942):*—To give power to the Syndicate of the University of Madras to continue to recognise constituent colleges as such, notwithstanding their removal to places outside the limits of the University on account of the situation created by the War.

*The Madras Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 1942 (Madras Act XXX of 1942) (December 10, 1942):*—To enhance the maximum penalty for illicit distillation and distribution of liquor.

*The Madras City Police (Amendment) Act, 1942 (Madras Act XXXI of 1942) (December 7, 1942):*—To make Deputy Commissioners of Police *ex officio* Presidency Magistrates for certain limited purposes.

*The Andhra University (Second Amendment) Act, 1942 (Madras Act XXXII of 1942), (December 17, 1942):*—To make certain amendments to the Andhra University Act 1925, for the purpose of removing difficulties experienced in working the Act.

*The Madras University (Fifth Amendment) Act, 1942 (Madras Act XXXIII of 1942), (December 17, 1942):*—To enable the Vice-Chancellor of the Madras University to hold elections to University bodies in anticipation of vacancies arising by efflux of time not earlier than two months from the date on which they arise.

*The Madras Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Act, 1942 (Madras Act XXXIV of 1942) (December 12, 1942):*—To provide that a person accused of a minor offence under the principal Act may appear before the court by pleader instead of in person or may plead guilty of the offence by a letter addressed to the court remitting at the same time the sum specified by it.

*The Madras Prohibition (Second Amendment) Act, 1942 (Madras Act XXXV of 1942) (December 28, 1942):*—To exempt from the provisions of the Madras Prohibition Act, 1937, troops and members of medical and other staffs attached to them, who are stationed in, or pass through prohibition areas, as well as canteen keepers and others duly empowered to supply liquor and intoxicating drugs to them.

*The Madras City Municipal and District Municipalities (Second Amendment)*

*Act, 1942 (Madras Act XXXVI of 1942) (December 30, 1942):*—To empower the Government to frame rules for the valuation of Government and railway buildings as well as of certain other buildings for the purpose of assessing them to property tax under the principal Acts.

*The Madras Cotton Control (Amendment) Act 1942 (Madras Act XXXVII of 1942) (December 29, 1942):*—To enhance the penalty for certain offences against the principal Act and to provide for the custody and examination of cotton seized under that Act and for the destruction of 'pulichai' cotton (a prohibited variety) or of cotton mixed with 'pulichai' cotton.

*The Madras Municipalities (Third Amendment) Act, 1942 (Madras Act XXXVIII of 1942) (January 29, 1943):*—To amend the principal Act with a view to remove the difficulties encountered in working the Act and to improve the municipal administration.

*The Madras Sales of Motor Spirit Taxation (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Madras Act I of 1943) (January 9, 1943):*—To provide for the transfer of the administration of the Madras Sales of Motor Spirit Taxation Act, 1939, from the Land Revenue to the Commercial Taxes Department.

*The Madras Electricity Duty (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Madras Act II of 1943) (January 22, 1943):*—To amend the principal Act so as to bring it into strict accord with the provisions of section 154-A of the Government of India Act, 1935.

*The Legal Practitioners (Madras Amendment) Act, 1943 (Madras Act III of 1943) (February 6, 1943):*—To empower the High Court to make an order as to costs in cases of professional misconduct by legal practitioners and to provide for the more effective suppression of the touting evil.

*The Madras Medical Registration (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Madras Act IV of 1943), (February 13, 1943):*—To provide for the constitution of an Executive Committee of the Madras Medical Council, to raise the fee levied for registration of medical practitioners from Rs. 15 to Rs. 20, to levy a fee of Rs. 5 for the registration of practitioners registered elsewhere in British India or for the registration of a registered practitioner under a new name and to define the functions of a Committee of the Council while making an enquiry under the principal Act.

*The Presidency Towns Insolvency (Madras Amendment) Act, 1943 (Madras Act V of 1943) (February 13, 1943):*—

To make the Official Assignee and his establishment part of the staff of the High Court and to authorize the transfer to the account of the Provincial Government of all moneys likely to be surplus in the hands of the Official Assignee without impairing in any way the rights of persons having claims against those moneys.

*The Madras District Municipalities (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Madras Act VI of 1943). (February 22, 1943):*—To amend section 84 (1) of the principal Act so as to enable municipal councils to levy the property tax on lands used exclusively for agricultural purposes at a rate higher than that at which property tax is levied by them on buildings.

*The Madras Court of Small Causes (Validation of Proceedings) Act, 1943 (Madras Act VII of 1943). (February 28, 1943):*—To validate the proceedings and acts of the Court of Small Causes of Madras during the period from the 13th April, 1942 to the 13th June, 1942 (both days inclusive) when the Court was located outside the Presidency-town of Madras.

*The Madras Finance Act, 1943 (Madras Act, VIII of 1943). (March 14, 1943):*—To reduce the General Sales Tax payable for the year 1943-44. The Act has since been repealed by the Madras Finance (No. 2) Act, 1943.

*The Madras Debt Conciliation (Amendment) Act 1943 (Madras Act IX of 1943) (March 12, 1943):*—To provide that where a creditor does not furnish to the Debt Conciliation Board a statement of the debt due to him by a debtor as required by section 10 (1), the debt itself is not discharged but that the creditor should challenge the accuracy of the particulars as to the debt given in the debtor's application.

*The Annamalai University (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Madras Act X of 1943) (May 8, 1943):*—To amend the principal Act so as to enable the Vice-Chancellor to hold anticipatory elections to University bodies not earlier than two months from the date of their reconstitution.

*The Madras City Municipal (Amendment) Act 1943 (Madras Act XI of 1943). (June 8, 1943):*—To amend section 91 of the principal Act so as to prohibit the Corporation of Madras from considering any proposals for the amendment of the establishment schedule of the Corporation of Madras except at the instance of its Commissioner.

*The Indian Lunacy (Madras Amendment) Act, 1943 (Madras Act XII of 1943). (May 17, 1943):*—To provide also

for the temporary discharge of lunatics who have been detained under the provisions of section 7 or 10 of the principal Act when such discharge is necessary in the interest of the health of the lunatics.

*The Madras Local Boards (Amendment) Act 1943 (Madras Act XIII of 1943). (June 25, 1943):*—To make specific provision in section 63 of the principal Act for the resumption of control over endowments which have been transferred to district boards under that section and also to provide that the rent value of lands in proprietary estates should be fixed once in three years.

*The Madnapalle Tuberculosis Sanatorium (Regulation of Buildings) Act, 1943 (Madras Act XIV of 1943). (June 27, 1943):*—To provide for the control of the construction of buildings in the neighbourhood of the Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Madanapalle, and for the exclusion, modification or restriction of enactments relating to public health from or in such neighbourhood.

*The Madras Agriculturists Relief (Amendment) Act, 1943 (Madras Act XV of 1943 (August 4, 1943):*—To validate certain rules under the Act enabling the parties concerned to apply to the court for a declaration of the amount of the debt as scaled down due by the debtor and to prefer an appeal against such declaration and certain orders of the court.

*The Madras Stamp (Increase of Duties) Act, 1943 (Madras Act XVI of 1943 (September 22, 1943):*—To increase the taxation leviable in this Province as an anti-inflationary measure. The stamp duty payable has been doubled in the case of certain instruments which are exclusively or principally connected with business and raised by fifty per cent in certain other cases.

*The Madras Finance (No. 2) Act, 1943 (Madras Act XVII of 1943) (September 8, 1943):*—(i) To amend the Madras Betting Tax Act, 1935, so as to raise the maximum of the totalizator tax and the tax on bets made with bookmakers from 4 and 6½ per cent; and (ii) to amend the Madras General Sales Tax Act, 1939, with effect from 1-10-1943, so as to restore the original rate of Rs. 5 a month in the case of dealers whose turnover is between Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 20,000 and to raise the rate to 1 per cent of the turnover where it exceeds Rs. 20,000.

*The Madras Irrigation Works (Repairs, Improvement and Construction) Act 1943 (Madras Act XVIII of 1943) (September 29, 1943):*—To authorize the

Government to repair and improve any existing irrigation works and to construct new irrigation works on private lands (the cost being met by the Government in the first instance and recovered later from the person concerned) and also to supply water from Government irrigation works and to charge fees for such supply.

*The Madras Pawnbrokers Bill, 1940* :—To regulate and control the business of pawnbrokers in the province of Madras.

*The Madras Village Panchayats Bill 1940* :—To make better provision in a separate enactment for the administration of village affairs by panchayats.

*The Madras Local Boards (Second Amendment) Bill, 1941* :—To remove panchayats from the scope of the Madras Local Boards Act, 1920 and confine the operation of the Act to district boards and to make certain other amendments to the Act either for the purpose of removing certain difficulties encountered in working the Act or for the purpose of improving the administration of district boards.

*The Madras Industrial Dispute Bill, 1942* :—To make provision for the promotion of peaceful and amicable settlement of Industrial disputes by conciliation and arbitration.

*The Criminal Tribes (Madras Amendment) Bill 1943* :—To make certain amendments to the Criminal Tribes Act, 1924, which are considered necessary by the experience gained so far in the working of the Act and to liberalize the provisions of the Act wherever possible.

*The Madras Restriction of Habitual Offenders Bill, 1943* :—To provide for the application of the provisions of the Criminal Tribes Act, 1924, to individual habitual offenders, so that where necessary, restrictions may be placed on the movements of such offenders or a duty laid on them to notify their residences, etc., as provided in that Act.

*The Madras Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 1943* :—To amend the principal Act with a view to facilitate the recovery of sums due to co-operative societies in Orissa from members of such societies residing in this Province.

*The Madras Proprietary Estates' Village Service and Hereditary Village-officers (Amendment) Bill, 1943* :—To allow the minor, registered as heir to a village-officer under the two principal Acts, a period of five years from the termination of his war service to qualify himself for the office.

*The Tambaram Tuberculosis Sanatorium (Regulation of Building) Bill, 1943* :—To provide for the control of

the construction of buildings in the neighbourhood of the Tuberculosis Sanatorium at Tambaram, and for the exclusion, modification or restriction of enactments relating to public health from or in such neighbourhood.

*The Annamalai University (Second Amendment) Bill, 1943* :—To amend the principal Act so as to secure the more efficient working of the Act, the main changes being abolition of the Academic Council, alteration of the constitution of the Senate so as to make it a more representative body, grant of effective powers to the Vice-Chancellor, etc.

*The Madras Public Health (Amendment) Bill, 1943* :—To amend the Madras Public Health Act, 1939, for the purpose of making separate provision for the treatment and control of leprosy, which is now regulated, along with other infectious diseases, by the provisions of Chapter VII of the Act.

*The Madras Estates Land (Temporary Amendment) Bill, 1943* :—To provide for the temporary assignment, subject to certain conditions, of waste lands situated in estates for periods ranging from 3 to 5 years for the cultivation of food crops during the present emergency.

*The Andhra University (Amendment) Bill, 1943* :—To remove the prohibition imposed by Section 26 (c) of the Andhra University (Second Amendment) Act, 1942, in the case of vacancies in seats on the Syndicate and the Finance Committee to which nominations are made by the Chancellor.

*The Madras University (Amendment) Bill, 1943* :—To enable the Madras University to institute, maintain and manage colleges and laboratories of its own outside the limits of the University and to confer degrees and other academic distinctions on students who have perused approved courses of study in such colleges and laboratories and passed the prescribed examinations.

## Govt of United Provinces

*The United Provinces Tenancy (Amendment) Act, 1942, (December 4, 1942)* :—To remove the hardship felt by the smaller landlords, permanent tenure holders and under-proprietors on joining the military, naval or air services of the Crown by not being able to let out their *khudkasht* without allowing the tenants to require hereditary rights.

*The United Provinces Famine Relief Fund (Amendment) Act, 1943, (January 22, 1943)* :—To provide that if in the subsequent year the balance in the Famine Relief Fund has reached the limit of 55 lakhs, the deficiency occurring

in the previous year need not be made good.

*The United Provinces District Boards (Amendment) Act, 1943, (February 26, 1943):*—To enable the district boards suffering considerable decrease in the income from local rate to increase the local rate.

*The Court Fees (United Provinces) (Amendment) Act, 1943, (March 2, 1943):*—To delete the provision made by the Court Fees (United Provinces Amendment) Act 1941, for the fees to be paid in the United Provinces in respect of certain applications and appeals under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939 (IV of 1939) as the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 1942, (XX of 1942) overrode the provisions of Clause (b) of Section 8 of the Court Fees (United Provinces Amendment) Act, 1941.

*The United Provinces Tenancy (Amendment) Act, 1943, (April 3, 1943):*—To remove the difficulties felt by persons in the military, naval or air services of the Crown holding land jointly with others in sub-letting of holdings and to exempt such persons from the penalty provided for in Sub-Section (1) of Section 171 of the U. P. Tenancy Act, 1939.

*The United Provinces Tenancy (Second Amendment) Act, 1943, (April 7, 1943):*—To allow Government to fix from time to time the sale price of receipt books kept for sale to land-holders for use in granting receipts for every payment made to them on account of rents of sayars, at a rate not exceeding the cost of production.

*The United Provinces Maintenance and Restoration of Order (Indemnity) Act, 1943, (April 9, 1943):*—To protect Government servants who in connection with the movement designed to paralyse Government launched by the Congress party in August, 1942, were obliged, in some instances, by the imperative need of restoring order in the interests of the defence of India, to take measures not covered by a provision of law.

*The United Provinces Entertainment and Betting Tax (War Surcharge) Act, 1943, (July 7, 1943):*—To empower Government to impose a surcharge to a maximum of one hundred per cent on the present rate of tax to check inflationary tendencies.

*The Court Fees (United Provinces Amendment) Act, 1943, (July 8, 1943):*—To enable Government to impose a surcharge of approximately 25% on all court fees leviable under the Court Fees Act (VII of 1870) with a view to combat inflation.

*The Indian Stamp (United Provinces*

*Amendment) Act, 1943, (July 18, 1943):*—To enable Government to impose a surcharge of approximately 25 per cent on all stamp duties leviable under the Indian Stamp Act (II of 1899) with a view to combat inflation.

*United Provinces Encumbered Estates (Amendment) Act, 1943, (September 7, 1943):*—Empowering the Commissioners instead of the Board of Revenue to decide the appeals under the United Provinces Encumbered Estates Act, 1934, with a view to expedite the disposal of cases under the Act and to enable the Board to correct mistakes, etc., in the liquidation awards declared final by the Collectors.

## Government of Central Provinces and Berar

From November 1, 1942, to September 30, 1943

*The Berar Land Revenue Code (Amendment) Act, 1942, (I of 1943), (December 29, 1942):*—To extend the term of "settlement" in Berar from 40 years to 45 years so as to avoid the necessity of starting settlement operations during the present period.

*The Central Provinces and Berar Postponement of General Elections to Local Boards (Amendment) Act, 1942, (XV of 1942), (December 31, 1942):*—To provide for the postponement of General Elections to Local Boards until the termination of the present war and for such period thereafter as the Provincial Government may, by notification, direct.

*The Central Provinces and Berar Postponement of Elections (Municipal Committees and Notified Area Committees) (Amendment) Act, 1942, (XVI of 1942), (December 31, 1942):*—To provide for the postponement of General Elections in Urban areas until the termination of the present war and for such period thereafter as the Provincial Government may, by notification, direct.

## Government of Bihar

*The Bihar Municipal (Temporary Extension of Term of Office), Act, 1942, (Bihar Act IX of 1942, (November 26, 1942):*—To secure power to postpone for the duration of the war all general elections in municipalities by extending the term of office of municipal commissioners and other officers of municipalities.

*The Bihar Public Demands Recovery (Amendment) Act, 1943, (Bihar Act I of 1943), (March 11, 1943):*—To provide for the recovery as a public demand of arrear dues payable under the Dehri-

Sasaram Electrification Scheme and Dehri-Sasaram Lift Irrigation Scheme.

*The Bihar Refund of Cess (Amendment) Act, 1943, (Bihar Act II of 1943), (March 12, 1943) :—*To allow refunds of cess to landlords in respect of rents reduced under the Bihar Tenancy Act, 1885, the Champaran Agrarian (Amendment) Act, 1938, the Kosi Baira (Reduction of Settled Rents) Act, 1939, and the Cess Act, 1880, where the effect of the operation of these Acts has been to reduce the money rent of a holding below the figure that was adopted as the basis of the last cess revaluation of the estate.

*The Bihar Maintenance and Restoration of Order (Indemnity) Act, 1943, (Bihar Act III of 1943), (April 9, 1943) :—*To afford protection to officers of Government who were, during the civil disturbances of August, 1942, obliged by the imperative need of restoring order, in the interests of the defence of India, to take measures not covered by a provision of law.

*The Bihar Sugar Factories Control (Amendment) Act 1943, (Bihar Act IV of 1943), (July 16, 1943) :—*To give statutory recognition to the sugarcane varieties advisory Committee and to empower Government to declare that particular varieties of plant cane or ratoon cane are unsuitable for use by factories in specified areas.

*The Patna City Municipality (Emergency Assessment and Recovery of Taxes) Act 1943, (Bihar Act V of 1943), (August 6, 1943) :—*To remove the difficulties caused by the destruction during the civil disturbances of August, 1942, of a part of the records of the Patna City Municipality, by empowering municipal commissioners to reconstruct both the arrear and current demands in a suitable manner.

*The Bihar Village Collective Responsibility Act, 1943, (Bihar Act VI of 1943), (August 17, 1943) :—*To give statutory recognition to the organisation of village patrols acting under headmen appointed by the District Magistrate for the guarding of lines of communications and Government property which were extensively damaged during the civil disturbances of August, 1942.

*The Bihar Criminal Law (Industrial Areas), Amendment Act 1943, (Bihar Act VII of 1943), (September 1, 1943) :—*To check the thefts of certain articles,

particularly iron and steel, from mines, railways and other industrial places which have become very common in Bihar.

### Govt. of N. W. F. Province

*The N.-W. F. P. Motor Vehicles Taxation (Amendment) Act, 1943, (August 18, 1943), (H. E.'s Assent August 26, 1943) :—*To authorise the Provincial Government to prescribe the form of token and for the issue thereof and their duplicates.

*The N.-W. F. P. Village Council (Amendment) Act, 1943, (August 18, 1943), (H. E.'s Assent August 26, 1943) :—*To authorise the Provincial Government to extend the life of village councils and the term of office of councillors.

*The N.-W. F. P. Pre-emption (Amendment) Act, 1943, (August 18, 1943), (H. E.'s Assent August 26, 1943) :—*To bring the N.-W. F. P. Pre-emption Act into line with the N.-W. F. P. Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act 1935.

*The N.-W. F. P. War Services (Exemption from (Disqualification) Act, 1943, (August 18, 1943), (H. E.'s Assent August 26, 1943) :—*To re-enact and consolidate the N.-W. F. P. War Services (Exemption from disqualification) Act, 1940, and the N.-W. F. P. War Services Exemption from disqualification Ordinance 1943.

*The N.-W. F. P. Legislative Assembly Speaker's and Deputy Speaker's Salaries (Amendment) Act, 1943, (August 18, 1943), (H. E.'s Assent August 26, 1943) :—*To increase the salaries of Speaker and Deputy Speaker.

*The N. W. F. P. Ministers' Salaries (Amendment) Act, 1943, (August 18, 1943), (H. E.'s Assent August 26, 1943) :—*To increase the salaries of the Hon'ble the Chief Minister and Hon'ble Ministers and to provide suitable conveyances for them at Government cost.

*The N. W. F. P. Legislative Assembly (Members' Allowances) (Amendment) Act, 1943, (August 27, 1943), (H. E.'s Assent September 12, 1943) :—*To increase the amount of daily allowances admissible to the Members of the N. W. F. P. Legislative Assembly.

*The N. W. F. P. Trade Employees Bill :—*Introduced on August 18, 1943, and circulated for eliciting public opinion.

**Congress** Responsibilities for August Disturbances  
1942-43

Gandhi-Wavell Correspondence

Gandhi's Reply to Government Indictment

Gandhi-Tottenham Correspondence

Etc.

Etc.

Etc.

# Congress Responsibilities for August Disturbances 1942-43

## Gandhiji's Letters to Wavell

### "Quit India" Stand Explained

"The Congress and I are wholly innocent of the charges brought against us" says Gandhiji, in a letter to H. E. Lord Wavell, dated, February 17, 1944, in which Gandhiji asked for an impartial tribunal to enquire into the charges made by the Government.

Warning the British in high places against self-satisfaction at the present state of affairs, Gandhiji says: "Promises for the future are valueless. Present performance is the need of the moment if a bloodier war is to be avoided in the future. Therefore, real war effort must mean satisfaction of India's demands."

In his last letter to the Viceroy, dated April 9, replying to the Viceroy's letter in which Lord Wavell called upon the Congress to abandon non-co-operation, Gandhiji says: "I agree with you that whilst you hold the views expressed in your letter under reply the proper place for one like me is Government's prison, and unless there is a change of heart, view and policy on the part of Government, I am content to remain your prisoner."

The correspondence between Gandhiji and the Viceroy, which took place in February, March and April 1944, was released for publication in the month of June.

### Text of Correspondence

#### GANDHIJI'S DEMAND FOR IMPARTIAL TRIBUNAL

*The following is the text of the correspondence:*

Detention Camp, Feb. 17, 1944.

Dear friend,

Although I have not had the pleasure of meeting you, I address you on purpose as 'Dear friend.' I am looked upon by the representatives of the British Government as a great, if not the greatest enemy of the British. Since I regard myself as a friend and servant of humanity including the British, in token of my goodwill I call you, the foremost representative of the British in India, my friend.

I have received, in common with some others, a notice informing for the first time why I am detained, and conferring on me the right of representation against my detention. I have duly sent my reply, but I have as yet heard nothing from the Government. A reminder too has gone after a wait of thirteen days.

I have said some only have received notices, because, out of six of us in this camp, only three have received them. I presume that all will receive them in due course. But my mind is filled with the suspicion that the notices have been sent as a matter of form only, and not with any intention to do justice. I do not wish to burden this letter with argument. I repeat what I said in the correspondence with your predecessor, that the Congress and I are wholly innocent of the charges brought against us. Nothing but an impartial tribunal to investigate the Government case, and the Congress case against the Government, will bring out the truth.

#### "SELF-SATISFACTION BODES ILL"

The speeches recently made on behalf of the Government in the Assembly on the release motion, and the gagging order on Shri. Sarojini Devi, I consider to be playing with fire. I distinguish between defeat of Japanese arms and Allied victory. The latter must carry with it the deliverance of India from the foreign yoke. The spirit of India demands complete freedom from all foreign dominance and would therefore resist Japanese yoke equally with British or any other. The Congress represents that spirit in full measure. It has grown to be an institution whose roots have gone deep down into the Indian soil. I was, therefore, staggered to read that the Government were satisfied with things as they were going. Had they not got from among the Indian people the men and money they wanted? Was not the Government machinery running smooth? This self-satisfaction bodes ill for Britain, India and the world if it does not quickly give place to a searching of hearts in British high places.

Promises for the future are valueless in the face of the world struggle in which the fortunes of all nations and therefore, of the whole of humanity are involved. Present performance is the peremptory need of the moment if the war is to end in world peace and not be a preparation for another war bloodier than

the present, if indeed, there can be a bloodier one. Therefore, real war effort must mean satisfaction of India's demand. "Quit India" only gives vivid expression to that demand, and has not the sinister and poisonous meaning attributed to it without warrant by the Government of India. The expression is charged with the friendliest feeling for Britain in terms of the whole of humanity.

I have done. I thought that, if I claim to be a friend of the British, as I do, nothing should deter me from sharing my deepest thoughts with you. It is no pleasure for me to be in this camp, where all my creature comforts are supplied without any effort on my part, when I know that millions outside are starving for want of food. But I should feel utterly helpless if I went out and missed the food by which alone living becomes worth-while.

I am, yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi.

Viceroy's Letter

Viceroy's Camp, India.  
Nagpur, 25th. Feb. 1944.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I thank you for your letter of February 17th. You will by now have received the reply to your representation. I am sorry to hear that three of those in the Aga Khan's Palace have not received notices. This will be looked into at once.

I expect you have seen in the papers reports of the speech I made to the Legislature on the same day on which you wrote that letter. This states my point of view and I need not repeat what I said then. I enclose a copy for your convenience if you wish to read it.

I take this opportunity to express to you deep sympathy from my wife and myself at the death of Mrs. Gandhi. We understand what this loss must mean to you after so many years of companionship.

Yours sincerely,  
Sd. Wavell,

Gandhi's Reply

TRIBUTE TO SHRI KASTURBA

Detention Camp. March 9. 1944.

Dear friend,

I must thank you for your prompt reply to my letter of 17th. February. At the outset I send you and Lady Wavell my thanks for your kind condolences on the death of my wife. Though for her sake I have welcomed her death as bringing freedom from living agony, I feel the loss more than I had thought I should. We were a couple outside the ordinary. It was in 1906 that, by mutual consent and after unconscious trials, we definitely adopted self-restraint as a rule of life. To my great joy this knit us together as never before. We ceased to be two different entities. Without my wishing it, she chose to lose herself in me. The result was she became truly my better half. She was a woman always of very strong will which in our early days I used to mistake for obstinacy. But that strong will enabled her to become quite unwittingly, my teacher in the art and practice of non-violent non-co-operation. The practice began with my own family. When I introduced it in 1906 in the political field it came to be known by the more comprehensive and specially coined name of Satyagraha. When the course of Indian imprisonments commenced in South Africa, Shri Kasturba was among the civil resisters. She went through greater physical trials than I. Although she had gone through several imprisonments, she did not take kindly to the present incarceration during which all creature comforts were at her disposal. My arrest simultaneously with that of many others and her own immediately following, gave her a great shock and embittered her. She was wholly unprepared for my arrest. I had assured her that the Government trusted my non-violence and would not arrest me unless I courted arrest myself. Indeed, the nervous shock was so great that after her arrest she developed violent diarrhoea and, but for the attention that Dr. Sushila Nayar, who was arrested at the same time as the deceased, was able to give her, she might have died before joining me in this detention camp, where my presence soothed her and the diarrhoea stopped without any further medicament. Not so the bitterness. It led to fretfulness ending in painfully slow dissolution of the body.

(2) In the light of the foregoing you will perhaps understand the pain I felt when I read in the papers the statement made on behalf of the Government, which I hold was an unfortunate departure from truth regarding her who was precious to me beyond measure. I ask you please to send for and read the complaint in

the matter which I have forwarded to the Additional Secretary to the Government of India (Home Department). Truth is said to be the first and the heaviest casualty in war. How I wish in this war it could be otherwise in the case of the Allied Powers.

(3) I now come to your address, which you delivered before the Legislature and of which you have kindly sent me a copy. When the newspapers containing the address were received, I was by the bedside of the deceased. Shri Mirabai read to me the Associated Press report. But my mind was elsewhere. Therefore, the receipt of your speech in a handy form was most welcome. I have now read it with all the attention it deserves. Having gone through it, I feel drawn to offer a few remarks, all the more so as you have observed that the views expressed by you need not be regarded as final. May this letter lead to a reshaping of some of them.

(4) In the middle of page two you speak of the welfare of the "Indian peoples." I have seen in some Viceregal pronouncements the inhabitants of India being referred to as the people of India. Are the two expressions synonymous?

#### BRITISH POLICY AND "QUIT INDIA" DEMAND

(5) At page 13, referring to the attainment of self-government by India, you say, "I am absolutely convinced not only that the above represents the genuine desire of the British people, but that they wish to see an early realisation of it. It is qualified only at present by an absolute determination to let nothing stand in the way of the earliest possible defeat of Germany and Japan; and by a resolve to see that in the solution of the constitutional problem full account is taken of the interests of those who have loyally supported us in the war and at all other times—the soldiers who have served the common cause; the people who have worked with us; the Rulers and the populations of the States to whom we are pledged; the minorities who have trusted us to see that they get a fair deal..... But until the two main Indian parties at least can come to terms, I do not see any immediate hope of progress." Without reasoning it out, I venture to give my paraphrase of your pronouncement. "We, the British, shall stand by the Indian soldier, whom we have brought into being and trained for consolidating our rule and position in India, and who, by experience, we have found can effectively help us in our wars against other nations. We shall also stand by the Rulers of the Indian States, many of whom are our creation and all of whom owe their present position to us, even when those Rulers curb or actually crush the spirit of the people whom they rule. Similarly shall we stand by the minorities whom we too have encouraged and used against the vast majority when the latter have at all attempted to resist our rule. It makes no difference that the majority seek to replace it by a rule of the will of the people of India taken as a whole. And in no case will we transfer power unless Hindus and Muslims come to us with an agreement among themselves." The position taken up in the paragraph quoted and interpreted is no new thing. I regard the situation thus envisaged as hopeless, and I claim in this to represent the thought of the man in the street. Out of the contemplation of this hopelessness was born the anguished cry of "Quit India." What I see happening in this country day after day provides a complete vindication of the "Quit India" formula as defined by me in my considered writings.

(6) I note as I read your speech that you do not regard the sponsors of the formula of "Quit India" as outcasts to be shunned by society. You believe them to be high-minded persons. Then, treat them as such and trust their interpretation of their own formula and you cannot go wrong.

#### WITHDRAWAL OF AUGUST RESOLUTION

(7) After developing the Cripps offer you have said at page 16 in the middle paragraph....."The demand for release of those leaders who are in detention is an utterly barren one until there is some sign on their part of willingness to co-operate. It needs no consultation with any one or anything but their own conscience for anyone of those under detention to decide whether he will withdraw from the "Quit India" Resolution and the policy which had tragic consequences and will co-operate in the great tasks ahead." Then again, reverting to the same subject you say on pages 19 and 20: "There is an important element which stands aloof; I recognise how much ability and high-mindedness it contains; but I deplore its present policy and methods as barren and unpractical. I should like to have the co-operation of this element in solving the present and the future problems of India. If its leaders feel that they cannot consent to take part in the present Government of India, they may still be able to assist in considering future pro-

blems. But I see no reason to release those responsible for the declaration of August 8th, 1942, until I am convinced that the policy of non-co-operation and even of obstruction has been withdrawn—not in sackcloth and ashes, that helps no one—but in recognition of a mistaken and unprofitable policy."

**"PUT ME IN TOUCH WITH WORKING COMMITTEE"**

(8) I am surprised that you, an eminent soldier and man of affairs, should hold such an opinion. How can the withdrawal of a resolution, arrived at jointly by hundreds of men and women after much debating and careful consideration, be a matter of individual conscience? A resolution jointly undertaken can be honourably, conscientiously and properly withdrawn only after joint discussion and deliberation. Individual conscience may come into play after this necessary step, not before. Is a prisoner ever free to exercise his conscience? Is it just and proper to expect him to do so?

(9) Again, you recognise "much ability and high-mindedness" in those who represent the Congress organisation and then deplore their present policy and methods as "barren and unpractical." Does not the second statement cancel the first? Able and high-minded men may come to erroneous decisions, but I have not before heard such people's policy and methods being described as "barren and unpractical." Is it not up to you to discuss the pros and cons of their policy with them before pronouncing judgment, specially when they are also admittedly representatives of millions of their people? Does it become an all-powerful Government to be afraid of the consequences of releasing unarmed men and women with a backing only of men and women equally unarmed and even pledged to non-violence? Moreover, why should you hesitate to put me in touch with the Working Committee members so as to enable me to know their minds and reactions?

(10) Then you have talked of the "tragic consequences" of the 'Quit India' resolution. I have said enough in my reply to the Government pamphlet "Congress Responsibility etc." combating the charge that the Congress was responsible for those consequences. I commend the pamphlet and my reply to your attention, if you have not already seen them. Here I would just like to emphasise what I have already said. Had Government stayed action till they had studied my speeches and those of the members of the Working Committee history would have been written differently.

(11) You have made much of the fact that your Executive Council is predominantly Indian. Surely, their being Indians no more makes them representatives of India than non-Indians. Conversely, it is quite conceivable that a non-Indian may be a true representative of India if he is elected by the vote of the Indian people. It would give no satisfaction even if the head of the Indian Government was a distinguished Indian not chosen by the free vote of the people.

**INDIAN SOLDIERS NOT "VOLUNTEERS"**

(12) Even you, I am sorry, have fallen into the common error of describing the Indian forces as having been recruited by "voluntary enlistment." A person who takes to soldiering as a profession will enlist himself whatever he gets his market wage. Voluntary enlistment has come to bear by association a meaning much higher than that which attaches to an enlistment like that of the Indian soldier. Were those who carried out the orders at the Jallianwala massacre volunteers? The very Indian soldiers who have been taken out of India and are showing unexampled bravery will be ready to point their rifles unerringly at their own countrymen at the orders of the British Government, their employers. Will they deserve the honourable name of volunteers?

**VICEROY INVITED TO MEET DETAINED LEADERS**

(13) You are flying all over India. You have not hesitated to go among the skeletons of Bengal. May I suggest an interruption in your scheduled flights and descent upon Ahmednagar and the Aga Khan's Palace in order to probe the hearts of your captives? We are all friends of the British, however much we may criticise the British Government and system in India. If you can but trust, you will find us to be the greatest helpers in the fight against Nazism, Fascism, Japanism and the like.

(14) Now I revert to your letter of the 25th February. Shri Mirabai and I have received replies to our representations. The remaining inmates have received their notices. The reply received by me I regard as a mockery, the one received by Shri Mirabai as an insult. According to the report of the Home Member's

## 204 CONGRESS RESPONSIBILITY FOR DISTURBANCES [DETENTION CAMP—

answer to a question in the Central Assembly, the replies received by us seem to be no replies. He is reported to have said that the stage "for the review of the cases had not yet arrived. Government at present were only receiving representations from prisoners." If their representations in reply to the Government notices are to be considered merely by the Executive that imprisoned them without trial, it will amount to a farce and an eye-wash, meant perhaps for foreign consumption, but not as any indication of a desire to do justice.

### DETENTION OF SHRI MIRABEN

My views are known to the Government. I may be considered an impossible man—though altogether wrongly, I would protest. But what about Shri Mirabai? As you know, she is the daughter of an Admiral and former Commander-in-Chief of these waters. But she left the life of ease and chose instead to throw in her lot with me. Her parents, recognising her urge to come to me, gave her their full blessings. She spends her time in the service of the masses. She went to Orissa at my request to understand the plight of the people of that benighted land. The Government was hourly expecting Japanese invasion. Papers were to be removed or burnt, and withdrawal of the civil authority from the coast was being contemplated. Shri Mirabai made Chaudwar (Outack) airfield her headquarters, and the local military commander was glad of the help she could give him. Later she went to New Delhi and saw General Sir Allen Hartley and General Molesworth, who both appreciated her work and greeted her as one of their own class and caste. It therefore baffles me to understand her incarceration. The only reason for burying her alive, so far as I can see, is that she has committed the crime of associating herself with me. I suggest your immediately releasing her, your seeing her and then deciding. I may add that she is not yet free from the pain for the alleviation of which the Government sent Capt. Simcox at my request. It would be a tragedy if she became permanently disabled in detention. I have mentioned Shri Mirabai's case because it is typically unjust.

(15) I apologise to you for a letter which has gone beyond the length I had prescribed for myself. It has also become very personal and very unconventional. That, however, is the way my loyalty to friends works. I have written without reservation. Your letter and your speech have given me the opening. For the sake of India, England and humanity I hope you will treat this as an honest and friendly if candid response to your speech.

(16) Years ago while teaching the boys and girls of Tolstoy Farm in South Africa I happened to read to them Wordsworth's "Character of the Happy Warrior." It recurs to me as I am writing to you. It will delight my heart to realise that warrior in you. There will be little difference between the manners and methods of the Axis Powers and the Allies if the war is to resolve itself into a mere trial of brute strength.

I am, yours sincerely,  
Sd. M. K. Gandhi.

### Lord Wavell's Letter

The Viceroy's House, New Delhi, March 28, 1944.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I have your letter of March 9th. You will receive a separate reply from the Home Secretary on your complaint about Mr. Butler's answer to a question in the House of Commons. I can only say that I deeply regret if you are left with the impression that the Government of India have been unsympathetic in the matter of Mrs. Gandhi's illness. Miss Slade's case will be examined in the light of what you say about her.

I do not think it profitable that we should enter into lengthy argument, and do not propose to answer in detail the points you raise in your letter. But I think it best to give you a clear statement of my views on the future development of India and the reasons for your present detention.

The draft declaration of H. M. G. which Sir Stafford Cripps brought to India stated in unmistakable terms the intention of H. M. G. to give India self-government under a constitution of her own devising, arrived at by agreement between the principal elements. I need hardly say that I am in entire accord with that aim, and only seek the best means to implement it without delivering India to confusion and turmoil. Much wisdom and spirit of goodwill and compromise will be required to arrive at the right solution, but with good leadership I am sure a solution can be found.

CRITICISM OF CONGRESS POLICY

Meanwhile there is much work to be done, particularly in the economic field, in preparing India to take her proper place in the modern world. She must be ready to welcome change and progress in many hitherto unfamiliar directions and to raise the standard of living of her population. Such work is primarily non-political ; it may well hasten a political settlement, but cannot await it. It will give rise to many new and absorbing problems demanding the best abilities that India can bring to bear on them. India cannot be expected to tackle these problems in isolation from the rest of the world, or without the aid that Britain can give and the services of an experienced administration. But it is work in which leaders of all parties can co-operate with the certainty that they are helping the country towards the goal of freedom.

I regret that I must view the present policy of the Congress Party as hindering and forwarding Indian progress to self-government and development. During a war in which the success of the United Nations against the Axis Powers is vital both to India and to the world, as you yourself have recognised, the Working Committee of Congress declined to co-operate, ordered Congress Ministries to resign, and decided to take no part in the administration of the country or in the war effort which India was making to assist the United Nations. At the greatest crisis of all for India, at a time when Japanese invasion was possible, the Congress Party decided to pass a resolution calling on the British to leave India, which could not fail to have the most serious effect on our ability to defend the frontiers of India against the Japanese. I am quite clear that India's problems cannot be solved by an immediate and complete withdrawal of the British.

"CANNOT HOLD CONGRESS GUILTLESS"

I do not accuse you or the Congress Party of any wish deliberately to aid the Japanese. But you are too intelligent a man, Mr. Gandhi, not to have realised that the effect of your resolution must be to hamper the prosecution of the war ; and it is clear to me that you had lost confidence in our ability to defend India, and were prepared to take advantage of our supposed military straits to gain political advantage. I do not see how those responsible for the safety of India could have acted otherwise than they did and could have failed to arrest those who sponsored the resolution. As to general Congress responsibility for the disturbances which followed, I was, as you know, Commander-in Chief at the time ; my vital lines of communication to the Burma frontier were cut by Congress supporters, in the name of the Congress, often using the Congress flag. I cannot therefore hold Congress guiltless of what occurred ; and I cannot believe that you, with all your acumen and experience, can have been unaware of what was likely to follow from your policy. I do not believe that the Congress Party's action in this matter represented the real feeling of India, nor that the Congress attitude of non-co-operation represents the opinion of any thing like a majority of India.

MUST ABANDON NON-CO-OPERATION

To sum up, I believe that with general co-operation we can in the immediate future do much to solve India's economic problems, and can make steady and substantial progress towards Indian self-government. I believe that the greatest contribution that the Congress Party can make towards India's welfare is to abandon the policy of non-co-operation and to join whole-heartedly with the other Indian parties and with the British in helping India forward in economic and political progress—not by any dramatic or spectacular stroke but by hard steady work towards the end ahead. I think that the greatest service you could do to India would be to advise unequivocally such co-operation.

In the meantime I regard it as my task in the interests of India, of which I am a sincere friend, to concentrate all my efforts on bringing this war to a victorious conclusion, and to prepare for India's advancement after the war. In this task I feel I can count on very considerable co-operation from the majority of Indians.

Yours sincerely,  
Sd. Wavell

Gandhi's Last Letter

Detention camp, April 9, 1944

Dear friend,

I have your letter of 28th March, received by me on the 3rd instant. Please accept my thanks for it.

I take up the general matter first.

You have sent me a frank reply. I propose to reciprocate your courtesy by being perfectly frank. Friendship, to be true, demands frankness even though it may sometime appear unpleasant. If anything I say offends you, please accept my apology in advance.

It is a pity that you have refused to deal with important points raised in my letter.

Your letter is a plea for co-operation by the Congress in the present administration and failing that in planning for the future. In my opinion, this required equality between the parties and mutual trust. But equality is absent and Government distrust of the Congress can be seen at every turn. The result is that suspicion of Government is universal. Add to this the fact that Congressmen have no faith in the competence of the Government to ensure India's future good. This want of faith is based upon bitter experience of the past and present conduct of the British administration of India. Is it not high time that it co-operated with the people of India through their elected representatives instead of expecting co-operation from them?

#### AUGUST CRISIS CREATED BY GOVERNMENT

All this was implied in the August Resolution. The sanction behind the demand in the resolution was not violence, but self-suffering. Anyone, be he Congressman or other, who acted against this rule of conduct had no authority to use the Congress name for his action. But I see that this resolution repels you as it did Lord Linlithgow. You know that I have joined issue on the point. I have seen nothing since to alter my view. You have been good enough to credit me with "intelligence," "experience" and "acumen." Let me say that all these three gifts have failed to make me realise that the effect of the Congress resolution "must be to hamper prosecution of the war." The responsibility for what followed the hasty arrest of Congressmen must rest solely on the Government. For, they invited the crisis, not the authors of the resolution.

#### "MARTIAL LAW IN THE WHOLE OF INDIA"

You remind me that you were Commander-in-Chief at the time. How much better it would have been for all concerned if confidence in the immeasurable strength of arms had ruled your action instead of fear of a rebellion! Had the Government stayed their hand at the time, surely, bloodshed of those months would have been avoided. And it is highly likely that the Japanese menace would have become a thing of the past. Unfortunately it was not to be. And so the menace is still with us, and what is more, the Government are pursuing a policy of suppression of liberty and truth.

I have studied the latest Ordinance about the detenus, and I recall the Rowlatt Act of 1919. It was popularly called the Black Act. As you know, it gave rise to an unprecedented agitation. That Act pales into insignificance before the series of Ordinances that are being showered from the Viceregal throne. Martial Law in effect governs not one province as in 1919, but the whole of India. Things are moving from bad to worse.

You say, "It is clear to me that you had lost confidence in our ability to defend India and were prepared to take advantage of our supposed military straits to gain political advantage." I must deny both the charges. I venture to suggest that you should follow the golden rule, and withdraw your statement and suspend judgment till you have submitted the evidence in your possession to an impartial tribunal and obtained its verdict. I confess that I do not make the request with much confidence. For in dealing with Congressmen and others Government have combined the prosecutor, judge and jailor in the same person and thus made proper defence impossible on the part of the accused. Judgments of courts are being rendered nugatory by fresh Ordinances. No man's freedom can be said to be safe in this extraordinary situation. You will probably report that it is an exigency of the war. I wonder!

#### "INDIA ONE VAST PRISON"

As I visualise India to-day, it is one vast prison containing four hundred million souls. You are its sole custodian. The Government prisons are prisons within this prison. I agree with you that whilst you hold the views expressed in your letter under reply, the proper place for one like me is a Government prison. And unless there is a change of heart, view and policy on the part of the Government, I am quite content to remain your prisoner. Only, I hope, you

will listen to the request made by me through the proper channels to remove me and my fellow prisoners to some other prison where the cost of our detention need not be even one tenth of what it is to-day.

As to my complaint about Mr. Butler's statement and later the Hon. Secretary's, I have received two letters from the Home Department in reply. I am sorry to say, they have appeared to me highly unsatisfactory. They ignore patent facts and betray an obstinate refusal to face truth even on a wholly non-political issue. My correspondence with the Home Department continues. I invite your attention to it, if you can spare the time and are interested in the subject.

I am glad and thankful that Shri Mirabai's (Miss Slade's) case is being considered in the light of what I said about her in my letter.

## **Gandhi-Linlithgow Correspondence**

*The following are the texts of letters exchanged between Mahatma Gandhi and Lord Linlithgow, the previous Viceroy, before the latter's departure from India :—*

*Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Lord Linlithgow on September 27, 1943, as follows :  
Dear Lord Linlithgow,*

On the eve of your departure from India I would like to send you a word. Of all the high functionaries I have had the honour of knowing, none has been the cause of such deep sorrow to me as you have been. It has cut me to the quick to have to think of you as having countenanced untruth, and that regarding one whom you at one time considered as your friend. I hope and pray that God will some day put it into your heart to realise that you, a representative of a great nation, had been led into a grievous error.

With good wishes. I still remain, your friend, M. K. Gandhi.

*Lord Linlithgow replied (marked "personal") as follows :—*

*Dear Mr. Gandhi,*

I have received your letter of 27th September. I am indeed sorry that your feelings about any deeds or words of mine should be as you describe. But I must be allowed, as gently as I may, to make plain to you that I am quite unable to accept your interpretation of the events in question.

As for the corrective virtues of time and reflection, evidently they are ubiquitous in their operation, and wisely to be rejected by no man.

I am, sincerely, (Ed.) Linlithgow.

Along with these letters, which run to 120 closely typed fullscap sheets, Mahatma Gandhi also circulated to his friends another equally bulky pamphlet which was his reply to the Government publication entitled "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43." The following is the text :—

## **Congress Responsibility for Disturbances 1942-43** **Gandhi's Reply to Government Indictment**

Detention Camp,  
15th. July, 1943.

To the Additional Secretary, Home Department, Government of India, New Delhi.

In reply to my request dated 5th, March last for a copy of Government of India Publication entitled "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances 1942-43," I received a copy on 13th. April. It contains several corrections marked in red ink. Some of them are striking.

2. I take it that the Government have based the charges made in the publication against the Congress and myself on the material printed therein and not on the evidence which, as stated in the preface, is withheld from the public.

3. The preface is brief and is signed by Sir R. Tottenham, Additional Secretary to the Government of India, Home Department. It is dated 13th. February last, i.e., three days after the commencement of my recent fast.

The date is ominous. Why was the period of my fast chosen for publishing a document in which I am the target?

4. The preface commences thus:

"In response to demands which have reached Government from several sources, Government have now prepared a review which brings together a number of facts—bearing on the responsibility of Mr. Gandhi and the Congress High Command for the disturbances which followed the sanctioning of a mass movement by the A. I. C. C. on August 8th, 1942."

There is an obvious misstatement here. The disturbances followed not the "sanctioning of the mass movement by the A. I. C. C." but the arrests made by the Government.

As for the "demands" so far as I am aware, they began soon after the wholesale arrests of principal Congressmen all over India. As the Government are aware, in my letters to H. E. the Viceroy, the last being dated 7th, February, 1943, I had asked for proof in support of my alleged guilt. The evidence now produced might have been given to me when I raised the question. Had my request been complied with, one advantage would certainly have accrued. I would have been heard in answer to the charges brought against me. That very process would have delayed the fast, and who knows, if Government had been patient with me, it might have even prevented it.

5. The preface contains the following sentence: "Almost all the facts presented in this review are, or should be, already within the knowledge of the public." Therefore, so far as the public are concerned, there was no such hurry as to require publication of the document during the fast.

This train of reasoning has led me to the inference that it was published in expectation of my death which medical opinion must have considered almost a certainty. It was feared even during my previous long fasts. I hope my inference is wholly wrong and the Government had a just and valid reason for choosing the time that they did, for the publication of what is after all an indictment of the Congress and me. I hope to be pardoned for putting on paper an inference, which if true, must discredit the Government. I feel that I am being just to them by unburdening myself of a suspicion instead of harbouring it and allowing it to cloud my judgment about their dealings with me.

#### PROSECUTOR, POLICEMAN AND JAILOR

6. I now come to the indictment itself. It reads like a presentation of his case by a prosecutor. In the present case the prosecutor happens to be also the policeman and jailor. He first arrests and gags his victims, and then opens his case behind their backs.

7. I have read it again and again. I have gone through the numbers of *Harijan* which my companions happened to have with them, and I have come to the conclusion that there is nothing in my writings and doings that could have warranted the inferences and the innuendoes of which the indictment is full. In spite of my desire to see myself in my writings as the author has seen me I have completely failed.

8. The indictment opens with a mis-representation. I am said to have deplored "the introduction of foreign soldiers into India to aid in India's defence." In the *Harijan* article on which the charge is based, I have refused to believe that India was to be defended through the introduction of foreign soldiers. If it is India's defence that is aimed at, why should trained Indian soldiers be sent away from India and foreign soldiers brought in instead? Why should the Congress—an organisation which was born and lives for the very sake of India's freedom—be suppressed?

I am clearer to-day in my mind than I was when I penned that article on 19th. April, that India is not being defended, and that if things continue to shape themselves as they are India will sink at the end of the war deeper than she is to-day, so that she might forget the very word freedom.

Let me quote the relevant passage from the *Harijan* article referred by the author:

"I must confess that I do not look upon this event with equanimity. Cannot a limitless number of soldiers be trained out of India's millions? Would they not make as good fighting material as any in the world? Then why foreigners? We know what American aid means. It amounts in the end to American influence, if not American rule added to British. It is a tremendous price to pay for the

possible success of Allied arms. I see no Indian freedom peeping through all this preparation for the so-called defence of India. It is a preparation pure and simple for the defence of the British Empire, whatever may be asserted to the contrary."

(*Harijan*, April 26, 1942, page 128.)

9. The second paragraph of the indictment opens with this pregnant sentence : "It will be suggested that during the period of Mr. Gandhi's first advocacy of British withdrawal from India and the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay in August the Congress High Command and in the later stages the Congress organisation as a whole were deliberately setting the stage for a mass movement designed to free India finally from British rule."

Let me underline the phrase "it will be suggested." Why should anything be left to suggestion about a movement which is open and above board ?

Much ado has been made about the simplest things which nobody has cared to deny and of which Congressmen are even proud. The Congress organisation as a whole "deliberately set the stage designed to free India finally from British rule," as early as the year 1920 and not since my 'first advocacy of British withdrawal from India' as suggested in the indictment.

Ever since that year the effort for a mass movement has never relaxed. This can be proved from numerous speeches of Congress leaders and from Congress resolutions.

Young and impatient Congressmen and even older men have not hesitated at times to press me to hasten the mass movement. But I, who knew better, always restrained their ardour, and I must gratefully admit that they gladly submitted to the restraint. The contradiction of this long period to the interval between my advocacy of British withdrawal from India and the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay on August 7th, is wholly wrong and misleading. I know of no special staging since 26th. April 1942.

10. The same paragraph then says that "an essential preliminary" to an examination of the type of movement "is a clear understanding of the real motives underlying the move."

#### SEARCH FOR MOTIVES

Why should motives be searched when everything is there in black and white ? I can say without any hesitation that my motives are always plain. Why I asked for the immediate withdrawal of the British power from India has been discussed by me almost threadbare in public.

11. At page 2 of the indictment, a phrase has been taken from an article entitled "One Thing Needful," dated 10th. May 1942, and I am represented as saying that I would devote the whole of my energy "to this supreme act." By simply detaching the phrase from its context, mystery has been made to surround it. The phrase "supreme act" occurs in an argument addressed to an English friend and if it is read in its setting, it ceases to be mysterious or objectionable, unless the very idea of withdrawal is held objectionable.

Here are the relevant parts from the argument :

"I am convinced, therefore, that the time has come during the war, not after it, for the British and the Indians to be reconciled to complete separation from each other. That way and that way alone lies the safety of both and, shall I say, the world.

"I see with the naked eye that the estrangement is growing. Every act of the British Government is being interpreted, and I think rightly, as being in its own interest and for its own safety. There is no such thing as joint common interest.....Racial superiority is treated not as a vice but a virtue. This is true not only in India ; but it is equally true in Africa, it is true in Burma and Ceylon. These countries could not be held otherwise than by assertion of race superiority.

"This is a drastic disease requiring a drastic remedy. I have pointed out the remedy—complete and immediate orderly withdrawal of the British from India at least, in reality and properly from all non-European possessions ; it will be the bravest and the cleanest act of the British people. It will at once put the Allied cause on a completely moral basis and may even lead to a most honourable peace between the warring nations.

"And the clean end of Imperialism is likely to be the end of Fascism and Nazism. The suggested action will certainly blunt the edge of Fascism and Nazism which are an offshoot of Imperialism.

"British distress cannot be relieved by nationalist India's aid in the manner

suggested by the writer. It is ill equipped for the purpose, even if it can be made enthusiastic about it.

"And what is there to enthuse nationalistic India? Just as a person cannot feel the glow of the sun's heat in its absence, even so India cannot feel the glow of freedom without the actual experience of it.

"Many of us simply cannot contemplate an utterly free India with calmness and equanimity. The first experience is likely to be a shock before the glow comes. That shock is a necessity. India is a mighty nation. No one can tell how she will act and with what effect when the shock is delivered.

"I feel, therefore, that I must devote the whole of my energy to the realisation of the supreme act. The writer of the letter admits the wrong done to India by the British. I suggest to the writer that the first condition of British success is the present undoing of the wrong. It should precede, not follow, victory.

"The presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan to invade India. Their withdrawal removes the bait. Assume, however, that it does not; free India will be better able to cope with the invasion. Unadulterated non-co-operation will then have full sway." (*Harijan*, May, 10, 1942, p. 148).

#### NOTHING TO WITHDRAW

In this long extract, the phrase "supreme act" takes its legitimate place. It does not refer simply to the British withdrawal. But it sums up all that must precede and succeed it; it is an act worthy of the energy not of one person but of hundreds. This is how I began my answer to the English friend's letter.

"I can but repeat what I felt and said in my letter to Lord Linlithgow recording my impressions of the first interview with him after the declaration of war. I have nothing to withdraw, nothing to repent of. I remain the same friend today of the British that I was then. I have not a trace of hatred in me towards them. But I have never been blind to their limitations as I have not been to their great virtues."

To read and fully understand my writings, it is necessary to understand always this background. The whole of the movement has been conceived for the mutual benefit of India and England.

Unfortunately, the author, ignoring this background has approached my writings with coloured spectacle, has torn sentences and phrases from their context, and dressed them up to suit his pre-conception. Thus he has put out of joint "their withdrawal removes the bait", and omitted the sentence that immediately follows and which I have restored in the foregoing extract. As is clear from the above article, unadulterated non-co-operation here refers exclusively to the Japanese.

12. The last paragraph at page 2 begins thus:—

"In its earlier stages Mr. Gandhi's "Quit India" move was meant and was widely interpreted as a proposal for the physical withdrawal from India of the BRITISH (CAPS mine), and of all Allied and British troops."

I have searched, and so have the friends with me, in vain, for some expression in my writings which would warrant the opinion that "Quit India" move was meant as a proposal for the physical withdrawal of the British from India.

It is true that colour was lent to such an interpretation by a superficial reading of a sentence in the article of *Harijan* of April 26th, already quoted. As soon as my attention was drawn to it by an English friend, I wrote in the *Harijan* of 24th May as follows:

"There is evidently confusion in some minds about my invitation to the British to withdraw. For a Britisher writes to say that he likes India and her people and would not like willingly to leave India. He likes too my method of non-violence. Evidently the writer has confused the individual as such with the individual as the holder of power. India has no quarrel with the British people. I have hundreds of British friends. Andrews' friendship was enough to tie me to the British people.

"With this clear enunciation of my views before him at the time of penning the indictment, how could he say that I had 'meant' physical withdrawal of the British as distinguished from the British power? And I am not aware that my writing was "widely interpreted as such." He has quoted nothing in support of this statement.

13. The author proceeds in the same paragraph:

"As late as June 14th, he makes for the purpose of his scheme, the assumption 'that the Commander-in-Chief of the United American and British Armies has decided that India is no good as a base.'"

'For the purpose of his scheme' is a gratuitous interpolation here. The extract is taken from an interview with several journalists. I was answering a series of questions.

At one stage I had put a counter question thus. 'Supposing England retires from India for strategic purposes, and apart from my proposal—as they had to do in Burma—what would happen? What would India do.'

They replied: "That is exactly what we have come to learn from you. We would certainly like to know that."

I rejoined: "Well, therein comes my non-violence. For, we have no weapons. Mind you, we have assumed that the Commander-in-Chief of the United American and British Armies has decided that India is no good as a base, and that they should withdraw to some other base and concentrate the Allied forces there. We can't help it. We have then to depend on what strength we have. We have no army, no military resources, no military skill either, worth the name, and non-violence is the only thing we can fall back upon." It is clear from this quotation that I was not expounding any scheme. I was merely arguing about possibilities based on assumptions agreed between the interviewers and myself.

#### POSITION OF FOREIGN TROOPS

14. The author proceeds:

"Added strength is given to the belief that this is a correct interpretation of Mr. Gandhi's original intentions by the prominence, to which attention has already been drawn, of the theme that the British withdrawal would remove any Japanese motive for invading India, for with the British and Allied armies still in India, how is the bait removed?"

I have just now shown that the physical withdrawal of the British was never contemplated by me. The withdrawal of the Allied and the British troops was certainly contemplated in the first instance. Therefore it is not a question of "interpretation", because it is one of fact. But the sentence has been impressed in order to make what is straight look crooked.

15. Then, proceeds the author: "At the same time, he made it clear that on the British departure the Indian Army would be disbanded."

I made clear no such thing. What I did was to discuss with interviewers the possibilities in the event of British withdrawal. Indian army being a creation of the British Government, I assumed, would be automatically disbanded when that Power withdrew unless it was taken over by a treaty by the replacing Government.

If the withdrawal took place by agreement and with goodwill on both sides these matters should present no difficulty.

16. From the same paragraph take the following:—

"Bowing to the gathering force of this opposition and also, as will be shown later, with a possible view to reconciling disagreement among members of the Working Committee, Mr. Gandhi discovered the 'gap' in his original proposals. In *Harijan* of June 14th, he paved the way,—by the slightly cryptic assertion that, if he had his way, the Indian National Government when formed would tolerate the presence of the United Nations on Indian soil under certain well defined conditions but would permit no further assistance—for the more definite statement made to an American journalist in the following week's *Harijan*, when in reply to a question whether he envisaged Free India's allowing Allied troops to operate from India, he said: 'I do. It will be only then that you will see real co-operation.' He continued that he did not contemplate the complete shifting of Allied troops from India and that, provided India became entirely free, he could not insist on their withdrawal." This is for me the key thought opening the author's mind. It is built on finding motives other than those that are apparent from my language. Had I been guided by the force of the opposition whether from the foreign or the Indian Press or from Congressmen, I should not have hesitated to say so.

It is well known that I am as capable of resisting opposition that makes no appeal to my head or my heart, as I am of readily yielding when it does. But the literal fact is that when I gave the country the withdrawal formula, I was possessed by one idea and one only, that if India was to be saved and also the Allied cause, and if India was to play not merely an effective but, may be, a decisive part in the war, India must be absolutely free now.

The 'gap' was this: although the British Government might be willing to declare India's independence, they might still wish, for their own and for China's defence to retain their troops in India. What would be my position in that case?

It is now wellknown that the difficulty was presented to me by Mr. Louis Fischer. He had come to Sevagram and stayed with me for nearly a week. As a result of the discussions between us, he drew up certain questions for me to answer. My reply to his second question, the author describes as a 'slightly cryptic assertion' paving the way for a 'more definite statement in the following week's *Harijan*.' I give below the whole of the article embodying the questions and answers. It was written on 7th June, 1942, and appeared in the *Harijan* dated 14th June, p. 188:

#### PROVISIONAL NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

A friend was discussing with me the implications of the new proposal. As the discussion was naturally desultory I asked him to frame his questions which I would answer through *Harijan*. He agreed and gave me the following:

1. Q. You ask the British Government to withdraw immediately from India. Would Indians thereupon form a National Government, and what groups or parties would participate in such an Indian Government?

A. My proposal is one-sided, i.e., for the British Government to act upon wholly irrespective of what Indians would do or would not do. I have even assumed temporary chaos on their withdrawal. But if the withdrawal takes place in an orderly manner, it is likely that on their withdrawal a provisional Government will be set up by and from among the present leaders. But another thing may also happen. All those who have no thought of the nation but only of themselves may make a bid for power and get together the turbulent forces with which they would seek to gain control somewhere and somehow. I should hope that with the complete, final and honest withdrawal of the British power the wise leaders will realise their responsibility, forget their differences for the moment and set up a provincial Government out of the material left by the the British power. As there would be no power regulating the admission or rejection of parties or persons to or from the Council board, restraint alone will be the guide. If that happens probably the Congress, the League and the States representatives will be allowed to function and they will come to a loose understanding on the formation of provisional National Government. All this is necessarily guesswork and nothing more.

2. Q. Would that Indian National Government permit the United Nations to use Indian territory as a base of military operations against Japan and other Axis powers?

A. Assuming that the National Government is formed and if it answers my expectations, its first act would be to enter into a treaty with the United Nations for defensive operations against aggressive powers, it being common cause that India will have nothing to do with any of the Fascist powers and India would be morally bound to help the United Nations.

3. Q. What further assistance would this Indian National Government be ready to render the United Nations in the course of the present war against the Fascist aggressors?

A. If I have any hand in guiding the imagined National Government, there would be no further assistance save the toleration of the United Nations on the Indian soil under well-defined conditions. Naturally there will be no prohibition against any Indian giving his own personal help by way of being a recruit or, and of giving financial aid. It should be understood that the Indian army has been disbanded with the withdrawal of British power. Again, if I have any say in the councils of the National Government all its power, prestige and resources would be used towards bringing about world peace. But of course after the formation of the National Government my voice may be a voice in the wilderness and nationalist India may go war-mad.

4. Q: Do you believe this collaboration between India and the Allied powers might or should be formulated in a treaty of alliance or an agreement for mutual aid?

#### PROSTRATION OF GREAT NATION

A: I think the question is altogether premature, and in any case it will not much matter whether the relations are regulated by treaty or agreement. I do not even see any difference.

Let me sum up my attitude. One thing and only one thing for me is solid and certain. This unnatural prostration of a great nation—it is neither 'nations' nor 'peoples'—must cease if the victory of the Allies is to be ensured. They lack the moral basis. I see no difference between the Fascist or Nazi powers and the

Allies. All are exploiters, all resort to ruthlessness to the extent required to compass their end. America and Britain are very great nations, but their greatness will count a 'dust' before the bar of dumb humanity, whether African or Asiatic. They and they alone have the power to undo the wrong. They have no right to talk of human liberty and all else unless they have washed their hands clean of the pollution. That necessary wash will be their surest insurance of success, for they will have the good wishes—unexpressed but no less certain—of millions of dumb Asiatics and Africans. Then, but not till then, will they be fighting for a new order. This is the reality. All else is speculation. I have allowed myself, however, to indulge in it as a test of my *bonafides* and for the sake of explaining in a concrete manner what I mean by my proposal.

What is described as the 'mere definite statement' is nothing but an impromptu reply given to an American journalist, Mr. Grover, representative of the Associated Press of America. If that interview had not chanced to come about, there might have been no statement 'more definite' than what appeared in my reply to Mr. Louis Fischer. Hence the writer's suggestion that I "paved the way" for "the more definite statement"...in the following week's *Harijan* is altogether unwarranted, if I may not call it even mischievous.

I do not regard my answers to Mr. Louis Fischer as a "slightly cryptic statement". They are deliberate answers given to deliberate questions framed after a full discussion lasting a week. My answers show very clearly that I had no scheme beyond the 'Quit India' formula, that all else was guess, and that immediately the Allied Nations' difficulty was made clear to me, I capitulated.

I saw the 'gap' and filled it in, in the best manner I knew. The 'definite statement' fortunately for me in my opinion, leaves little room if any for conjectures and insinuations in which the writer has indulged. Let it speak for itself. Here are the relevant portions :

Coming to the point, Mr. Grover said again : "There is a good deal of speculation that you are planning some new movement. What is the nature of it ?"

It depends on the response made by the Government and the people. I am trying to find out public opinion here and also the reaction on the world outside.

"When you speak of the response, you mean response to your new proposal ?"

"Oh, yes," said Gandhiji. "I mean response to the proposal that the British Government in India should end to-day. Are you startled ?"

"I am not," said Mr. Grover, "you have been asking for it and working for it."

"That's right. I have been working for it for years. But now it has taken definite shape and I say that the British power in India should go to-day for the world peace, for China, for Russia and for the Allied cause. I shall explain to you how it advances that Allied cause. Complete independence frees India's energies, frees her to make her contribution to the world crisis. To-day the Allies are carrying the burden of a huge corpse—a huge nation lying prostrate at the feet of Britain. I would even say at the feet of the Allies. For America is the predominant partner, financing the war, giving her mechanical ability and her resources which are inexhaustible. America is thus a partner in the guilt.

"Do you see a situation when after full independence is granted American and Allied troops can operate from India ?" Mr. Grover pertinently asked

"I, do," said Gandhiji. "It will be only then that you will see real co-operation. Otherwise all the effort you put up may fail. Just now Britain is having India's resources because India is her possession. To-morrow whatever the help, it will be real help from a 'free' India."

"You think India in control interferes with Allied action to meet Japan's aggression ?"

"It does."

"When I mentioned Allied troops operating I wanted to know whether you contemplated complete shifting of the present troops from India ?"

"Not necessarily."

"It is on this that there is a lot of misconception."

"You have to study all I am writing. I have discussed the whole question in the current issue of *Harijan*. I do not want them to go, on condition that India becomes entirely free. I cannot then insist on their withdrawal, because I want to resist with all my might the charge of inviting Japan to India."

"But suppose your proposal is rejected what will be your next move ?"

#### EXPLOITATION OF POLICY OF NON-EMBARRASSMENT

"It will be a move which will be felt by the whole world. It may not in-

terfere with the movement of British troops but it is sure to engage British attention. It would be wrong of them to reject my proposal and say India should remain a slave in order that Britain may win or be able to defend China. I cannot accept that degrading position. India, free and independent, will play a prominent part in defending China. To-day I do not think she is rendering any real help to China. We have followed the non-embarrassment policy so far. We will follow it even now. But we cannot allow the British Government to exploit it in order to strengthen the stranglehold on India. And to-day it amounts to that. The way, for instance, in which thousands are being asked to vacate their homes with nowhere to go to, no land to cultivate, no resources to fall back upon, is the reward of our non-embarrassment. This should be impossible in any free country. I cannot tolerate India submitting to this kind of treatment. It means greater degradation and servility, and when a whole nation accepts servility it means goodbye for ever to freedom."

"All you want is the civil grip relaxed. You won't then hinder military activity?" was Mr. Grover's next question.

"I do not know. I want unadulterated independence. If the military activity serves but to strengthen the stranglehold, I must resist that too. I am no philanthropist to go on helping at the expense of my freedom. And what I want you to see is that a corpse cannot give any help to a living body. The Allies have no moral cause for which they are fighting, so long as they are carrying this double sin on their shoulders, the sin of India's subjection and the subjection of the Negroes and African races."

Mr. Grover tried to draw a picture of a free India 'after' an Allied victory. Why not wait for the boons of the victory?" Gandhiji mentioned as the boons of the last World War the Rowlett Act and martial law Amritsar. Mr. Grover mentioned more economic and industrial prosperity—by no means due to the grace of the Government, but by the force of circumstances, and economic prosperity was a step further forward to Swaraj. Gandhiji said the few industrial gains were wrung out of unwilling hands, he set no store by such gains after this war, those gains may be further shackles, and it was a doubtful proposition whether there would be any gains—when one had in mind the industrial policy that was being followed during the war. Mr. Grover did not seriously press the point.

"You don't expect any assistance from America in persuading Britain to relinquish her hold on India," asked Mr. Grover half incredulously.

"I do indeed" replied Gandhiji.

"With any possibility of success?"

"There is every possibility, I should think," said Gandhiji. I have every right to expect America to throw her full weight on the side of justice, if she is convinced of the justice of the Indian cause."

"You don't think the American Government is committed to the British remaining in India?"

#### BRITISH PROPAGANDA IN AMERICA

"I hope not. But British diplomacy is so clever that America, even though it may not be committed, and in spite of the desire of President Roosevelt and the people to help India, it may not succeed. British propaganda is so well organised in America against the Indian cause that the few friends India has there have no chance of being effectively heard. And the political system is so rigid that public opinion does not effect the administration."

"It may, slowly," said Mr. Grover apologetically.

"Slowly?" said Gandhiji. "I have waited long, and I can wait no longer. It is a terrible tragedy that 40 crores of people should have no say in this war. If we have the freedom to play our part we can arrest the march of Japan and save China."

Mr. Grover, having made himself sure that Gandhiji did not insist on the literal withdrawal of either the British or the troops, now placing himself in the position of the Allies, began to calculate the gains of the bargain. Gandhiji, of course, does not want independence as a reward of any services but as a right and in discharge of a debt long overdue. "What specific things would be done by India to save China," asked Mr. Grover, "if India is declared independent?"

"Great things I can say at once, though I may not be able to specify them to-day," said Gandhiji. "For I do not know what government we shall have. We have various political organisations here which I expect would be able to work out a proper national solution. Just now they are not solid parties, they are often acted upon by the British power, they look up to it and its frown or

favour means much to them. The whole atmosphere is corrupt and rotten. Who can foresee the possibilities of a corpse coming to life? At present India is a dead weight to the Allies."

"By dead weight you mean a menace to Britain and to American interests here?"

"I do. It is a menace in that you never know what sullen India will do at a given moment."

"No, but I want to make myself sure that if genuine pressure was brought to bear on Britain by America, there would be solid support from yourself?"

"Myself? I do not count—with the weight of 73 years on my shoulders. But you get the co-operation—whatever it can give willingly—of a free and mighty nation. My co-operation is of course there. I exercise what influence I can by my writings from week to week. But India's is an infinitely greater influence. To-day because of widespread discontent there is not that active hostility to Japanese advance. The moment we are free, we are transformed into a nation prizing its liberty and defending it with all its might and, therefore, helping the Allied cause."

#### LESSONS OF BURMA AND RUSSIA

"May I concretely ask—will the difference be the difference that there is between what Burma did and what, say, Russia is doing?" said Mr. Grover.

"You might put it that way. They might have given Burma independence after separating it from India. But they did nothing of the kind. They stuck to the same old policy of exploiting her. There was little co-operation from Burmans, on the contrary there was hostility or inertia. They fought neither for their own cause nor for the Allied cause. Now take a possible contingency. If the Japanese compel the Allies to retire from India—to a safer base, I cannot say to-day that the whole of India will be up in arms against the Japanese. I have a fear that they may degrade themselves as some Burmans did. I want India to oppose Japan to a man. If India was free she would do it, it would be a new experience to her, in twenty-four hours her mind would be changed. All parties would then act as one man. If this live independence is declared to-day I have no doubt India becomes a powerful Ally."

Mr. Grover raised the question of communal disunion as a handicap, and himself added that before the American Independence there was not much unity in the States. "I can only say that as soon as the vicious influence of the third party is withdrawn, the parties will be face to face with reality and close up ranks," said Gandhiji. "Ten to one my conviction is that the communal quarrels will disappear as soon as the British power that keeps us apart disappears."

"Would not Dominion Status declared to-day do equally well?" was Mr. Grover's final question.

"No good," said Gandhiji instantaneously. "We will have no half measures, no tinkering with independence. It is not independence that they will give to this party or that party, but to an indefinable India. It was wrong, I say, to possess India. The wrong should be righted by leaving India to herself." (*Harijan*, June 21, 1942, pp. 193, et. seq.)

#### THE ALLAHABAD DRAFT RESOLUTION

17. The rest of the chapter is taken up with a colourful description of the draft resolution I sent to Allahabad and a quotation containing remarks attributed to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and Shri Rajagopalachari on that resolution.

Immediately after the publication of the extracts from the notes seized by the Government, Panditji issued a statement. I cannot understand why the author has disregarded that important statement, unless for the reason that he disbelieved Panditji's explanation.

As for Shri Rajagopalachari's statement, the author stands on less insecure ground. Rajaji certainly holds the views attributed to him. In the interview with Mr. Grover, the American correspondent, this is what I said about Rajaji's difference with me.

"May I finally ask you about your attitude to Rajaji's move?" "I have declared that I will not discuss Rajaji in public. It is ugly to be talking at valued colleagues. My differences with him stand, but there are some things which are too sacred to be discussed in public."

But Mr. Grover had not so much in mind the Pakistan controversy as C.R.'s crusade for the formation of a National Government. Mr. Grover had the discernment to make it clear that C. R. "could not be motivated by British Government. His position happens to harmonise with them."

"You are right," said Gandhiji. "It is fear of the Japanese that makes him tolerate the British rule. He would postpone the question of freedom until after the war. On the contrary I say that if the war is to be decisively won, India must be freed to play her part today. I find no flaw in my position. I have arrived at it after considerable debating within myself; I am doing nothing in hurry or anger. There is not the slightest room in me for accommodating the Japanese. No. I am sure that India's independence is not only essential for India, but for China and the Allied cause" (*Harijan*, June 21, 1942, p. 195.)

18. The first chapter concludes with the following commentary on the draft which had been sent by me to the Working Committee at Allahabad:

"A draft, to repeat, of which the whole thought and background is one of favouring Japan, a resolution which amounts to running into the arms of Japan."

And this is written in spite of Pandit Jawaharlal's repudiation of the statement attributed to him, and in spite of my explanation about differences with Rajaji—all of which was before the writer.

19. In support of my contention that the author had no warrant for the opinions expressed in the sentences quoted, I would like to draw attention to the following extracts from my statement reported in the Press on 1st August last:

"As the language of the draft (the one that was sent to Allahabad) shows, it had many I's to be dotted and T's to be crossed, it was sent through Miraben to whom I had explained the implications of the draft and I said to her or to the friends of the Working Committee who happened to be in Sevagram, to whom I had explained the draft, that there was an omission—deliberate—from my draft as to the foreign policy of the Congress and therefore any reference to China and Russia.

For, as I had said to them, I derived my inspiration and knowledge from Panditji about foreign matters of which he had been a deep student. Therefore, I said that he could fill in that part in the resolution.

But I may add that I have never even in a most unguarded moment, expressed the opinion that Japan and Germany would win the war. Not only that I have often expressed the opinion that they cannot win the war, if only Great Britain will once for all shed her Imperialism, I have given expression to that opinion more than once in the columns of *Harijan* and I repeat here that in spite of all my wishes to the contrary and of others, if disaster overtakes Great Britain and the Allied Powers it will be because even at the critical moment—most critical in her history—she has most obstinately refused to wash herself of the taint of Imperialism which she has carried with her for at least a century and a half."

How in the face of this categorical statement the author could say that the actuating motive behind the "Quit India" move was that I was "convinced that Axis would win the war" passes understanding.

20. In support of the same charge the author says:

"That this attitude persisted long after the Allahabad meeting of the Working Committee is shown by the following remark made by Mr. Gandhi in *Harijan* of July 19th, in reply to a question whether it would not be wiser to postpone his movement until Britain had settled with the Germans and the Japanese.

"No because I know you will not settle with Germans without us."

I quote below from the article in which this opinion is expressed. It is from the *Harijan* of July 19, 1942, pp. 234 and 235 and is entitled "A Two Minutes' Interview", the interviewer being a correspondent of the *Daily Express*, London.

"But the correspondent of the *Daily Express* (London) who was among the first to arrive and who was not staying until the end, said he would be content with just a couple of minutes' interview, and Gandhiji acceded to his request. He had made up his mind that if the demand for withdrawal which seemed to gather strength every day was rejected, there would be some kind of a movement. So he asked:

"Would you say that your movement will make it more difficult or less difficult for us to keep the Japanese out of India?"

"Our movement," said Gandhiji, "will make it more difficult for the Japanese to come in. But, of course, if there is no co-operation from Britain and the Allies, I cannot say."

"But," said Mr. Young, "think of the war as a whole. Do you think that your new movement will help the Allied nations towards victory, which you have said you also desire?"

"Yes, if my submission is accepted."

"What do you mean by your submission?—That Britain should offer non-violent battle?"

FREE INDIA A REAL ALLY

"No, no. My submission that British rule in India should end. If that is accepted, victory for the Allied powers is assured. Then India will become an independent power, and thus a real ally, while now she is only a slave. The result of my movement, if it is sympathetically responded to, is bound to be a speedy victory. But if it is misunderstood by the British and they take up the attitude that they would like to crush it, then they would be responsible for the result, not I."

This was far from convincing Mr. Young. He would not think of any movement with equanimity. So he made an appeal to Gandhiji's sentiment—a sentiment he had more than once expressed.

"Mr. Gandhi, you have been in London yourself. Have you no comment to make on the heavy bombing which the British people have sustained?"

"Oh, yes. I know every nook and corner of London where I lived for three years so many years ago, and somewhat of Oxford and Cambridge and Manchester too; but it is London I specially feel for. I used to read in the Inner Temple Library, and would often attend Dr. Parker's sermons in the Temple Church. My heart goes out to the people, and when I heard that the Temple Church was bombed I bled. And the bombing of the Westminster Abbey and other ancient edifices affected me deeply."

"Then don't you think," said Mr. Young, "it would be wiser to postpone your movement until we have settled with the Germans and the Japanese?"

"No, because I know you will not settle with the Germans without us. If we were free, we could give you cent per cent co-operation in our own manner. It is curious that such a simple thing is not understood. British have to-day no contribution from a free India. To-morrow, as soon as India is free, she gains moral strength and a powerful ally in a free nation—powerful morally. This raises England's power to the 'n'th degree. This is surely self-proved."

It is curious that sentences taken out of a piece breathing concern for the success of the Allied arms are here presented as an indication of my 'pro-Axis' mentality.

21. The following passage is then reproduced from my letter to H. E. the Viceroy of 14th August last as 'significant':

"I have taken Jawaharlal Nehru as my measuring rod. His personal contacts make him feel much more the misery of the impending ruin of China and Russia than I can."

The misery of the impending ruin of China and Russia has been underlined by the author who thus comments on the passage.

"They foresaw a British rearguard action across India and the devastation that this must entail."

According to his wont the author has failed to quote the whole of the relevant part of the letter. Nor has he guided the reader by quoting the letter in the appendix. I quote below the relevant part:

"One thing more. The declared cause is common between the Government of India and us. To put it in the most concrete terms, it is the protection of the freedom of China and Russia. The Government of India think that freedom of India is not necessary for winning the cause. I think exactly the opposite. I have taken Jawaharlal Nehru as my measuring rod. His personal contacts make him feel much more the misery of the impending ruin of China and Russia than I can, and may I say than even you can. In that misery he tried to forget his old quarrel with Imperialism."

"He dreads much more than I do the success of Nazism and Fascism. I argued with him for days together. He fought against my position with a passion which I have no words to describe. But the logic of facts overwhelmed him. He yielded when he saw clearly that without the freedom of India that of the other two was in great jeopardy. Surely you are wrong in having imprisoned such a powerful friend and ally."

I suggest the full quotation gives a meaning wholly different from that given by the author. The following passages from *Harijan* will further prove the baselessness of the charge of pro-Axis or "defeatist" tendency on my part:

Q.—"Is it a fact that your present attitude towards England and Japan is influenced by the belief that you think the British and the Allies are going to be defeated in the war?....."

A—".....I have no hesitation in saying that it is not true. On the contrary I said only the other day in *Harijan* that the Britisher was hard to beat. He has not known what it is to be defeated." (*Harijan*, June 7, 1942, p. 177)

".....America is too big financially, intellectually and in scientific skill, to be subdued by any nation or even combination....." (*Harijan*, June 7, 1942, p. 181)

22. A further complete answer to the same charge, if one were still needed, is furnished by my letter to Shrimati Miraben, dictated on the spur of the moment and never meant for publication. The letter was written to her in answer to her questions which carried to me her belief that the Japanese attack was imminent and that they were likely to have a walk-over. My answer leaves no doubt whatsoever as to my attitude.

The letter was written after the Allahabad meeting of the All-India Congress Committee. It was dictated by me to the late Shri Mahadev Desai. The original is in Shrimati Miraben's possession.

I know that she wrote a letter to Lord Linlithgow from this camp on December 24th last, sending copies of this correspondence and requesting its publication. She never received even an acknowledgment of her communication. I hope it was not pigeon-holed without so much as being read.

23. In view of the colourful description of my draft resolution sent to Allahabad, I reproduce opposite passages from the resolution, to show that the author has gone to everything connected with the Congress with the deliberate intention, as it seems to me, of seeing nothing but evil. Thus "Britain is incapable of defending India" is followed by these sentences :

"It is natural that whatever she (Britain) does is for her own defence. There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests. It follows their notions of defence would also differ. The British Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian Army has been maintained until now mainly to hold India in subjugation. It has been completely segregated from the general population who can in no sense regard it as their own. This policy of mistrust still continues and is the reason why national defence is not entrusted to India's elected representatives."

#### COMPLETE NON-CO-OPERATION WITH AGGRESSORS

24. Then there is this sentence taken from the draft: "If India were freed her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan." This has to be read in conjunction with the following paragraphs from the draft :

"This Committee desires to assure the Japanese Government and people that India bears no enmity either towards Japan or towards any other nation. India only desires freedom from all alien domination. But in this fight for freedom the Committee is of opinion that India while welcoming universal sympathy does not stand in need of foreign military aid. India will attain her freedom through her non-violent strength and will retain it likewise. Therefore, the Committee hopes that Japan will not have any designs on India. But if Japan attacks India and Britain makes no response to its appeal the Committee would expect all those who look to Congress for guidance to offer complete non-violent non-co-operation to the Japanese forces and not render any assistance to them. It is no part of the duty of those who are attacked to render any assistance to the attacker. It is their duty to offer complete non-co-operation.

It is not difficult to understand the simple principle of non-violent non-co-operation :—

1. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders.
2. We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill.
3. If he wishes to take possession of our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the efforts to resist him.
4. If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks out aid we may not refuse it.
5. In such places where the British and Japanese forces are fighting, our non-co-operation will be fruitless and unnecessary.

"At present our non-co-operation with the British Government is limited. Were we to offer them complete non-co-operation when they are actually fighting, it would be tantamount to placing our country deliberately in Japanese hands. Therefore, not to put any obstacle in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our non-co-operation with the Japanese. Neither

may we assist the British in any active manner. If we can judge from their recent attitude, the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help only as slaves—a position we can never accept.

"Whilst non-co-operation against the Japanese forces will necessarily be limited to a comparatively small number and must succeed if it is complete and genuine, the true building up of Swaraj consists in the millions of India wholeheartedly working the constructive programme. Without it the whole nation cannot rise from its age-long torpor. Whether the British remain or not it is our duty always to wipe out unemployment to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, to banish communal strife, to exercise the demon of untouchability, to reform dacoits and save the people from them. If crores of people do not take a living interest in this nation-building work, freedom must remain a dream and unattainable by either non-violence or violence."

I contend that from this setting it is impossible to infer pro-Japanese attitude or anti-British attitude on my part or that of the Working Committee. On the contrary there is determined opposition to any aggression and meticulous concern for the Allied arms. The demand for immediate freedom itself is born of that concern. If the search be for implacable opposition on my part to British Imperialism that search is superfluous, for it is patent in all my writings.

25. I would like to close this subject by quoting some passages from my speeches on the 7th. and 8th. August last.

Extracts from the Hindustani Speech of 7th. August.

Then, there is the question of your attitude towards the British. I have noticed that there is hatred towards the British among the people. They say they are disgusted with their behaviour. The people make no distinction between British Imperialism and the British people. To them the two are one.

This hatred would even make them welcome the Japanese. This is most dangerous. It means that they will exchange one slavery for another. We must get rid of this feeling.

Our quarrel is not with the British people, we fight their Imperialism. The proposal for the withdrawal of British power did not come out of anger. It came to enable India to play its due part at the present critical juncture.

It is not a happy position for a big country like India to be merely helping with money and material obtained willfully from her while the United Nations are conducting the war. We cannot evoke the true spirit of sacrifice and valour so long as we do not feel that it is our war, so long as we are not free.

I know the British Government will not be able to withhold freedom from us when we have made enough self-sacrifice. We must therefore purge ourselves of hatred. Speaking for myself I can say that I have never felt any hatred. As a matter of fact I feel myself to be a greater friend of the British now than ever before. One reason is that they are to-day in distress. My very friendship therefore demands that I should try to save them from their mistakes.

As I view the situation, they are on the brink of an abyss. It therefore becomes my duty to warn them of their danger even though it may, for the time being, anger them to the point of cutting off the friendly hand that is stretched out to help them. People may laugh; nevertheless, that is my claim. At a time when I may have to launch the biggest struggle of my life, I may not harbour hatred against anybody. The idea of taking advantage of the opponent's difficulty and utilising it for delivering a blow is entirely repugnant to me.

There is one thing which I would like you always to keep before your mind. Never believe that the British are going to lose the war. I know they are not a nation of cowards. They will fight to the last rather than accept defeat.

But suppose, for strategic reasons they are forced to leave India as they had to leave Malaya, Singapore, and Burma what shall be our position in that event? The Japanese will invade India and we shall be unprepared. Occupation of India by the Japanese will mean too the end of China and perhaps Russia. I do not want to be the instrument of Russia's and China's defeat.

Pandit Nehru was only to-day describing to me the wretched condition of Russia. He was agitated. The picture he drew still haunts me. I have asked myself the question, 'what can I do to help Russia and China?' And the reply has come from within. 'You are being weighed in the balance. You have in the alchemy of ahimsa a universal panacea. Why don't you give it a trial? Have you lost faith?'

Out of this agony has emerged the proposal for British withdrawal. It may

irritate the Britishers to-day and they may misunderstand me; they may even look upon me as their enemy. But some day they will say that I was their true friend.

(From the Hindustani Speech on 8th August.)

After showing concern for China I said :

I therefore want freedom immediately, this very night, before dawn, if it can be had. It cannot now wait for the realisation of communal unity. If that unity is not achieved, sacrifices for attaining freedom will need to be much greater than would otherwise have been the case. The Congress has to win freedom or be wiped out in the effort. The freedom which the Congress is struggling to achieve will not be for Congressmen alone but for the whole of the Indian people.

(From the concluding speech in English on 8th August.)

It will be the greatest mistake on their (United Nations) part to turn a deaf ear to India's non-violent pleading and refuse her fundamental right of freedom. It will deal a mortal blow to Russia and China if they oppose the demand of non-violent India which is to-day, on bended knee, pleading for the discharge of a debt long overdue.....

I have been the author of the non-embarrassment policy of the Congress and yet to-day you find me talking in strong language. My non-embarrassment plea, however, was always qualified by the proviso, "consistently with the honour and safety of the nation." If a man holds me by the collar and I am drowning, may I not struggle to free myself from the strangle-hold? Therefore, there is no inconsistency between our earlier declarations and our present demand.....

I have always recognised a fundamental difference between Fascism and the democracies despite their many limitations, and even between Fascism and British Imperialism which I am fighting. Do the British get from India all they want? What they get to-day is from an India which they hold in bondage.

Think, what a difference it would make if India were to participate in the war as a free ally. That freedom, if it is to come, must come to-day. For she will utilise that freedom for the success of the Allies, including Russia and China. The Burma Road will once more be opened, and the way cleared for rendering really effective help to Russia.

Englishmen did not die to the last man in Malaya or on the soil of Burma. They effected instead, what has been described as a 'masterly evacuation.' But I cannot afford to do that. Where shall I go, where shall I take the forty crores of India? How is this mass of humanity to be set adrift in the cause of world deliverance unless and until it has touched and felt freedom? To-day there is no life left in them. It has been crushed out of them. If lustre has to be restored to their eyes freedom has to come, not to-morrow but to-day. Congress must therefore pledge itself to do or die.

These quotations show clearly why I advised the Congress to make the demand for the withdrawal of British Power. The quotations also show that non-violence, i.e. self-suffering and self-sacrifice without retaliation was the key-stone of the movement.

26. The author has had difficulty in finding an adequate explanation for my agreement to the stationing of Allied troops in India in spite of the withdrawal of British power. If he had an open mind, there should have been no difficulty. My explanation was there. There was no occasion to doubt its sincerity unless there was positive evidence to the contrary. I have never claimed infallibility or a larger share of intellect for myself than the ordinary.

27. The author says that no "satisfactory solution" of the difficulty raised by Rajaji, namely that the stationing of the Allied forces, without the civil power being with the British Government, would be 'reinstallation of the British Government in a worse form' was "ever made public by Mr. Gandhi." The author therefore suggests that "the solution was one which he (I) preferred should remain a secret," and he proceeds to say :

"Now while the details of Mr. Gandhi's personal solution of this problem must remain a matter for speculation, an explanation which fulfils the logical requirements of the above situation immediately comes to mind; it is that, as has been shown above to be probable, Mr. Gandhi's admission of this amendment to his scheme was intended primarily as a bid for American support and secondarily as a sop to his opponents on the Working Committee, but that he envisaged, or planned to create, circumstances in which this permission would be meaningless, that is to say circumstances in which the troops would either be forced to withdraw, or would if they remained, be rendered ineffective."

It is difficult to characterise this suggestion. I take it that the secrecy suggested was to be secret even from the members of the Working Committee. If not, they would also become conspirators with me in the fraud to be perpetrated on the Allied powers.

Amazing consequences would flow from such a fraud. Assume that the British Government has shed all power in India, that by an agreement between the Free India Government and the Allied powers, their troops are stationed in India. This assumption carries with it the further assumption that the agreement has been arrived at without any pressure, violent or non-violent, and simply from the British recognition of the necessity of recognising the Independence of India.

Assume further that the secret has all this time remained buried in my bosom, and that I suddenly divulge it to the Free India Government and therefore to the world, and they carry out my plan to frustrate the terms of the agreement, what would be the result? The Allied Powers, having all the overwhelming military strength at their disposal, would forfeit my head to themselves—which would be the least—and would further let their righteous rage descend upon the Free India Government and put an end to Independence, which was won, not by military strength, but simply by force of reason, and therefore make it impossible, so far as they can, for India to regain such lost Independence.

I must not carry this train of thought much further. The author's suggestion, if it were true, would also conclusively prove that all of us conspirators were thinking, not of the deliverance of India from bondage or of the good of the masses, but only of our base little selves.

28. The difficulty pointed out by Rajaji and on which the writer has laid stress in order to infer 'secret motive' on my part was pointed out even more forcibly by another correspondent and I dealt with it in the issue of *Harijan* dated 19th July, 1942, pp. 232 and 233. As the whole of the article consists of questions and answers which have a bearing on the author's insinuations, I produce them without apology :—

#### TOLERANCE OF ALLIED TROOPS

Q. 1. If non-violent activity is naturalised by and cannot go along with armed violence in the same area, will there remain any scope for non-violent resistance to aggression in the event of India allowing foreign troops to remain on her soil and operate from here?

A. The flaw pointed out in the first question cannot be denied. I have admitted it before now. The tolerance of Allied troops by Free India is an admission of the nation's limitations. The nation as a whole has never been and never has claimed to be non-violent. What part is cannot be said with any accuracy.

And what is decisive is that India has not yet demonstrated non-violence of the strong such as would be required to withstanding a powerful army of invasion. If we had developed that strength we would have acquired our freedom long ago and there would be no question of any troops being stationed in India. The novelty of the demand should not be missed. It is a demand not for a transference of power from Great Britain to a Free India. For there is no party to which Britain would transfer such power. We lack the unity that gives strength.

The demand, therefore, is not based on our demonstrable strength. It is a demand made upon Britain to do the right irrespective of the capacity of the party wronged to bear the consequences of Britain's right Act. Will Britain restore seized property to the victim merely because the seizure was wrong? It is none of her concern to weigh whether the victim will be able to hold possession of the restored property. Hence it is that I have been obliged to make use of the word anarchy in this connection. This great moral act must give Britain the moral status which could ensure victory. Whether without India Britain would have reason to fight, is a question I need to consider. If India is the stake and not British honour we should know. My demand then loses force but not justness.

Such being the case, my honesty and honour require me to provide for the flaw. If to ask for the withdrawal of the Allied forces means their certain defeat, my demand must be ruled out as dishonest. Force of circumstances has given rise to the demand and also to its limitations. It must be admitted, therefore, that there will be little scope for non-violent resistance or aggression, with the

Allied troops operating in India as there is practically none now. For the troops are there to-day enjoying full mastery over us. Under my demand they will operate under the nation's terms.

Q. 2. If the maintenance of India's freedom is allowed to be made dependent upon armies which, in the existing circumstances, will be led and controlled by Britain and America, can there be a feeling of real freedom experienced by the people of India, at any rate, during the duration of the war?

A. If Britain's declaration is honest I see no reason why the presence of the troops should, in any shape or form, affect the feeling of real freedom. Did the French feel differently when during the last war the English troops were operating in France? When my master of yesterday becomes my equal and lives in my house on my own terms, surely his presence cannot detract from my freedom. Nay, I may profit by his presence which I have permitted.

#### DEFENCE OF INDIA

Q. 3. Whatever be the terms of the 'treaty', if the Anglo-American military machine is allowed to operate for the 'defence' of India, can Indians play anything but a minor and subordinate role in the defence of this country?

A. The conception in my scheme is that we do not want these troops for our defence or protection. If they left these shores we expect to manage somehow. We may put up non-violent defence. If luck favours us, the Japanese may see no reason to hold the country after the Allies have withdrawn, if they discover that they are not wanted. It is all speculation as to what can happen after withdrawal—voluntary and orderly or forced.

Q. 4. Supposing the British, not from any moral motive but only to gain a political and strategic advantage for the time being, agree to a 'treaty' under which they are allowed to maintain and increase their military forces in India, how can they be dislodged afterwards if they prefer to remain in possession?

A. We assume their or rather British honesty. If would be not a matter of dislodging them, it is one of their fulfilling their plighted word. If they commit breach of faith, we must have strength enough, non-violent or violent, to enforce fulfilment.

Q. 5. Is not the position postulated in the preceding question comparable to the position that would arise if, for instance, Subhas Babu made a treaty with Germany and Japan under which India would be declared 'independent' and the Axis forces would enter India to drive the British out?

A. Surely there is as much difference between the South Pole and the North as there is between the imagined conditions. My demand deals with the possessor; Subhas Babu will bring German troops to oust the possessors. Germany is under no obligation to deliver India from bondage. Therefore, Subhas Babu's performance can only fling India from the frying pan into the fire. I hope the distinction is clear.

Q. 6. If the Congress, as Maulana Sahab has just stated, 'considers defence as armed defence only,' is there any prospect of real independence for India, in view of the fact that India simply has not got the resources 'independently' to offer effective armed resistance to a formidable aggressor? If we are to think in terms of armed defence only, can India, to mention only one thing, expect to remain independent with her 4,000 miles of coast line and no navy and ship-building industry?

A. Maulana Sahab, it is well known, does not hold my view that any country can defend itself without force of arms. My demand is based on the view that it is possible to defend one's country non-violently.

Q. 7. What material aid could India send to China to-day, even if she were declared 'independent' by the British?

A. India at present gives such indifferent and ill-conceived aid as the Allies think desirable. Free India can send men and material that China may need. India has affinities with China being part of Asia which the Allies cannot possibly possess and exploit. Who knows that Free India may not even succeed in persuading Japan to do the right by China?

Why has the author ignored the explanation, for instance, in answers 2 and 4 which was before him? Boiled down, my explanation means that I would trust the Allies to carry out faithfully the conditions of the contract to be fulfilled by them, just as I would expect them to trust the Government of Free India to carry out their part of the contract.

British withdrawal, whenever it comes, will carry with it so much honour

that everything to be done thereafter by either party will be done with the greatest goodwill and utmost sincerity. I hold that this solution of the difficulty presented is perfectly comprehensible and satisfactory.

#### NO "SECRET" METHODS

29. As to secrecy, this is what I said on the 8th. August in my Hindustani speech before the A. I. C. C. meeting:—

Nothing, however, should be done secretly. This is an open rebellion. In this struggle secrecy is a sin. A free man would not engage in a secret movement. It is likely that when you gain freedom you will have a C. I. D. of your own, in spite of my advice to the contrary. But in the present struggle we have to work openly and to receive bullets in our chests, without running away. In a struggle of this character all secrecy is sin and must be punctiliously avoided.

It is somewhat hard for a man who has avoided secrecy as a sin to be accused of it, especially when there is no evidence whatsoever for the charge.

#### "SCORCHED EARTH"

30. The author proceeds:—

".....and it is no coincidence that at the same time as Mr. Gandhi was developing the 'Quit India' scheme in *Harijan*, he was also inveighing against any form of 'scorched earth' policy (Mr. Gandhi's solicitude for the property, largely industrial property be it noted, which it might have been necessary to deny to the enemy, contrasts strangely with his readiness to sacrifice countless numbers of Indians in non-violent resistance to the Japanese. The property must be saved: it is perhaps legitimate to ask—for whom?)"

"The coincidence" is a gratuitous suggestion for which there is no proof. The suggestion behind the parenthetical gloss is evidently that I was more solicitous about the property of moneyed men than of the lives and property of the masses. This appears to me to be a wilful distortion of truth. I give the following quotations which show the contrary:—

"As a war resister my answer can only be one. I see neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying life or property for offence or defence. I would far rather leave, if I must, my crops and homestead for the enemy to use than destroy them for the sake of preventing their use by him. There is reason, sacrifice and even bravery in so leaving my homestead and crops, if I do so not out of fear but because I refuse to regard anyone as my enemy—that is—out of a humanitarian motive. But in India's case there is, too, a practical consideration. Unlike Russia's, India's masses have no national instinct developed in the sense that Russia's have. India is not fighting. Her conquerors are."

*Harijan*, March 22, 1942 p. 88

"There is no bravery in my poisoning my well or filling it in so that my brother who is at war with me may not use the water. Let us assume that I am fighting him in the orthodox manner. Nor is there sacrifice in it, for it does not purify me and sacrifice, as its root-meaning implies, presupposes purity. Such destruction may be likened to cutting one's nose to spite one's face. Warriors of old had wholesome laws of war. Among the excluded things were poisoning wells and destroying food crops. But I do claim that there are bravery and sacrifice in my leaving my wells, crops and homestead intact, bravery in that I deliberately run the risk of the enemy feeding himself at my expense and pursuing me, and sacrifice in that the sentiment of leaving something for the enemy purifies and ennobles me.

"My questioner has missed the conditional expression 'if I must.' I have imagined a state of things in which I am not prepared just now to die and therefore, I want to retreat in an orderly manner in the hope of resisting under other and better auspices. The thing to consider here is not resistance but non-destruction of food crops and the like. Resistance, violent or non-violent, has to be well thought out. Thoughtless resistance will be regarded as bravado in military parlance, and violence or folly in the language of non-violence. Retreat itself is often a plan of resistance and may be a precursor of great bravery and sacrifice. Every retreat is not cowardice which implies fear to die. Of course, a brave man would more often die in violently or non-violently resisting the aggressor in the latter's attempt to oust him from his property. But he will be no less brave if wisdom dictates present retreat."

*(Harijan*, April 12, 1942, p. 109.)

"So far there is solicitude only for the poor man's property. There is no mention of industrial property. I have also given my reasons, which I still hold to

be perfectly sound, for non-destruction of such property. I have found only one note in the issues of *Harijan* in my possession which refers to industrial property. It is as follows:

"Suppose there are factories for grinding wheat or pressing oil seed. I should not destroy them. But munitions factories, yes.....Textile factories I would not destroy and I would resist all such destruction."

(*Harijan*, May 24, 1942, p. 167.)

#### SOLICITUDE FOR THE MASSES

The reason is obvious. Here too, the solicitude is not for the owners, but for the masses who use food products and cloth produced in factories. It should also be remembered that I have all along written and even acted against both kinds of factories, in normal times, in the interests of village industries, my creed being to prefer the products of hand labour in which millions can be engaged, to those of factories in which only a few thousands or at best a few lacs can be employed.

31. Mark too the last sentence in the penultimate paragraph of the draft resolution sent to Allahabad: "But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to or is of use to the masses." It is incomprehensible how the author could, in the face of the foregoing, distort truth as he has done.

32. In the same paragraph from which I have quoted the parenthetical remark of the author, I find the following:

"We have however his own admission that he could not guarantee that non-violent action would keep the Japanese at bay; he refers indeed to any such hope as an 'unwarranted supposition.'"

And this is cited to support the conclusion that in order to prevent India from becoming a battlefield between the Allied Nations and Japan I was prepared "to concede to their (Japanese) demands."

Let me quote where the phrase is taken from. In an article entitled "A Fallacy" in *Harijan* dated 5th, July, 1942, I have dealt with the following question addressed to me by a correspondent:

Q. "You consider it a vital necessity in terms of non-violence to allow the Allied troops to remain in India. You also say that, as you cannot present a fool-proof non-violent method to prevent Japanese occupation of India, you cannot throw the Allies over-board. But, don't you consider that the non-violent force created by our action which will be sufficient to force the English to withdraw will be sufficiently strong to prevent Japanese occupation also? And is it not the duty of a non-violent resister to equally consider it a vital necessity to see that his country, his home and his all are not destroyed by allowing two foreign mad bulls to fight a deadly war on his soil?"

My reply to this runs as follows:

A. "There is an obvious fallacy in the question. I cannot all of a sudden produce in the minds of Britishers who have been for centuries trained to rely upon their muscle for their protection, a belief which has not made a very visible impression even on the Indian mind. Non-violent forces must not act in the same way as violence. The refusal to allow the Allied troops to operate on the Indian soil can only add to the irritation already caused by my proposal. The first is inevitable, the second would be wanton.

"Again, if the withdrawal is to take place, it won't be due merely to the non-violent pressure. And in any case what may be enough to affect the old occupant would be wholly different from what would be required to keep off the invader. Thus we can disown the authority of the British rulers by refusing taxes and in a variety of ways. These would be inapplicable to withstand the Japanese onslaught. Therefore, whilst we may be ready to face the Japanese, we may not ask the Britishers to give up their position of vantage merely on the unwarranted supposition that we would succeed by mere non-violent effort in keeping off the Japanese.

"Lastly, whilst we must guard ourselves in our own way, our non-violence must preclude us from imposing on the British a strain which must break them. That would be a denial of our whole history for the past twenty-two years."

(*Harijan*, July 5, 1942, p. 210.)

The supposition referred to here is my Correspondent's, namely that the non-violent forces created by my action which will be sufficient to force the English to withdraw, will be sufficiently strong to prevent Japanese occupation also and, therefore, I should not have resiled from my original proposition that the British

Power should withdraw their troops from India. I have shown the absurdity of such a supposition made for the sake of preventing the retention of British troops. My belief in the power of non-violence is unchangeable, but I cannot put it before the British in order to prevent their use of India as a base if they consider it necessary for dealing with the Japanese menace.

#### GANDHIJI'S APPEAL TO JAPS

33. The author has further sought to strengthen his inference by quoting the following from my appeal to the Japanese.

"And we are in the unique position of having to resist an Imperialism that we detest no less than yours (the Japanese) and Nazism."

The author has conveniently omitted the sentences which follow and which instead of strengthening his inference would negative it altogether. These are the sentences.

"Our resistance to it (British Imperialism) does not mean harm to the British people. We seek to convert them. Ours is an unarmed revolt against British rule. An important party in the country is engaged in a deadly—but friendly quarrel with the foreign rulers.

"But in this they need no aid from foreign Powers. You have been gravely misinformed, as I know you are, that we have chosen this particular moment to embarrass the Allies when your attack against India is imminent. If we wanted to turn Britain's difficulty into our opportunity, we should have done it as soon as the War broke out nearly three years ago. Our movement demanding the withdrawal of the British Power from India should in no way be misunderstood. In fact, if we are to believe your reported anxiety for the Independence of India, a recognition of that Independence by Britain, should leave you no excuse for any attack on India. Moreover the reported profession sorts ill with your ruthless aggression against China.

"I would ask you to make no mistake about the fact that you will be sadly disillusioned if you believe that you will receive a willing welcome from India. The end and aim of the movement for British withdrawal is to prepare India, by making her free for resisting all militarist and Imperialist ambition, whether it is called British Imperialism, German Nazism, or your pattern. If we do not, we shall have been ignoble spectators of the militarisation of the world in spite of our belief that in non-violence we have the only solvent of the militarist's spirit and ambition. Personally, I fear that without declaring the Independence of India, the Allied Powers will not be able to beat the Axis combination which has raised violence to the dignity of a religion. The Allies cannot beat you and your partners unless they beat you in your ruthless and skilled warfare. If they copy it, their declaration that they will save the world for democracy and individual freedom must come to nought. I feel that they can only gain strength to avoid copying your ruthlessness by declaring and recognising 'now' the freedom of India and turning sullen India's forced co-operation into freed India's voluntary co-operation.

"To Britain and the allies, we have appealed in the name of justice, in proof of their professions, and in their own self interest. To you I appeal in the name of humanity. It is a marvel to me that you do not see that ruthless warfare is nobody's monopoly. If not the Allies, some other Power will certainly improve upon your method and beat you with your own weapon. Even if you win you leave no legacy to your people of which they would feel proud. They cannot take pride in a recital of cruel deeds, however skilfully achieved.

"Even if you win, it will not prove that you were in the right, it will only prove that your power of destruction was greater. This applies obviously to the Allies too unless they perform 'now' the just and righteous act of freeing India as an earnest and promise of similarly freeing all other subject peoples in Asia and Africa.

"Our appeal to Britain is coupled with the offer of Free India's willingness to let the Allies retain their troops in India. The offer is made in order to prove that we do not in any way mean to harm the Allied cause, and in order to prevent you from being misled into feeling that you have but to step into the country that Britain has vacated. Needless to repeat that, if you cherish any such idea and will carry it out, we will not fail resisting you with all the might that our country can muster. I address this appeal to you in the hope that our movement may even influence you and your partners in the right direction and deflect you and them from the course which is bound to end in your moral ruin and the reduction of human being to robots.

"The hope of your response to my appeal is much fainter than that of response from Britain. I know that the British are not devoid of a sense of justice and they know me. I do not know you enough to be able to judge. All I have read tells me that you listen to no appeal but to the sword. How I wish that you are cruelly misrepresented and that I shall touch the right chord in your heart! Anyway I have an undying faith in the responsiveness of human nature. On the strength of that faith I have conceived the impending movement in India, and it is that faith which has prompted this" (*Harijan*, July 26, 1942, p 240 *et seq.*)

I have given this long quotation because I see that it is a complete answer to the author's insinuations, as it is also an open gate to the whole of my mind regarding the movement contemplated in the resolution of 8th August last.

#### INDIA'S FREEDOM MAIN CONCERN

But the author has many arrows in his quiver. For, in defence of his inference that I was prepared to "concede to their (Japanese) demands," he proceeds :

"Only in the grip of some dominant emotion would he (I) have contemplated such a capitulation. This emotion was, there seems little doubt, his desire to preserve India from horrors of war."

In other words, I would exchange Japanese rule for British.

My non-violence is made of sterner stuff. Only a jaundiced eye can read such an emotion in the face of the clearest possible writings in the *Harijan* that I would face all the horrors of war in order to end the horror of horrors which British domination is.

I am impatient of it because I am impatient of all domination. I am in "the grip" of only one "dominant emotion" and no other—that is India's Freedom.

The author has admitted this in the same breath that he has charged me with an unworthy emotion. He has thus condemned himself out of his own mouth.

34. At page 14 of the indictment the author says :

"In conclusion there are the famous words uttered by Mr. Gandhi at a Press Conference at Wardha, after the Working Committee had passed the resolution of July 14th which show clearly however at that early stage he was fully determined on a final struggle :—

"There is no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation. There is no question of one more chance. After all it is an OPEN REBELLION.

"There also lies the answer to those who have since accused Government of precipitating the crisis by the arrest of Mr. Gandhi and the Congress leaders, and have suggested that the period of grace referred to by Mr. Gandhi in his Bombay speech should have been utilised for negotiation. "There is no room left for withdrawal or negotiation," Mr. Gandhi has said a month earlier. Moreover, the Wardha resolution merely threatened a mass movement if the demands of Congress were not accepted. The Bombay resolution went further. It no longer 'threatened' a movement with the delay that that might entail. It 'sanctioned' the movement and if any further delay was intended, are there not at least good grounds for believing in the light of all that had been said, that it was to be used not for the purpose of negotiation but for putting the finishing touches to a plan to which its authors were already committed but which might not yet be completely ready to put into execution ?

#### OFFICIAL "DISTORTIONS"

I shall presently show that the "famous words" attributed to me are partly a distortion and partly an interpolation not to be found in the authentic report of the Wardha interview as published in *Harijan* of 19th July, 1942. Let me quote in full the portion of the Wardha interview in which that part of the quotation which I claim is distorted appears in its correct form :

"Do you hope that negotiations may be opened by the British Government ?"

"They may, but with whom they will do it I do not know. For it is not a question of placating one party or other. For it is the unconditional withdrawal of the British Power without reference to the wishes of any party that is our demand. The demand is therefore based on its justice. Of course it is possible that the British may negotiate a withdrawal. If they do, it will be a feather in their cap. Then it will cease to be a case for withdrawal. If the British see, however late, the wisdom of recognising the independence of India, without reference to the various parties, all things are possible. But the point I want to stress is this, viz., that THERE IS NO ROOM LEFT FOR NEGOTIATIONS IN THE PROPOSAL FOR WITHDRAWAL. Either they recognise Independence or they don't. After that recognition many things can follow. For by that one single act the British representatives will have altered

the face of the whole landscape and revived the hope of the people which has been frustrated times without number. Therefore, whenever that great act is performed, on behalf of the British people, it will be a red letter day in the history of India and the world. And, as I have said, it can materially affect the fortunes of war." (Capitals mine.) (*Harijan*, July, 1942, p. 233.)

The corresponding quotation in the indictment I reproduce below in capital letters:

"THERE IS NO ROOM LEFT IN THE PROPOSAL FOR WITHDRAWAL OF NEGOTIATION."

I suggest that in the context from which this is torn and distorted, it is entirely out of place. I was answering the question: "Do you hope that negotiations may be opened by the British Government?" As an answer to the question, the sentence as it appears in *Harijan* "there is no room left for negotiations in the proposal for withdrawal," is perfectly intelligible and harmonises with the sentences preceding and succeeding.

35. The distorted sentence in the indictment has two others tacked on to it. They are: "There is no question of one more chance. After all is an open rebellion."

The underlining is the author's.

The two sentences are not to be found anywhere in the report of the interview as it appears in *Harijan*. "There is no question of one more chance, can have no place in the paragraph about negotiations with my approach to them as revealed in my answer. As to 'open rebellion', I have even at the Second Indian Round Table Conference used that expression coupled with the adjective non-violent. But it has no place anywhere in the interview.

36. I have taxed myself to know how the two sentences could have crept into the author's quotation. Fortunately on 26th June, while this reply was being typed there came the *Hindustan Times* file for which Shri Pyarelal had asked. In its issue of 15th July, 1942 there appears the following message:

#### A MISREPORT

Wardhaganj, July 14.

"There is no room left in the proposal for withdrawal or negotiation; either they recognise India's independence or they don't," said Mahatma Gandhi answering questions at a Press interview at Sevagram on the Congress resolution. He emphasised that what he wanted was not the recognition of Indian independence on paper, but in action.

Asked if his movement would not hamper war efforts of the United Nations, Mahatma Gandhi said: "The movement is intended not only to help China but also to make common cause with the Allies."

On his attention being drawn to Mr. Amery's latest statement in the House of Commons, Mahatma Gandhi said: "I am very much afraid that we shall have the misfortune to listen to repetition of that language in stronger terms, but that cannot possibly delay the pace of the people or the group that is determined to go its way," Mahatma Gandhi added: "There is no question of one more chance. After all it is an open rebellion."

Asked what form his movement would take, Mahatma Gandhi said: "The conception is that of a mass movement on the widest possible scale. It will include what is possible to include in a mass movement or what people are capable of doing. This will be a mass movement of a purely non-violent character."

Asked if he would court imprisonment this time Mahatma Gandhi said: "It is too soft a thing. There is no such thing as courting imprisonment this time. My intention is to make it as short and swift as possible."—A. P. I.

37. This message is an eye-opener for me. I have often suffered from misreporting or coloured epitomes of my writings and speeches even to the point of being lynched... This one, though not quite as bad, is bad enough.

The above A. P. summary gives, if it does, the clue to the author's source for the misquotation and the additional sentence. If he used that source the question arises why he went out of his way to use that doubtful and unauthorised source, when he had before him the authentic text of the full interview in *Harijan* of 19th July last. He has made a most liberal, though disjointed and biased use of the columns of *Harijan* for building up his case against me. At page 13 of the indictment he thus begins the charge culminating in the misquotation at page 14.

"From this point onwards Mr. Gandhi's conception of the struggle developed rapidly. His writings on the subject are too lengthy to quote in full, but the

following excerpts from *Harijan* illustrate the direction in which his mind was moving."

On the same page he has quoted passages from page 233 of *Harijan* from the report of the interview in question. I am therefore entitled to conclude that the question under examination was taken from *Harijan*. It is manifest now that it was not. Why not?

If he took the three sentences from the aforementioned A. P. report, why has he quoted them without asterisks between the sentences that appear apart in the A. P. report?

I may not pursue the inquiry any further. It has pained me deeply. How the two sentences not found in the authentic text of the interview found place in the A. P. summary I do not know. It is for the Government to inquire if they will.

#### GOVT. INVITED THE CRISIS

38. The author's quotation having been found wanting, the whole of his conclusions and inferences based upon it must fall to the ground. In my opinion, therefore, the Government does stand accused not only of 'having precipitated,' but of having invited, a crisis by their premeditated coup. The elaborate preparations they made for all-India arrests were not made overnight.

It is wrong to draw a distinction between the Wardha resolution and the Bombay one in the sense that the first only threatened and the second 'sanctioned' the mass civil disobedience. The first only required ratification by the All-India Congress Committee but the effect of either was the same i. e., both authorised me to lead and guide the movement if negotiations failed.

But the movement was not started by the resolution of 8th August last. Before I could function they arrested not only me but principal Congressmen all over India. Thus it was not I but the Government who started the movement and gave it a shape which I could not have dreamt of giving and which it never would have taken while I was conducting it. No doubt, it would have been 'short and swift,' not in the violent sense, as the author has insinuated, but in the non-violent sense as I know it.

The Government made it very short and very swift by their very violent action. Had they given me breathing time, I would have sought an interview with the Viceroy and strained every nerve to show the reasonableness of the Congress demand.

Thus there were no 'grounds,' good or bad for believing, as the author would have one believe, that the 'period of grace' was to be used for "putting the finishing touches to a plan to which its authors were already committed but which might not yet be completely ready to put into execution." In order to sustain such a belief it has become necessary for the author to dismiss from consideration the whole of the proceedings of the Bombay meeting of the All-India Congress Committee and even vital parts of its resolution—save the clause of referring to the mass movement—and the very awkward word 'non-violence' to which I shall come presently.

#### ANXIETY TO AVOID CONFLICT

39. I give below extracts from my speeches and writings to show how eager and earnest I was to avoid conflict and achieve the purpose by negotiation and to show that the Congress aim never was to thwart the Allies in any way:

"... It would be churlish on our part if we said 'we don't want to talk to anybody and we will by our own strong hearts expel the British.' Then the Congress Committee won't be meeting; there would be no resolutions; and I should not be seeing Press representatives."

(*Harijan*, July 26, 1942, p. 243.)

#### NO ARBITRATION ON THE INDEPENDENCE ISSUE

Q: "Cannot there be any arbitration on the question of Independence?"

A: "No, not on the question of Independence. It is possible only on questions on which sides may be taken. The outstanding question of Independence should be treated as common cause. It is only then that I can conceive possibility of arbitration on the Indo-British question... But if there is to be any arbitration—and I cannot logically say there should not, for if I did, it would be an arrogation of complete justice in my side—it can be done only if India's Independence is recognised."

(*Harijan*, May 24, 1942, p. 168.)

An English correspondent: "...Would you advocate arbitration for the Indo-British problem?"

A : "Any day, I suggested long ago that this question could be decided by arbitration....."

(*Harijan*, May 24, 1942, p. 168.)

**"ACTUAL STRUGGLE NOT COMMENCED"**

The actual struggle does not commence this very moment. You have merely placed certain powers in my hands. My first act will be to wait upon H. E. the Viceroy and plead with him for the acceptance of the Congress demand. This may take two or three weeks. What are you to do in the meanwhile? I will tell you. There is the spinning wheel, I had to struggle with the Maulana Saheb before it dawned upon him that in a non-violent struggle it had an abiding place. The fourteen-point constructive programme is all there for you to carry out. But there is something more you have to do and it will give life to that programme. Everyone of you should from this very moment consider yourself a free man or woman and even act as if you are free and no longer under the heel of this Imperialism. This is no make-believe. You have to cultivate the spirit of freedom before it comes physically. The chains of the slave are broken the moment he considers himself a free man. He will then tell his master: "I have been your slave all these days but I am no longer that now. You may kill me, but if you do not and if you release me from the bondage, I will ask for nothing more from you. For, henceforth, instead of depending upon you, I shall depend upon God for food and clothing. God has given me the urge of freedom and therefore I deem myself a free man."

You may take it from me that I am not going to strike a bargain with the Viceroy for Ministries and the like. I am not going to be satisfied with anything short of complete freedom. May be he will propose the abolition of the salt tax, the drink evil, etc, but I will say, 'Nothing less than freedom'."

**"DO OR DIE"**

Here is a *Mantra*—a short one—that I will give you. You may imprint it on your hearts and let every breath of yours give expression to it. The *Mantra* is this : "We shall do or die. We shall either free India or die in the attempt. We shall not live to see the perpetuation of slavery." Every true Congressman or woman will join the struggle with an inflexible determination not to remain alive to see the country in bondage and slavery. Let that be your badge. Dismiss jails out of your consideration. If the Government leaves me free, I shall spare you the trouble of filling the jails. I will not put on the Government the strain of maintaining a large number of prisoners at a time when it is in trouble. Let every man and woman live every moment of his or her life hereafter in the consciousness that he or she eats or lives for achieving freedom and will die, if need be, to attain that goal. Take a pledge with God and your own conscience as witness that you will no longer rest till freedom is achieved and will be prepared to lay down your lives in the attempt to achieve it. He who loses his life shall gain, he who will seek to save it shall lose it. Freedom is not for the faint-hearted.

(From the concluding speech in Hindustani on 8th August before the A. I. C. C.)

Let me tell you at the outset that the struggle does not commence to-day. I have yet to go through much ceremonial, as I have always to do and this time more than ever before—the burden is so heavy. I have yet to continue to reason with those with whom I seem to have lost all credit for the time being.

From the concluding speech in English on 8th August before the A. I. C. C.)

40. At page 11 of the indictment the author says :

To summarise briefly, Mr. Gandhi did not believe that non-violence alone was capable of defending India against Japan. Nor had he any faith in the ability of the Allies to do so : 'Britain', he stated in his draft Allahabad resolution, 'is incapable of defending India.' His 'Quit India' move was intended to result in the withdrawal of the British Government to be succeeded by a problematical provisional Government or, as Mr. Gandhi admitted to be possible, by anarchy ; the Indian army was to be disbanded ; and Allied troops were to be allowed to operate only under the terms imposed by this provisional Government, assisted by India's non-violent non-co-operation to Japan, for which, as Mr. Gandhi had already admitted, there would be little scope with Allied troops operating in India.

"Finally, even if, in the face of the above arguments, it could be supposed that Mr. Gandhi and the Congress proposed to pin their faith on the ability of Allied troops to defend India, it should be noted that the former himself admitted that

the ability of Allied troops to operate effectively would depend upon the formation of a suitable provisional Government.

"Now since this Government was to be representative of all sections of Indian opinion, it is clear that neither Mr. Gandhi nor the Congress could legitimately commit it in advance to any particular course of action; they could not, that is to say, undertake that it would support the Allies in defending India against Japan. They could not, in fact, make any promise on behalf of this provisional Government unless they intended that it should be dominated by Congress; the whole trend of Congress policy, however, coupled with the extravagant promises made in the Bombay A. I. C. C. resolution on behalf of this provisional Government, leave little doubt that this was their intention, a view held, significantly, by the Muslim League and Muslims in general." You have then a situation in which the Allied troops would be dependent for support on a Government dominated by clique which has already been shown to be thoroughly defeatist in outlook, and whose leader had already expressed the intention of negotiating with Japan.

"It is not the intention here to examine the third aim, the establishment of communal unity followed by the formation of a provisional Government at all closely. It has been suggested in the preceding paragraph that the Congress intended this Government to be under their domination and a note has been made of the strength added to this view by the unity of Muslim opinion that the Congress move was aimed at establishing Congress-Hindu domination over India. It will suffice here to show, from Mr. Gandhi's own writings, the doubts that he entertained as to the feasibility of establishing any such Government."

#### "CRUEL MISREPRESENTATION"

This brief summary is a perfect caricature of all I have said or written, and the Congress has stood for and expressed in the resolution of 8th. August last. I hope I have shown in the foregoing pages how cruelly I have been misrepresented. If my argument has failed to carry conviction, I should be quite content to be judged on the strength of the quotations interspersed in the argument.

As against the foregoing caricature, let me give a summary of my views based on the quotations referred to above.

1. I believe that non-violence alone is capable of defending India, not only against Japan but the whole world.

2. I do hold that Britain is incapable of defending India. She is not defending India to-day; she is defending herself and her interests in India and elsewhere. These are often contrary to India's.

3. 'Quit India' move was intended to result in the withdrawal of British Power and is possible with simultaneous formation of a provisional Government, consisting of members representing all the principal parties, if the withdrawal took place by the willing consent of the British Government. If, however, the withdrawal took place willy-nilly there might be a period of anarchy.

4. The Indian army would naturally be disbanded, being a British creation — unless it forms part of Allied troops, or it transfers its allegiance to the Free India Government.

5. The Allied troops would remain under terms agreed to between the Allied Powers and the Free India Government.

6. If India become free, the Free India Government would tender co-operation by rendering such military aid as it could. But in the largest part of India where no military effort was possible, non-violent action will be taken by the masses of the people with the utmost enthusiasm.

#### FREE INDIA AS AN ALLY

41. Then the summary comes to the provisional Government. As to this, let the Congress resolution itself speak. I give the relevant parts below:

"The A. I. C. C. therefore repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British Power from India. On the declaration of India's independence, a provisional Government will be formed and Free India will become an ally of the United Nations, sharing with them in the trials and tribulations of the joint enterprise of the struggle for freedom. The provisional Government can only be formed by the co-operation of the principal parties and groups in the country.

"It will thus be a composite Government, representative of all important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the non-violent forces at its

command, together with its allied powers, and to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The provisional Government will evolve a scheme for a Constituent Assembly which will prepare a constitution for the Government of India acceptable to all sections of the people.

"This constitution, according to the Congress view, should be a Federal one with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and with the residuary powers vesting in these units. The future relations between India and the Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their co-operation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

"Lastly, whilst the A. I. C. C. has stated its own view of the future governance under Free India, the A. I. C. C. wishes to make it quite clear to all concerned that by embarking on a mass struggle, it has no intention of gaining power for the Congress. The power, when it comes, will belong to the whole people of India."

#### NON-PARTY CHARACTER OF CONGRESS

I claim that there is nothing in this clause of the resolution that is 'extra-vagant' or impracticable. The concluding sentence proves in my opinion, the sincerity and non-party character of the Congress. And as there is no party in the country which is not wholly anti-Fascist, anti-Nazi and anti-Japan, it follows that a Government formed by these parties is bound to become an enthusiastic champion of the Allied cause which by the recognition of India as a free state will truly become the cause of democracy.

42. As to communal unity, it has been a fundamental plank with the Congress from its commencement. Its President is a Muslim divine of world wide repute, especially in the Muslim world. It has besides him three Muslims on the Working Committee.

It is surprising that the author has summoned to his assistance the Muslim League opinion. The League can afford to doubt the sincerity of Congress professions and accuse the Congress of the desire of establishing a "Congress-Hindu domination." It ill becomes the all-powerful Government of India to take shelter under the Muslim League wing.

This has a strong flavour of the old Imperial Mantra *Divide and Rule*.

League-Congress differences are a purely domestic question. They are bound to be adjusted when foreign domination ends, if they are not dissolved sooner.

43. The author winds up the second chapter as follows :

"Whether the authors of the resolution genuinely believed that the Congress demand would, if accepted, help rather than hinder the cause of the United Nations and intended that it should have that effect, depends on the answer to two questions. In the first place, could any body of men who honestly desired that result have deliberately called the country, if their way of achieving it was not accepted, to take part in a mass movement the declared object of which was to have precisely the opposite effect by paralysing the whole administration and the whole war effort? In the second place, bearing in mind that less than a year previously it had been proclaimed under Mr. Gandhi's orders to be a 'sin' to help the war with men or money, can it be denied that these men saw their opportunity in Britain's danger and believed that the psychological moment for the enforcement of their political demands must be seized while the fate of the United Nations hung in the balance and before the tide of war turned—if it was ever going to turn—in their favour? The answer to these two questions is left to the reader."

#### ADMINISTRATION'S "DEAD-SET AGAINST CONGRESS"

I have to answer these two questions both as reader and accused. As to the first question, there is no necessary inconsistency between the genuine belief that an acceptance of the Congress demand would help the cause of the United Nations i. e., of democracy all the world over and a mass movement (which moreover was merely contemplated) to paralyse the administration on non-acceptance of the Congress demand.

It is submitted that the attempt 'to paralyse the administration' on non-acceptance proves the genuineness of the demand which sets the seal on its genuineness by Congressmen preparing to die in the attempt to paralyse an administration that thwarts their will to fight the combine against democracy.

Thus it is the administration's dead-set against the Congress which proves the hollowness of its claim that it is engaged in a fight for democracy.

My firm belief is that the administration is daily proving its inefficiency for handling the war in the right manner. China is slowly pining away while the administration is playing at war handling. In the attempt to suppress the Congress it has cut off the greatest source of help to the millions of China who are being ground down under the Japanese heel.

44. The second question hardly demands a separate answer. Congressmen who proclaimed a year ago under my "orders" that it is a "sin" to help the war with "men and money" need not be considered here, if I give different "orders."

For me, I am as much opposed to all war to-day as I was before a year or more. I am but an individual. All Congressmen are not of that mind.

#### CONGRESS AND WAR ISSUE

The Congress will give up the policy of non-violence to-day, if it can achieve India's freedom by so doing. And I would have no compunction about inviting those who seek my advice to throw themselves heart and soul into the effort to help themselves and thus deliver from bondage those nations that are wedded to democracy. If the effort involves military training, the people will be free to take it, leaving me and those who think with me to our own non-violence.

I did this very thing during the Boer War, and in the last war, I was a "good boy" then, because my action harmonised with the British Government's wishes. To-day I am the arch enemy, not because I have changed but because the British Government, which is being tried in the balance is being found wanting.

I helped before, because I believed in British good faith. I appear to be hindering to-day because the British Government will not act up to the faith that was reposed in them.

My answer to the two questions propounded by the author may sound harsh, but it is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth as God lets me see it.

#### GROSS MISQUOTATIONS—

45. The gravamen, however, of the charges against me is that "every reference to non-violence in the forecasts of the forms the movement would take made by Mr. Gandhi and his Congress disciples and in the post arrest programmes and instructions is nothing more than a pious hope or at best a mild warning which was known to have no practical value." It is also described as mere "lip service."

46. The author gives no proof to show that it (the warning) "was known to have no practical value." If the references to non-violence are removed from my writing and my utterances in order to condemn me and my "Congress disciples" the removal would be on a par with the omission of 'nots' from the Commandments and quoting them in support of killing, stealing, etc. The author in robbing me of the one thing I live by and live for robs me of all I possess.

The evidence given in support of dismissing references to non-violence as "valueless" mostly consists of innuendoes. "It was to be a struggle, a fight to the finish in which foreign domination was to be ended cost what it may." In a non-violent struggle the cost has always to be paid by the fighters in their own blood.

"It was to be an unarmed revolt, short and swift" the prefix 'un' in 'unarmed', unless it be regarded as 'valueless' gives 'short and swift' an ennobling meaning. For to make the struggle 'short and swift' prisons have to be avoided as too soft a thing and death to be hugged as a true friend enabling the fighters to affect the opponents' heart much quicker than mere jail going can.

#### —AND POST-FACTO MEANINGS

Mention by me of 'conflagration' meant giving of lives in thousands or more, if need be. The author has called it a 'grimly accurate forecast.'

This has a post-facto meaning unintended by the author in that a heavy toll of lives was taken by way of reprisals by the authorities, and an orgy of unmentionable excesses let loose upon the people by the soldiery and the police, if the press reports and statements by responsible public men are to be believed.

"Mr. Gandhi was prepared to risk the occurrence of riots." It is true that I was prepared to take such a risk. Any big movement whether violent or non-violent involves certain risks. But non-violent running of risks means a special method, a special handling. I would have strained every nerve to avoid riots.

Moreover, my first act would have been to woo the Viceroy. Till then no question of running any risks could arise. As it was, the Government would not let me run the risk. They put me in prison instead!

What the mass movement was to include and how the risk was to be taken,

if at all, the author could not know for the movement was never started. Nor had any instructions been issued by me.

47. The author complains of my 'making full use of existing grievances'. The use began even before the birth of the Congress. It has never ceased. How could it, so long as the foreign domination, of which they were a part, lasted?

"AN UNPARDONABLE SUPPRESSION"

48. "Finally every man and woman was to consider himself free and act for himself. These last words or at least their sense finds a place in the resolution itself." This last sentence is a specimen of *suppressio veri*. Here is the relevant extract from the Congress resolution:

"They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress Committees can function. When this happens every man and woman who is participating in this movement must function for himself within the four corners of the general instructions issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India."

There is nothing new or startling in this. It is practical wisdom. Men and women must become their own leaders when their trusted guides are removed from them, or when their organisation is declared illegal or otherwise ceases to function.

True, there were formerly nominal 'dictators' appointed. This was more to court arrest than to guide followers by being in touch with them. For, touch was not possible except secretly.

This time, not prison, but death, was to be sought in the prosecution of the movement. Therefore, every one was to become his own leader to act within the four corners of the square foundation—non-violence.

The omission of the two conditions for every one becoming his or her own guide was an unpardonable suppression of relevant truth.

USE OF MILITARY TERMS IN NON-VIOLENCE

49. The author then proceeds to consider whether the movement contemplated by me could, by its very nature, be non-violent and further whether "Mr. Gandhi (I) intended that it should be so or hoped that it would remain so."

I have already shown that the movement never having been started, nobody could say what I had contemplated or hoped unless my intention or my hope could be justly deduced from my writings. Let me however observe how the author has arrived at this conclusion.

His first proof is that I have employed military terms in connection with a movement claimed to be wholly non-violent. I have employed such language from the commencement of my experiment in South Africa. I could more easily show the contrast between my move and the ordinary ones by using identical phraseology so far as possible, and coupling it with non-violence.

Throughout my experience of Satyagraha since 1908, I cannot recall an instance in which people were misled by my use of military phraseology. And, indeed, Satyagraha being a 'moral equivalent of war', the use of such terminology is but natural. Probably all of us have used at some time or another, or, are at least familiar with expressions such as 'sword of the spirit', 'dynamite of truth', 'shield and buckler of patience', 'assaulting the citadel of truth', or 'wrestling with God.' Yet no one has ever seen anything strange or wrong in such use.

ANALOGY OF THE SALVATION ARMY

Who can be ignorant of the use of military phraseology by the Salvation Army? That body has taken it over in its entirety, and yet I have not known anyone having mistaken the Salvation Army, with its Colonels and Captains, for a military organisation trained to the use of deadly weapons of destruction.

50. I must deny that "it has been shown that Mr. Gandhi had little faith in the effectiveness of non-violence to resist Japanese aggression." What I have said is that maximum effectiveness cannot be shown when it has to work side by side with violence.

It is true that Maulana Sahab and Pandit Nehru have doubts about the efficacy of non-violence to withstand aggression, but they have ample faith in non-violent action for fighting against British domination. I do believe that both British and Japanese Imperialisms are equally to be avoided. But I have already

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shown by quoting from *Harijan* that it is easier to cope with the evil that is than the one that may come.

51. I admit at once that there is "a doubtful proportion of full believers" in my "theory of non-violence." But it should not be forgotten that I have also said that for my movement I do not at all need believers in the theory of non-violence, full or imperfect. It is enough if people carry out the rules of non-violent action.

### NON-VIOLENT RECORD OF CIVIL RESISTANCE

52. Now comes the author's most glaring lapse of memory or misrepresentation in the paragraph under discussion. He says, ".....remember too that he had before him the example of his previous movements, each professedly non-violent, yet each giving rise to the most hideous violence."

I have before me a list 20 civil resistance movements beginning with the very first in South Africa. I do recall instances in which popular frenzy had broken out resulting in regrettable murders. These instances of mob violence, though bad enough, were but a flea-bite in proportion to the vast size of this country—as big as Europe less Russia territorially and bigger numerically.

Had violence been the Congress policy, secretly or openly, or had the Congress discipline been less strict, it is simple enough to realise that the violence instead of being a flea-bite, would have been more like a volcanic eruption.

But every time such outbreaks took place the most energetic measures were taken by the whole Congress organisation to deal with them. On several occasions I had myself resorted to fasting. All this produced a salutary effect on the popular mind.

And there were also movements which were singularly free from violence. Thus the South African Satyagraha, which was a mass movement and similar movements in Champaran, Kheda, Bardoli and Borsad—not to mention others in which collective civil disobedience on a wide scale was offered—were wholly free from any outburst of violence.

In all these the people had conformed to the rules laid down for their observance. The author has thus gone against history in making the sweeping statement that I had before me the "example of previous movements each professedly non-violent, yet each giving rise to the most hideous violence."

My own experience being quite to the contrary, I have not the shadow of a doubt that if the Government had not, by their summary action unnecessarily provoked the people beyond endurance, there never would have been any violence.

### VIOLENCE RULED OUT BY WORKING COMMITTEE

The members of the Working Committee were anxious that violence on the part of the people should be avoided, not from any philanthropic motive, but from the conviction borne in upon them the experience of hard facts, that violence by the people could not usher in independence.

The education that the people had received through the Congress was wholly non-violent, before 1920, because of the leaders' belief in constitutional agitation and faith in British promises and declarations, and since 1920, because of the belief, in the first instance induced by me and then enforced by experience, that mere constitutional agitation, though it had served up to a point, could never bring in independence, and that regard being had to the condition of India, non-violent action was the only sanction through which independence could be attained in the quickest manner possible.

### SATYAGRAHA—THE WORLD'S HOPE

The accumulated experience of the past thirty years, the first eight of which were in South Africa, fills me with the greatest hope that in the adoption of non-violence lies the future of India and the world. It is the most harmless and yet equally effective way of dealing with the political and economic wrongs of the down-trodden portion of humanity.

I have known from early youth that non-violence is not a cloistered virtue to be practised by the individual for his peace and final salvation, but it is a rule of conduct for society if it is to live consistently with human dignity and make progress towards the attainment of peace for which it has been yearning for ages past.

It is therefore sad to think that a Government, the most powerful in the world, should have belittled the doctrine and put its votaries, however imperfect they may be, out of action. "It is my firm opinion that thereby they have injured the cause of universal peace and the Allied Nations."

53. For the author "the certainty" was "that his (my) movement could not remain non-violent". For me "the certainty" was quite the contrary, if the movement had remained in the hands of those who could guide the people.

54. It is also now "clear" what I meant when I said I was prepared to go to the extremist limit, that is that I would continue the non-violent movement even though the Government might succeed in provoking violence. Hitherto I have stayed my hand when people have been so provoked.

This time I ran the risk because the risk of remaining supine in the face of the greatest world conflagration known to history was infinitely greater. If non-violence be the greatest force in the world, it must prove itself during this crisis.

#### REPLY TO CHARGE OF "LIP SERVICE"

55. The final proof given by the author of my non-violence being "mere lip service" consists of the following caricature of my writing in defence of Polish bravery.

"In other words, in any fight the weaker of the two combatants may employ as violent measures as he likes or is able, and may still be considered to be fighting non-violently; or to put it in another way, violence when employed against superior odds automatically becomes non-violence. Surely a very convenient theory for the rebels in an 'unarmed revolt'."

I claim the writing quoted by the author does not warrant the misleading deduction. How can I possibly lay down a proposition against everyday experience?

There is rarely a fight among absolute equals. One party is always weaker than the other. The illustrations I have given taken together, can lead to one conclusion only, namely that the weaker party does not make any preparation for offering violence for the simple reason that the intention is absent, but when he is suddenly attacked he uses unconsciously, even without wishing to do so, any weapon that comes his way.

The first illustration chosen by me is that of a man who having a sword, uses it singlehanded against a horde of dacoits. The second is that of a woman using her nails and teeth or even a dagger in defence of her honour. She acts spontaneously. And the third is that of a mouse fighting a cat with its sharp teeth. These three illustrations were specially chosen by me in order to avoid illegitimate deduction being drawn in defence of offering studied violence.

One infallible test is that such a person is never successful in the sense of overpowering the aggressor. He or she dies and saves his or her honour rather than surrender to the demands of the aggressor. I was so guarded in the use of my language that I described the defence of the Poles against overwhelming numbers as "almost non-violence."

57. Having given proof against me to show that my professions about non-violence were "valueless" the author turns to my colleagues in the Congress High Command to observe how they interpreted my "views to their Congress followers and to their masses."

#### STUDENTS AND THE CONGRESS

The author sees objection in Pandit Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Shri Shankarrao Deo having singled out the student community for attention. Attention paid to the student community and peasantry was no new thing introduced for the first time for the sake of the struggle on the history of the Congress. As early as 1920 students were specially invited to join the non-co-operation movement and several thousands had responded to the call by suspending their studies.

I do not know what happened after the August arrests, in the Benares Hindu University. But assuming that some students belonging to it went astray, that is no ground for associating Pandit Nehru with their acts. Positive proof would be necessary to establish such connection.

Overwhelming proof can be produced in support of the contention that his faith in non-violence for the purpose of achieving Swaraj is inferior to nobody's. The same thing can be said about his exhortation to the Kisans of the United Provinces. There is, too, nothing in favour of violence in the other leaders' speeches so far as one can judge from the extracts given in the indictment.

#### THE "DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS"

58. Having dealt with the leaders' speeches the author comes to the 'detailed instructions regarding the conduct of the movement in existence before the All-India Congress Committee meeting in Bombay.' The 'first example' has been 'chosen'

from *Harijan* of August 9th. The article is entitled 'Ways of non-violent non-co-operation.' As it happens, it is a discussion in connection with the threatened invasion from Japan. Thus the article opens :

"Ever since 1920 we are familiar with some of the ways of offering non-violent non-co-operation. These included boycott of all Government institutions and services and extended to the non-payment of taxes. They were directed against a foreign Government in occupation of the country for years. The ways of non-co-operation to adopt against a new foreign invader would naturally differ in details. It would, as Gandhiji has said, extend to the refusal of food or water. All non-co-operation calculated to make the functioning of the enemy impossible, has to be resorted to."

Then the writer of the article (M. D.) has given samples of non-violent non-co-operation offered elsewhere than in India. They are not examples of non-violence consciously exercised. That the whole article was written to show what could be non-violently done to repel the invader, is clear from the final paragraph :

"What one has to remember is that, in war, repression would be ten times as severe as was resorted to in France but if there is the will to suffer, the resourcefulness to devise ways and means on the lines indicated in these different instances of passive resistance and above all the determination to drive out the invader, cost what it may, victory is certain. The vastness of our country, far from being a disadvantage, may be an advantage as the invader would find it difficult to cope with resistance on a thousand and one fronts.

#### NO VIOLENT INTENTION

59. The other example given by the author is an extract from an article by Shri K. G. Mashruwalla in *Harijan* of 23rd August, 1942. Shri Mashruwalla is a valued co-worker. He carries non-violence to an extreme which baffles those who know him intimately.

Nevertheless I do not propose to defend the paragraph quoted. He has guarded himself by saying that it represents his personal opinion only. He must have heard me debating the question whether interference with bridges, rails and the like could be classified as non-violent. I had always questioned the practicability of the interference being non-violent. Even if such interference could conceivably be non-violent, as I hold it can be, it is dangerous to put it before the masses who cannot be expected to do such things non-violently. Nor would I expect the British Power in the same category as the Japanese for the purposes of the movement.

60. Having allowed myself to criticise the opinion of a respected colleague, I wish to say that Shri Mashruwalla's opinion is no evidence of violent intention. At best it is an error of judgment which is much more likely in a novel subject like the applicability of "ahimsa" practised in all walks of life by masses of mankind. Great generals and statesmen have been known before now to have committed errors of judgment without losing caste or being accused of evil intentions.

#### THE ANDHRA CIRCULAR

61. Then comes the Andhra circular. I must regard it as forbidden ground for me inasmuch as I knew nothing about it before my arrest. Therefore I can only comment on it with reserve. Subject to that caution I consider the document to be harmless on the whole. This is its governing clause:

"The whole movement is based on non-violence. No act which contravenes these instructions should ever be undertaken. All acts of disobedience committed should be overt never covert (open but not under cover)."

The parenthesis is in the original. The following warning is also embodied in the circular:

"Ninety-nine chances out of hundred chances are for the inauguration of this movement by Mahatmaji at an early date, possibly a few hours after the next All-India Congress Committee meeting at Bombay. The D. C. C.'s should be alert and begin to act immediately, but please also take note that no movement should be launched or any overt act done till Mahatmaji decides. After all they may decide otherwise and you will be responsible for a great unwarranted mistake. Be ready, organise at once, be alert, but by no means act."

As to the body of the circular, I could not make myself responsible for some of the lines. But I must refuse to judge a thing which I cannot correct especially in the absence of what the Committee has to say on them, assuming of course that the circular is an authentic document. I miss in the indictment the text of an alleged written amendment raising the ban on the removal of rails.

62. Attention is then drawn to the fifth appendix showing how my mind was working in the direction of violence under the 'valueless' cover of nonviolence, as the author would say. The appendix gives what purports to be the All-India Congress Committee's instructions with extracts from my writings in parallel columns.

"NON-VIOLENCE AS I KNOW IT"

I have tried to study that appendix. I have nothing to withdraw from my writings. And I contend that there is not a trace of violence in the instructions alleged to be from All-India Congress Committee.

63. Independently of the argument in the indictment, I must now say something about non-violence as I know it. Its spread in all walks of life has been my mission from early youth. This covers a period of very nearly sixty-years. It was adopted at my instance as a policy by the Congress in 1920.

In its very nature it was meant to be paraded before the world, but it was accepted as a means indispensable for the attainment of Swaraj. Congressmen saw at an early date that its mere adoption on paper had no value. It was of use only in so far as it was put into practice individually and collectively. It was of no more use as a badge than a rifle in the hands of a person who did not know how to use it effectively on due occasion. Therefore if non-violence has raised the Congress prestige and popularity since its adoption, it has done so in exact proportion to its use, even as the power which the rifle gives to its possessor is in exact proportion to its effective use.

The comparison cannot be carried very far. Thus while violence is directed towards the injury, including the destruction, of the aggressor, and is successful only when it is stronger than that of the opponent, non-violent action can be taken in respect of an opponent, however powerfully organised for violence.

Violence *per se* of the weak has never been known to succeed against the stronger in violence. Success of non-violent action of the very weak is a daily occurrence. I make bold to say that I have applied to the present struggle the principles of non-violence as enunciated here. Nothing could be farther from my thought than injury to the person or property of those who are manning and regulating the machinery of British Imperialism as it operates in India.

My non-violence draws a fundamental distinction between the man and his machine. I would destroy a harmful machine without compunction, never the man. And this rule I have enforced in my dealings with my nearest relatives as also friends and associates not without considerable success.

AIMS OF WARDHA RESOLUTION

64. After disposing of non-violence the author has summarised what he calls the 'ostensible aims' of the Wardha resolution of July 14th. and the Bombay resolution of August 8th. as follows:

Three main ostensible aims are common to both the Wardha resolution of July 14th. (Appendix III-1) and the Bombay resolution of August 8th. (Appendix III-2.)

These are :

(1) To remove foreign domination over India.  
(2) To check the growing ill-will against Britain, with its danger of passive acceptance by the masses of aggression against India; to build up a spirit of resistance to aggression among Indians; and by granting India's millions immediate freedom to release that energy and enthusiasm which alone can enable India to play an effective part in her own defence and in her war as a whole.

(3) To achieve communal unity by the removal of the foreign power with its policy of divide and rule, which will be followed by the formation of a provisional Government representative of all sections of the Indian people.

Three further aims appeared for the first time in the Bombay resolution :

(4) To bring all subject and oppressed humanity to the side of the United Nations, thus giving these nations the moral and spiritual leadership of the world.

(5) To assist Asiatic nations under foreign domination to regain their freedom and to ensure that they are not again placed under the rule of any colonial power.

(6) To bring about a world federation which would ensure the disbanding of the national armies, navies and air forces, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all.

He says that "the genuineness of the first of these aims is undeniable. The freedom of India in whatever terms it may have been expressed, has long been

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the main goal of the Congress and it has been shown above how this aim coincides with one of the main motives underlying the 'Quit India' move."

Strange, as it appears to me, notwithstanding this admission of the genuineness of the first aim, he ridicules the others in some shape or form. I contend that all the others follow from the first.

Thus if the foreign domination goes by agreement, ill-will against Britain is automatically turned into goodwill and the energy of millions is set free on behalf of the Allied cause.

Similarly, communal unity must follow as day follows night when the night of foreign domination is gone. If nearly four hundred million people become free, other portions of oppressed humanity must also become free and naturally the Allied Nations being privy to this freedom, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world comes to them without seeking.

The fifth aim is included in the fourth, and the sixth is but a repetition of the aim of the whole of humanity which it must attain or perish without.

It is true that the three last aims were added in Bombay. That surely is not a matter to cavil at. Even if they were a result of criticism, what is there wrong about it? No democratic organisation can afford to defy criticism, for it has to live upon the fresh air of criticism. As a matter of fact, however, world federation and rights of non-White people are not new ideas for Congressmen. They have been mentioned in Congress resolutions on other occasions. The paragraph about world federation found place in the August resolution at the instance of a European friend and about non-White people at mine.

65. As to the disturbances that took place after the arrests of 9th August I have carefully read chapters IV and V of the indictment detailing them as also the appendices purporting to be instructions from various bodies. I must refuse to judge these one-sided statements or unverified documents.

As to the so-called instructions, I can say that, so far as they are contrary to non-violence, they can never have my approval.

### OMISSION OF REFERENCE TO GOVT. REPRISALS

66. One searches in vain in the indictment for a detailed account of the measures taken by the Government by way of reprisals. And if one is to believe what has been allowed to appear in the press about these measures, the so-called misdeeds of exasperated people, whether they can be described as Congressmen or not, pale into insignificance.

### ARRESTS OF LEADERS THE CAUSE

The most natural way to look at the disturbances is that they broke out after the arrests, which were, therefore, the cause. The indictment has been framed for the sole purpose, as the title shows, of fastening the responsibility on the Congress. The argument seems to me to be this. First, I and then the Congress had been setting the stage for a mass movement since April, 1942, when I first bruited the idea of British withdrawal, popularly known as "Quit India." A mass movement was bound to result in the outbreak of violence. I and the Congressmen who had accepted my guidance had intended that violence should take place. Leaders had been preaching it. Hence the disturbances were to take place in any case. The arrests, therefore, merely anticipated that violent movement and nipped it in the bud. This sums up the reasoning the indictment.

### "WOULD HAVE STRAINED TO MAKE NEGOTIATIONS SUCCESSFUL"

I have endeavoured to show that no special stage for a mass movement was set or contemplated because of my proposal for British withdrawal, that violence was never contemplated by me or any Congress leader, that I had declared that, if Congressmen indulged in an orgy of violence, they might not find me alive in their midst, that the mass movement was never started by me, that the sole charge of starting it was vested in me, that I had contemplated negotiations with the Government, that I was to start the movement only on failure of negotiations and that I had envisaged an interval of "two or three weeks" for the negotiations. It is, therefore, clear that, but for the arrests, no such disturbances would have taken place as happened on 9th August last and after. I would have strained every nerve, first, to make the negotiations successful and secondly, if I had failed, to avoid disturbances. The Government would have been no less able to suppress them than they were in August last. Only they would have had some cause against me and the Congress.

It was the duty of the Government, before taking action, to study the speeches

of the Congress leaders and myself at the All-India Congress Committee meeting. The Congress leaders were desirous that the movement should remain non-violent, if only because they knew that no violent movement, in the existing circumstances, could possibly succeed when matched against a most powerfully equipped Government. Whatever violence was committed by people, whether Congressmen or others, was therefore committed in spite of the leaders' wishes. If it is held otherwise by the Government it should be proved beyond doubt before an impartial tribunal. But why seek to shift the responsibility, when the cause is patent? The Government action in enforcing India-wide arrests was so violent that the populace, which was in sympathy with the Congress, lost self-control. The loss of self-control cannot imply Congress complicity, but it does imply that the power of endurance of human nature has limitations. If Government action was in excess of the endurance of human nature, its authors were responsible for the explosions that followed. But the Government may assert that the arrests were necessary. If so, why should the Government fight shy of taking the responsibility for the consequences of their action? The wonder to me is that the Government, at all, need to justify their action when they know their will is law.

#### GOVT. AUTOCRACY VS. CONGRESS DEMOCRACY

Let me analyse the system of Government in vogue here. A population numbering nearly 400 millions of people, belonging to an ancient civilisation, are being ruled by a British representative called Viceroy and Governor General, aided by 250 officials called Collectors and supported by a strong British garrison with a large number of Indian soldiers, trained by British officers, and carefully isolated from the populace. The Viceroy enjoys within his own sphere powers much larger than the King of England. Such powers, as far as I know, are not enjoyed by any other person in the world. The Collectors are miniature Viceroy's in their own spheres. They are first and foremost, as their name implies, collectors of revenue in their own districts and have magisterial powers. They can requisition the military to their aid when they think necessary. They are also Political Agents for the small Chieftains within their jurisdiction, and they are in the place of overlords to them.

Contrast this with the Congress, the most truly democratic organisation in the world—not because of its numerical strength, but because its only sanctions deliberately adopted is non-violence. From its inception, the Congress has been a democratic body, seeking to represent all India. However feeble\* and imperfect the attempt may have been, the Congress has never in its history of now nearly sixty years shifted its gaze from the pole star of India's freedom. It has progressed from stage to stage in its march towards democracy in the truest term. The Congress learnt the spirit of democracy from Great Britain. No Congressman would care to deny the statement, though it must be added that the roots were to be found in the old panchayat system. It can never brook Nazi, Fascist or Japanese domination. An organisation whose very breath is freedom, and which pits itself against the most powerfully organised imperialism, will perish to a man in the attempt to resist all domination. So long as it clings to non-violence, it will be uncrushable and unconquerable.

#### "QUIT INDIA"—A CRY OF ANGUISH

What can be the cause of the extraordinary resentment against the Congress into which the Government have betrayed themselves? I have never known them before to exhibit so much irritation. Does the cause lie in the "Quit India" formula? The disturbances cannot be the cause, because the resentment began to show itself soon after the publication of my proposal for British withdrawal. It crystallized into the wholesale arrests of 9th August last which were pre-arranged and merely awaited the passing of the resolution on 8th August. Yet there is nothing novel in the resolution save the "Quit India" formula. Mass movements have been known to be on the Congress programme ever since 1920. But freedom seemed elusive. Now the Hindu-Muslim disunity, now the pledges to the Princes, now the interests of the Scheduled Classes, now the vested interests of Europeans, barred the gateway to freedom. Divide and rule was an inexhaustible well. The sands of time were running out, rivers of blood were flowing fast among the warring nations, and politically-minded India was looking on helplessly—the masses were inert. Hence the cry of "Quit India." It gave body to the freedom movement. The cry was unanswerable. Those who were anxious to play their part in the world crisis found vent in that cry of anguish. Its root is in the will to save democracy from Nazism as well as Imperialism.

For, satisfaction of the Congress demand meant assurance of victory of democracy over any combination of reactionary forces and deliverance of China and Russia from the menace of Japan and Germany respectively but the demand irritated the Government. They distrusted those who were associated with the demand and thereby they themselves became the greatest impediment to the war effort. It is wrong, therefore, to accuse the Congress of hindering war effort. Congress activity up to the night of 8th August was confined to resolutions only. The dawn of the 9th saw the Congress imprisoned. What followed was a direct result of the Government action.

#### SINCERITY OF GOVERNMENT'S PROFESSIONS DOUBTED

The resentment over what I hold to be a just and honourable desire confirms the popular suspicion about the *bonafides* of the Government's professions about democracy and freedom after the war. If the Government were sincere, they would have welcomed the offer of help made by the Congress. Congressmen, who have been fighting for India's liberty for over half a century, would have flocked to the Allied banner as one man for the defence of India's freedom newly won. But the Government did not wish to treat India as an equal partner and ally. They put out of action those who made this demand. Some of them are even being hounded as if they were dangerous criminals. I have in mind Shri Jai Prakash Narayan and others like him. A reward of Rs. 5,000, now doubled, has been promised to the informant who would show his hiding place. I have taken Shri Jai Prakash Narayan purposely as my illustration because, as he very rightly says, he differs from me on several fundamentals. But my differences, great as they are, do not blind me to his indomitable courage and his sacrifice of all that a man holds dear for the love of his country. I have read his manifesto which is given as an appendix to the indictment. Though I cannot subscribe to some of the views expressed therein, it breathes nothing but burning patriotism and his impatience of foreign domination. It is virtue of which any country would be proud.

#### ACTION AGAINST CONSTRUCTIVE WORKERS CRITICISED

So much for politically-minded Congressmen. In the constructive department of the Congress also Government have deprived themselves of the best talent in the country for the organisation of hand industries which are so vital a need in wartime. The All-India Spinners' Association, which is responsible for having distributed without fuss over three crores of rupees as wages among the poor villagers whom no one had reached and whose labour was being wasted, has come in for a heavy hand. Its President, Shri Jajuji, and many of his co-workers have been imprisoned without trial and without any known reason. Khadi centres, which are trust property, have been confiscated to the Government. I do not know the law under which such property can be confiscated and the tragedy is that the confiscators are themselves unable to run these centres which were producing and distributing cloth. Khadi and charkhas have been reported to have been burnt by the authorities. The All-India Village Industries Association worked by the Kumarappa brothers has also received much the same treatment. Shri Vinoba Bhave is an institution by himself. Many workers were incessantly doing creative labour under his guidance. Most men and women of constructive organisations are not political workers. They are devoted to constructive work of the highest merit. And if some of them have found it necessary to appear at all on the political field, it is a matter for the Government to reflect upon. To put such organisations and their supervisors under duress is in my opinion an unpardonable interference with war effort.

The self-satisfaction with which the highest officials proclaim that limitless men and material are being had from this unhappy land, is truly amazing, while the inhabitants of India are suffering from shortage of food, clothing and many other necessities of life. I make bold to say that this scarcity would have been largely minimised, if not altogether obviated, if instead of imprisoning Congress workers throughout India, the Government had utilised their services. The Government had two striking illustrations of the efficient working by the Congress agency—I mean the handling of the disastrous Bihar earthquake by Congress under Dr. Rajendra Prasad and of the equally disastrous flood in Gujarat under Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

#### "WITHDRAW THE INDICTMENT"

This brings me to the end of my reply to the indictment. It has become much longer than I had wanted to make it. It has cost me and my co-workers

in the camp no end of labour. Although I must ask, in fairness to myself and the cause I represent, for the publication of this reply, my chief purpose is to carry conviction to the Government that the indictment contains no proof of the allegations against the Congress and me. The Government know that the public in India seem to have distrusted the indictment and regarded it as designed for foreign propaganda. Men like Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and the Rt. Hon. Shri M. R. Jayakar have given their opinion that the "evidence" produced in the indictment is of no judicial value. Therefore, the Government should withdraw the indictment, I see from the preface to the indictment that the Government have in their possession "valuable evidence," presumably incriminating the detenus I submit that, if the Government cannot safely divulge the evidence, they should discharge the detenus and bring to book those who, after discharge, may be caught in the act of committing or promoting crimes. With limitless power at their back, they need not resort to unsustainable accusations.

It will be noticed that, although the indictment is a Government publication, I have only criticised its unknown author in the fond hope that the individual members composing the Government of India have not read the originals on which it is based. For, I am of opinion that no one having a knowledge of the originals could possibly endorse the inferences and innuendoes with which it is replete.

Lastly, I wish to state that, if I have anywhere erred in analysing the indictment and if my error is pointed out to me, I shall gladly correct myself. I have simply written as I have felt.

I am, Yours sincerely, M. K. Gandhi.

## Gandhi—Tottenham Correspondence

Sir R. Tottenham's Letter

The following further letters were exchanged on the reply :

Home Department, October 14th. 1943.

Sir,

I am directed to reply to your letter of the 15th. July in which you have attempted to controvert certain passages appearing in the Government publication "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances 1942-43." At the outset, I am to remind you that the document in question was published for the information of the public and not for the purpose of convincing you or eliciting your defence. It was supplied to you only at your own request and in forwarding it Government neither invited nor desired your comments upon it. Since, however, you have thought fit to address Government on the subject, I am to say that Government have given due consideration to your letter.

### "DEFEATIST OUTLOOK TOWARDS JAP THREAT"

Government regret to observe that although your letter contains lengthy quotations from your own utterances and writing, it contains no fresh or categorical statement of your own attitude in regard to the material issues or any clear repudiation of the disastrous policy to which you and the Congress Party committed yourselves in the series of events leading up to the Congress resolution of the 8th. August, 1942. The purpose of your letter appears to be to suggest that you have been misrepresented in some way in "Congress Responsibility," but in what substantial respect is not clear. No attempt was made in the book, as you seem to think, to charge you with pro-Japanese sympathies and the sentence at the end of the first chapter, to which you have taken exception in paragraph 18 of your letter, was merely an echo of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's own words quoted on the previous page. He has not, as you wrongly allege, repudiated those words in the published statement to which you refer. It was, however, one of the purposes of the book to find an explanation of your actions in your own defeatist outlook towards the threat from Japan and your fear that, unless the Allied forces withdrew in time, India would become a battle-field in which the Japanese would ultimately win. This feeling was attributed to you by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru himself in the course of his remarks to which

reference has been made above and your own draft of the Allahabad resolution makes it plain that, both in the "Quit India" campaign and the Congress resolution which was intended to enforce it, your object was to be left in a position in which you and the Congress would be free to make terms with Japan. The Government of India note that your letter makes no attempt to meet this imputation, which they still regard as true. It is the only explanation which is consistent with your own statement that "the presence of the British in India is an invitation to the Japanese to invade India. Their withdrawal removes the bait." Nor have you been able to explain on any theory other than that suggested in the book the contradiction between this statement and your subsequent avowal of your willingness to permit the retention of Allied troops on Indian soil.

#### GANDHIJI ACCUSED OF "INCREDIBLE LEVITY"

The Government of India are not disposed to follow you into the various verbal points that you have raised. They do not deny that, owing to your habit of reinterpreting your own statements to suit the purposes of the moment, it is easy for you to quote passages from your utterances or writings which are in apparent contradiction to any view attributed to you. But the fact that you admit the discovery of important gaps in them or that you have found it necessary from time to time to put glosses on what you have said, is itself evidence of the incredible levity with which, in a moment of grave crisis, you made pronouncements in regard to matters of the most vital importance to India's defences and her internal peace. Government can only interpret your statements in the plain sense of the words as it would appear to any honest or unbiassed reader and they are satisfied that the book "Congress Responsibility" contains no material misrepresentation of the general trend of your utterances during the relevant period.

#### REFERENCE TO "OPEN REBELLION"

You have devoted considerable space in your letter to an apparent attempt to disown the phrase attributed to you in the A. P. I. report of a press conference which you held at Wardha on the 14th July 1942, where you are reported to have said: "There is no question of one more chance. After all it is an open rebellion." This press message was reproduced at the time by newspapers throughout India. You now wish the Government of India to believe that you first became aware of it on the 26th June, 1943. They can only regard it as highly improbable that, if it did not correctly represent what you said, it should not have been brought to your notice at the time or that you should have left it uncontradicted during the following weeks while you were still at liberty.

The Government of India also note that you still seek to cast on the Government the responsibility for the disturbances for reasons which they can only regard as trivial and which have already been answered in your published correspondence with His Excellency the Viceroy. The point which is clearly established by the book "Congress Responsibility" is that those disturbances were the natural and predictable consequence of your declaration of an "open rebellion" and the propaganda which preceded it. That you yourself could have foreseen those consequences is clear from the statement which you yourself made in court in 1922 when you admitted the impossibility of dissociating yourself from the "diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura and the mad outrages of Bombay" and went on to say that you knew that you were playing with fire, but you had taken the risk and would do so again. If you now contend that the consequences were unintended and unforeseen, this fact is itself an admission of your own inability to judge the reactions of your followers. You now seek to excuse, if not to defend, the barbarities committed in your own name and that of the Congress rather than to condemn them. It is clear where your sympathies lie. Your letter does not contain one word of explanation of your own message "Do or die," nor does it throw any light on your message, quoted in Appendix X of the book, which, if you cannot disown it, is sufficient to refute your contention that no movement had been launched by you at the time when the disturbances took place.

I am finally to refer to your request for the publication of your letter. In the first place, I am to remind you of your own position, which has already been explained to you, viz., that so long as the grounds for your detention remain unchanged, Government are not prepared to afford you any facilities for communication with the general public nor are they prepared themselves to act as agents for your propaganda. In the second place, I am to point out that you had ample opportunities during the months preceding the Congress Resolution of the 8th August 1942 to make your meaning unequivocally clear before you were arrested.

The fact that your own followers interpreted your intentions in the same way as Government leaves no scope for further explanations. I am to inform you, therefore, that Government do not propose to publish your letter unless and until they think fit. This decision is, however, without prejudice to the freedom of Government to use at any time and in any manner which they think fit the various admissions contained in the communications which you have voluntarily addressed to them.

To the extent that your present letter may be designed to relieve you of responsibility for the Congress rebellion and the connected events that have taken place, Government regret that they cannot accept it as in any way relieving you of that responsibility, or, indeed, to their regret, as a serious attempt to justify yourself. They observe again with regret that you have taken no step in your letter to dissociate yourself personally from the Congress Resolution of 8th August 1942 ; they condemn unequivocally the violent outrages which took place in your name after the passing of that resolution ; to declare yourself unequivocally in favour of the use of all the resources of India for the prosecution of the war against the Axis Powers and in particular Japan, until victory is won ; or to give satisfactory assurances for good conduct in the future. And in the absence of any sign of any change of mind on your part and of any disclaimer of the policy as the result of which it has been necessary to restrain your movements and those of the Working Committee of the Congress they are unable to take any further action on your present communication.

I am, etc.,  
R. Tottenham.

Gandhi's Reply

October 26th, 1943.

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th instant received on 18th instant.

Your letter makes it clear that my reply to the charges brought against me in the Government publication "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances, 1942-43" has failed in its purpose, namely, to convince the Government of my innocence of those charges. Even my good faith is impugned.

I observe too that the Government did not desire "comments" upon the charges. Previous pronouncements of the Government on such matters had led me to think otherwise. Be that as it may, your current letter seems to invite an answer.

In my opinion, I have, in my letter of 15th July last, unequivocally answered all charges referred to in your letter under reply. I have no regret for what I have done or said in the course of the struggle for India's freedom.

#### DESIRE TO DISCUSS WITH WORKING COMMITTEE

As to the Congress Resolution of 8th August 1942, apart from my belief that it is not only harmless but good all round, I have no legal power to alter it in any way. That can only be done by the body that passed that resolution, i.e., the All-India Congress Committee, which is no doubt guided by its Working Committee. As the Government are aware, I offered to meet the members of the Working Committee in order to discuss the situation and to know their mind. But my offer was rejected. I have thought and still think that my talk with them might have some value from the Government stand-point. Hence I repeat my offer. But it may have no such value so long as the Government doubt my *bona fides*. As a Satyagrahi, however, in spite of the handicap, I must reiterate what I hold to be good and of immediate importance in terms of war effort. But if my offer has no chance of being accepted so long as I retain my present views, and if the Government think that it is only my evil influence that corrupts people, I submit that the members of the Working Committee and other detenus should be discharged. It is unthinkable that, when India's millions are suffering from preventable starvation and thousands are dying of it, thousands of men and women should be kept in detention on mere suspicion, when their energy and the expense incurred in keeping them under duress could, at this critical time, be usefully employed in relieving distress. As I have said in my letter of 15th July last, Congressmen abundantly proved their administrative, creative and humanitarian worth at the time of the last terrible flood in Gujerat and equally terrible earthquake in Bihar. The huge palace in which I am being detained with a large guard around me, I hold to be waste of public funds. I should be quite content to pass my days in any prison.

## REFER CHARGES TO AN IMPARTIAL TRIBUNAL

As to "satisfactory assurances" about my "good conduct" I can only say that I am unaware of any unworthy conduct at any time. I presume that the impression Government have of my conduct is referable to the charges mentioned in the indictment, as I have succinctly called 'Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances 1942-43.' And since I have not only denied the charges *in toto* but on the contrary have ventured to bring counter-charges against the Government, I think that they should agree to refer both to an impartial tribunal. Seeing that a big political organisation and not a mere individual is involved in the charges, I hold that it should be a vital part of the war effort to have the issue decided by a tribunal, if mutual discussion and effort are considered by the Government to be undesirable and—or futile.

Whilst your letter rejects my request that my letter of 15th. July last should, in fairness to me, be published, you inform me that their decision in this matter, however, "is without prejudice to the freedom of Government to use at any time and in any manner which they think fit the various admissions contained in the communication which you have voluntarily addressed to them." I can only hope that this does not mean that, as in the case of the "Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances 1942-43," garbled extracts will be published. My request is that my letter should be published in full, if and when the Government think fit to make public use of it.

I am  
M. K. Gandhi.

## Request for Meeting With Colleagues Rejected

Home Department,  
November 18th, 1943.

Sir,

In reply to your letter of October 26th, I am directed to say that since there is no change in your attitude towards the Congress Resolution of August 8th, 1942, and Government have received no indication that the views of any of the members of the Working Committee differ from your own, a meeting between you would appear to serve no useful purpose. Both you and they are well aware of the conditions on which such a proposal could be entertained.

I am to add that the other points in your letter have been noted.

I, am etc.  
R. Tottenham.

## Stoppage of Letter to Mr. Jinnah

## GANDHIJI'S COMPLAINT TO SIR R. TOTTENHAM

*Following are letters exchanged between Mr. Gandhi and the Home Department on the interception of his letter to Mr. Jinnah :*

May 27th, 1943.

Dear Sir Richard Tottenham.

I received last evening your letter of the 24th. instant refusing my request to forward my letter addressed to Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah. I wrote only yesterday to the Superintendent of this camp asking him kindly to inquire whether my letter to Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah, and later, one dated the 15th. instant, to Right Honourable Lord Samuel had been forwarded to the respective addresses.

I am sorry for the Government's decision. For my letter to the Quaid-e-Azam was sent in reply to his public invitation to me to write to him and I was especially encouraged to do so because his language had led me to think that if I wrote to him, my letter would be forwarded to him. The public too are anxious that the Quaid-e-Azam and I should meet or at least establish contact. I have always been anxious to meet the Quaid-e-Azam, if perchance we could devise some solution of the communal tangle which might be generally acceptable. Therefore the disability in the present instance is much more that of the public than mine. As a Satyagrahi I may not regard as disabilities the restrictions which the Government have imposed upon me. As the Government are aware, I have denied myself even the pleasure of writing to my relatives as I am not allowed to perform the service of writing to my co-workers who are in a sense more to me than my relatives.

The advance copy of the contemplated communique with which you have considerably favoured me requires emendation in more places than one. For, as it stands, it does not fit in with facts.

As to the disavowal referred to in the proposed communique, the Government are aware that I regard the non-violent mass movement, for the launching of which the Congress gave me authority on the 8th. of August last, as perfectly legitimate and in the interest both of the Government and the public. As it is, the Government left me no time to start the movement. Therefore, how could a movement, which was never started, embarrass "India's" war effort? If then, there was any embarrassment by reason of the popular resentment of the Government's action in resorting to the wholesale arrests of principal Congressmen, the responsibility was solely that of the Government. The mass movement, as the resolution sanctioning it said in so many words, was sanctioned in order to promote India-wide effort on behalf of the Allied cause, including the causes of Russia and China, whose danger was very great in August last and from which in my opinion, they are by no means free even now. I hope the Government will not feel offended when I say that all the war effort that is being put forth in India is not India's but the alien Government's. I submit that if the Government had complied with the request of the Congress as embodied in its August Resolution, there would have been a mass effort without parallel for winning the battle for human freedom and ridding the world of the menace that Fascism, Nazism, Japanism and Imperialism are. I may be wholly wrong, anyway, this is my deliberate and honest opinion.

In order to make the communique accord with facts, I suggest the following alteration in the first paragraph: After "Mr. Jinnah" and "in response to his public invitation to Mr. Gandhi to write to him, stating that he (Mr. Gandhi) would be willing to correspond with or meet him according as he wished."

I hope that the remaining portion of the communique too will be suitably amended in the light of my submission.

I am yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi.

May 28th, 1943.

Dear Sir Richard Tottenham,

I handed my reply to your letter of the 24th, insted, at about one o'clock yesterday, to the Superintendent. I hurried the writing and the despatch in the hope of my letter reaching you before the publication of the communique. I was therefore astonished and grieved to find the communique in the papers received in the afternoon, and *Reuter's* report of the reactions upon it in London. Evidently, there was no meaning in an advance copy of the communique being sent to me. I regard the communique not only to be inconsistent with facts, but unfair to me. The only way partial redress can be given to me is the publication of the correspondence between us. I therefore request that it may be published.

I am, yours sincerely,  
M. K. Gandhi.

#### Official Reply

Home Department, June 4th, 1943.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am directed to acknowledge your letter to Sir Richard Tottenham, dated 27th. May 1943, and to say that the Government of India have considered it but see no reason to modify their communique already published.

Your Sincerely,  
E. Conran-Smith, Secretary to the Government of India.

June 8th, 1943.

Dear Mr. Gandhi.

In reply to your letter to Sir Richard Tottenham, dated 28th. May 1943, I am directed to say that the advance copy of the communique stating Government's reason for not forwarding your letter to Mr. Jinnah was furnished to you for your personal information and that Government regret they see no reason to publish the correspondence.

Your Sincerely,  
E. Conran-Smith.

# Gandhi—Maxwell Correspondence

## Maxwell's Refusal to Correct Errors

On May 21, 1943 Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Sir Reginald Maxwell, then Home Member to the Government of India, pointing out "some errors" of fact and misquotations in the latter's speech in the Assembly in justification of the August arrests of Congress leaders. The following are extracts from the letter, paras 5 to 8, 10, 11 and 15 being omitted because they deal with points already covered by Gandhi in his reply to the Tottenham pamphlet :—

Dear Sir Reginald Maxwell,

It was only on the 10th instant, that I read your speech delivered in the Legislative Assembly on the 15th February last on the adjournment motion about my fast. I saw at once that it demanded a reply. I wish I had read it earlier.

I observe that you are angry, or at least were at the time you delivered your speech. I cannot in any other way account for your palpable inaccuracies. This letter is an endeavour to show them.....It is written to you, not as an official, but as man to man.

The first thought that came to me was that your speech was a deliberate distortion of facts. But I quickly revised it.....So long as there was a favourable construction possible to put upon your language, the unfavourable had to be rejected. I must assume therefore that what appeared to me to be distortions were not deliberate.

You have said that "the correspondence that led to the fast is there for anyone to interpret as he chooses", yet you have straightaway told your audience that "it can perhaps be read in the light of the following facts." Did you leave them the choice?

I now take your "facts" seriatim :—

1—"When the Congress Party passed their resolution of August 8th, a Japanese attack on this country was thought to be likely."

You seem to have conveyed the meaning that the thought was that of the Congress and that it was gratuitous. The fact is that the Government gave currency to the thought and emphasised it by action which even seemed ludicrous.

2—"By demanding the withdrawal of British power from India and by placing the Congress in open opposition to it the Congress Party might be thought to have hoped for some advantage to themselves if the Japanese attack succeeded."

Now this is not a fact but your opinion, wholly contrary to facts. Congressmen never hoped for, nor desired any advantage from, Japanese success; on the contrary, they dreaded it and that dread inspired the desire for the immediate end of British rule. All this is crystal clear from the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee (8th August, 1942) and my writings.

### "HOPE" FROM JAPANESE

3—"To-day, six months after the Japanese danger has, at any rate, for the time being receded and there is little immediate hope from that quarter....."

This again is your opinion: mine is that the Japanese danger has not receded.....It still stares India in the face. Your fling that "there is little immediate hope from that quarter," should be withdrawn unless you think and prove that the resolution and my writings adverted to in the previous paragraph did not mean what they said.

4. "The movement initiated by the Congress has been decisively defeated."

I must combat this statement. Satyagraha knows no defeat. It flourishes on blows the hardest imaginable. But I need not go to that bower for comfort. I learnt in schools established by the British Government of India that "Freedom's battle once begun is bequeathed from bleeding sire to son." It is of little moment when the goal is reached so long as effort is not relaxed.

The dawn came with the establishment of the Congress sixty years ago. Sixth of April, 1919, on which All-India Satyagraha began, saw a spontaneous awakening from one end of India to the other.

You can certainly derive comfort, if you like, from the fact that the immediate objective of the movement was not gained as some Congressmen had expected. But that is no criterion of 'decisive' or any 'defeat.' It ill-becomes one belonging to a race which owns no defeat to deduce defeat of a popular movement from the

suppression of popular exuberance, may be not always wise, by a frightful exhibition of power.

#### FAST NOT TO SECURE RELEASE

9. "But now, fresh light emerges. Government without granting any of his demands informed Mr. Gandhi that they would release him for the purpose and for the duration of the fast in order to make it clear they disclaimed responsibility for the consequences. On that, Mr. Gandhi replied that if he was released, he would at once abandon the fast, and that he had conceived the fast only as a prisoner. Thus, if he were released, the objects for which he declared his fast, although still unfulfilled, would recede into the background. As a free man, he would neither demand these objects nor fast. Interpreted in this way, his fast would seem to amount to little more than a demand for release."

Together with the letter containing the offer of release, a copy of the draft communique that was to be issued by the Government was delivered to me. It did not say that the offer was made in order to make it clear that the Government "disclaimed responsibility for the consequences." If I had seen that offending sentence he would have sent a simple refusal. In my innocence, I put a fair meaning on the offer and in my reply I argued why I could not accept it. And, according to my wont, in order that the Government may not be misled in any shape or form, I told them how the fast was conceived and why it could not be taken by me as a free man. I went out of my way even to postpone, for the convenience of the Government, the commencement of the fast by a day. Mr. Irwin who had brought the offer and the draft communique appreciated the courtesy. Why was this reply of mine withheld from the public at the time the revised communique was issued, and why was unwarranted interpretation given instead? Was not my letter a material document.

Now for the second wrong. You say that if I were released my objects for which I had declared the fast would recede into the background, and even gratuitously suggest that as a free man I would neither demand these objects nor fast. As a free man I could and would have carried on an agitation for an impartial public inquiry into the charges brought against Congressmen and me. I would also have asked for permission to see the imprisoned Congressmen. Assume that my agitation had failed to make any impression on the Government, I might then have fasted. All this, if you were not labouring under intense irritation, you could have plainly seen from my letter, supported as you would have been by my past record. Instead, you have deduced a meaning, which according to the simple rules of construction, you had no right to deduce.....

Again as a free man I would have had the opportunity of examining the tales of destruction said to have been wrought by Congressmen and even by non-Congressmen. And if I had found that they had committed wanton acts of murder, then also I might have fasted as I have done before now.

You should thus see that the demands made in my letter to H. E. the Viceroy would not have receded into the background if I had been released, for they could have been pressed otherwise than by the fast, and that the fast had not the remotest connection with any desire for release. ....

Moreover imprisonment is never irksome to a Satyagrahi. For him a prison is a gateway of Liberty.

12. "I must confess that speaking for myself it is certainly repugnant to western ideas of decency to exploit against an opponent his feelings of humanity, chivalry or mercy or to trifle with such a sacred trust as one's own life in order to play on the feelings of the public for the sake of some purely mundane object."

I must tread with extreme caution upon the ground with which you are infinitely more familiar than I can be. Let me however remind you of the historic fast of the late MacSwiney. I know that the British Government let him die in imprisonment. But he has been acclaimed by the Irish people as a hero and a martyr.

#### "BEGGED GOVT. NOT TO BE A DAMNED FOOL."

Edward Thompson in his "You have lived through all this" says that the late Mr. Asquith called the British Government's action a "political blunder of the first magnitude." The author adds: "He was allowed to die by inches while the world watched with a passion of admiration and sympathy and innumerable British men and women begged their Government not to be such a damned fool."

And is it repugnant to western ideas of decency to exploit (if that expression

must be retained.) against the opponent his feelings of humanity, chivalry or mercy ?

Which is better, to take the opponent's life secretly or openly, or to credit him with finer feelings and evoke them by fasting and the like ?

Again, which is better, to trifle with one's own life by fasting or some other way of self-immolation, or to trifle with it by engaging in an attempt to compass the destruction of the opponent and his dependants ?

13. "What he says in effect is this. 'You say, Government is right and the Congress is wrong. I say the Congress is right and the Government is wrong. I choose to put the burden of proof on you. I am the only person to be convinced. You must either admit you are wrong or submit your reasons to me and make me the sole arbiter in the matter.....' It seems to me that Mr. Gandhi's demands is rather like asking the United Nations to appoint Hitler to adjudge the responsibility for the present war. It is not usual in this country to put the accused person on the bench to judge his own case."

This is an unbecoming caricature of my letters to the Viceroy. What I said in effect was this : "You have allowed me to consider myself as your friend. I do not want to stand on my rights and demand a trial. You accuse me of being in the wrong. I contend that your Government is in the wrong. Since you would not admit your Government's error you owe it to me to let me know wherein I have erred. For, I am in the dark as to how I have erred. If you convince me of my guilt, I will make ample amends."

#### WOLF AND THE LAMB

My simple request you have turned against me and compared me to an imaginary Hitler appointed to adjudge his own case. If you do not accept my interpretation of my own letters, can I not say, let an impartial judge examine the rival interpretation ? Will it be an offensive comparison if I recall the fable of the wolf who was always in the right and the lamb who was always in the wrong ?

14. "Mr. Gandhi is the leader of an open rebellion.....He forfeits that right (the right of being heard) so long as he remains an open rebel. He cannot claim to function except through the success of his own method. He cannot take part in the public life under the protection of the law that he denies. He cannot be a citizen and yet not a subject."

You are right in describing me as the leader of an open rebellion except for a fundamental omission namely, strictly non-violent. This omission is on a par with the omission of 'nots' from the commandments and quoting them in support of killing, stealing, etc.

You may dismiss the phrase or explain it away in any manner you like. But when you quote a person you may not omit anything from his language especially an omission which changes the whole aspect of things.

I have declared myself an open rebel on many occasions, even during my visit to London on the occasion of the second Round Table Conference. But the anathema that you have pronounced against me has not been pronounced before.....

You will perhaps recall the time when the late Lord Reading was willing to hold a Round Table Conference in which I was to be present, although I was leading a mass civil disobedience movement. I was not called because I had insisted that the Ali Brothers, who were then in prison, should be released.

British history which I was taught as a lad had it that Wat Tyler and John Hampden who had rebelled were heroes. In very recent times the British Government treated with Irish rebels whilst their hands were still red with blood. Why should I become an outcast although my rebellion is innocent and I have had nothing to do with violence ?

In spite of the validity of my claim that you have enunciated a novel doctrine, I admit that you made a perfect statement when you said : "He cannot claim to function except through the success of his own method." My method being based on truth and non-violence ever succeeds to the extent it is applied. Therefore, I function always and only through the success of my method and to the extent that I correctly represent, in my own person, its fundamentals.

The moment I became a Satyagrahi from that moment I ceased to be a subject, but never ceased to be a citizen. A citizen obeys laws voluntarily and never under compulsion or for fear of the punishment prescribed for their breach. He breaks them when he considers it necessary and welcomes the punishment. That robs it of its edge or of the disgrace which it is supposed to imply.

"ARMED" WITH A RESOLUTION

16. "It is not the method of peaceful persuasion to go to the person whom you wish to convince armed with a Resolution declaring mass rebellion. The essence of negotiation is that both parties should be uncommitted and that neither should exert the pressure of force on the other. That is true in any circumstances. But as between a subject and the State which rules him the position is still more emphatic. It is not for the subject to deal with the State on equal terms, still less to approach it with an open threat."

At the outset let me make one correction. The resolution did not 'declare' mass rebellion. It merely sanctioned the "starting of a mass struggle on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale so that the country might utilise all the non-violent strength it has gathered during the last twenty-two years of peaceful struggle. I was to guide the nation in the steps to be taken." The paragraph sanctioning the mass struggle also "appeals to Britain and the United Nations in the interest of world freedom."

The essence of negotiation should undoubtedly be that the parties are uncommitted and that neither "exerts the pressure of force on the other." In the case under consideration the actual position is that one party has overwhelming force at its disposal and the other has none. About non-committal too the Congress has no commitments except the immediate attainment of freedom. Subject to that there is the widest latitude for negotiation.

Your proposition about the subject and the state is, I knew, a reply to the cry of 'Quit India.' Only the cry is intrinsically just and the subject and the state formula is too antediluvian to have any real meaning. It is because the Congress has felt the subjection of India as an unsufferable reproach that it has risen against it. A well ordered state is subject to the people. It does not descend upon the people from above but the people make and unmake it.

The resolution of 8th August did not contain any threat, open or veiled. It prescribed the limitations under which the negotiations could be carried on and its sanction was free of all 'force' i. e., violence. It consisted of self-suffering. Instead of appreciating the fact that the Congress laid all its cards on the table, you have given a sinister meaning to the whole movement by drawing unwarranted inferences.

In so far as there was any violence after the 8th August last on the part of any Congressman, it was wholly unauthorised as is quite clear from the resolution itself. The Government in their wisdom left me no time whatsoever for issuing instructions. The All India Congress Committee finished after midnight on the 8th August. Well before sunrise on the 9th, I was carried away by the Police Commissioner without being told what crime I had committed. And so were the members of the Working Committee and the principal Congressmen who happened to be in Bombay. Is it too much when I say that the Government invited violence and did not want the movement to proceed on peaceful lines?

NEGOTIATION WITH REBELS

Now let me remind you of an occasion of an open rebellion when you played an important part. I refer to the famous Bardoli Satyagraha, under Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. He was conducting a campaign of Civil Disobedience. It had evidently reached a stage when the then Governor of Bombay felt that there should be a peaceful end to the struggle. You will remember that the result of an interview between H. E. the then Governor and the Sardar was the appointment of a committee of which you were a distinguished member. And the committee's findings were for the most part in favour of the civil resisters. Of course you may say, if you wish, that the Governor made a mistake in negotiating with the rebel, and so did you in accepting the appointment. Consider the reverse position, what would have happened, if instead of appointing a committee the Governor had attempted heavy repression? Would not the Government have been held responsible for any outbreak of violence if the people had lost self-control?

17. "Government does hold Mr. Gandhi responsible for the recent happenings that have so disturbed the peace of India, caused so much loss of life and property of innocent persons and brought the country to the brink of a terrible danger. I do not say he had any personal complicity in acts of violence but it was he that put the match to the train carefully laid beforehand by himself and his colleagues. That he was forced to do so prematurely was not his fault but our fortune. This was the method by which they hoped to gain their ends. They may seek to repudiate it now that it has proved unsuccessful, but the responsibility is theirs nonetheless.

...If Mr. Gandhi wished to dissociate himself from them, he could have spoken for himself without consulting the members of the Working Committee. Can he then without cancelling the Congress rebellion, without reparation, without even assurances, for the future claim, at any moment to step back as though nothing, had happened into the public life of the country and be received by Government and society as a good citizen ?"

I can accept no responsibility for the unfortunate happenings described by you. I have no doubt whatsoever that history will record that the responsibility for the happenings was wholly that of things. I could not put a match to a train which for one thing was never laid. And if the train was never laid, the question of prematurity does not arise.

#### MISFORTUNE OF FIRST MAGNITUDE

The deprivation of the people of their leaders you may consider "our fortune," I consider it a misfortune of the first magnitude for all concerned.

I wish to repudiate nothing of what I have done or intended. I have no sense of repentance for I have no sense of having done any wrong to any person.

I have stated times without number that I detest violence in any shape or form. But I can give no opinion about things of which I have no first hand knowledge.

I never asked for permission to consult the Congress Working Committee to enable me to dissociate myself from violence. I asked for permission to see them, if I was expected to make any proposals on behalf of the Committee.

I cannot cancel the Congress rebellion which is of a purely non-violent character. I am proud of it.

I have no reparation to make, for I have no consciousness of guilt. And there can be no question of assurances for the future, when I hold myself guiltless.

#### NOT FACTS BUT OPINIONS

The question of re-entering the public life of the country or being received by Government and society as a good citizen does not arise. I am quite content to remain a prisoner. I have never thrust myself on the public life of the country or on the Government. I am but a humble servant of India. The only certificate I need is a certificate from the inner voice. I hope you realise that you gave your audience not facts but your opinions framed in anger.

To conclude, why have I written this letter ? Not to answer your anger with anger. I have written it in the hope that you may read the sincerity behind my own words.

I never despair of converting any person even an official of the hardest type. General Smuts was converted or say reconciled as he declared in his speech introducing the bill giving relief in terms of the settlement arrived at between him and me in 1914. That he has not fulfilled my hope or that of the Indian settlers which the settlement had inspired is a sad story, but it is irrelevant to the present purpose.

I can multiply such recollections. I claim no credit for these conversions or reconciliations. They were wholly due to the working of truth and non-violence expressing themselves through me.

I subscribe to the belief or the philosophy that all life in its essence is one, and that the humans are working consciously or unconsciously towards the realisation of that identity. This belief requires a living faith in a living God who is the ultimate arbiter of our fate. Without Him not a blade of grass moves.

My belief requires me not to despair even of my converting you, though your speech warrants no such hope. If God has willed it, He may put power in some word of mine which will touch your heart. Mine is but to make the effort. The result is in God's hand.

(Sd.) M. K. Gandhi.

Sir R. Maxwell's reply to Gandhiji was as follows :—

Personal,

New Delhi, the 17th June, 1943.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I have your letter of the 21st May and have read with interest your comments on my Assembly speech of the 15th February. I see you still maintain the position which you took up in your letters to his Excellency the Viceroy regarding the Congress resolution of the 8th August and responsibility for the disturbances

that followed it. As you know Government have never accepted the construction which you sought to put upon those events. So long as this fundamental difference exists, I must regretfully conclude that there is not sufficient common ground for profitable discussion of the other points raised in your letter.

Yours sincerely,  
(Sd.) R. MAXWELL.

To the above, Mahatma Gandhi replied on June 23, as follows:—

Dear Sir Reginald Maxwell,

I thank you for your reply of 17th instant received on 21st instant to my letter of 21st May last.

I had not hoped that my reply would remove the fundamental difference between us, but I had hoped, and would still like to hope that the difference would be no bar to an admission and correction of discovered errors.

I had thought, and still think, that my letter did point out some errors in your Assembly speech of 15th February last.

I am  
Yours sincerely  
( Sd. ) M. K. GANDHI.

## Gandhi—Samuel Correspondence

### Gandhi's Letter to Lord Samuel

During his detention in the Aga Khan's Palace, Mahatma Gandhi wrote a number of letters, as occasion arose, explaining the position of himself and the Congress in general and the implications of the August Resolution in particular. In these letters, which have now been released for publication, Gandhiji was mainly concerned to correct and disprove the many mis-statements about, and allegations against himself, his colleagues of the Working Committee and the Congress, by interested spokesmen in this country and in England.

For instance, Gandhiji wrote a letter on May 15, 1943, to Lord Samuel, in reply to his speech to the Lords on April 6, 1943. The letter, which was not forwarded by the authorities to the addressee, runs as follows:

Dear Lord Samuel,

I enclose herewith a cutting from THE HINDU dated the 8th April last, containing *Reuter's* summary of your speech in the House of Lords, during the recent debate. Assuming the correctness of the summary, I feel impelled to write this letter.

The report distressed me. I was wholly unprepared for your unqualified association with the one-sided and unjustified statement of the Government of India against the Congress and me.

You are a philosopher and a Liberal. A philosophic mind has always meant for me a detached mind, and liberalism a sympathetic understanding of men and things.

As it seems to me, there is nothing in what the Government has said to warrant the conclusions to which you are reported to have come.

From the summary, I selected a few of the items which, in my opinion, are inconsistent with facts.

1. "The Congress Party has to a great extent thrown over democratic philosophy."

The Congress Party has never "thrown over democratic philosophy." Its career has been one progressive march towards democracy. Every one who subscribes to the attainment of the goal of Independence through peaceful and legitimate means and pays four annas per year can become its member.

2. "It shows signs of turning towards totalitarianism."

You have based your charge on the fact that the Working Committee of the Congress had control over the late Congress Ministries. Does not the successful party in the House of Commons do likewise? I am afraid even when democracy has come to full maturity, the parties will be running elections and their managing committees will be controlling the actions and policies of their members. Individual Congressmen did not run elections independently of the party machinery. Candidates were officially chosen and they were helped by All-India Leaders.

"Totalitarian", according to the Oxford Pocket Dictionary, means "designating a party that permits no rival loyalties or parties." "Totalitarian State" means "with only one governing party." It must have violence for its sanction for keeping control. A Congress member, on the contrary, enjoys the same freedom as the Congress President, or any other member of the Working Committee. There are parties within the Congress itself. Above all the Congress eschews violence. Members render voluntary obedience. The All-India Congress Committee can at any moment unseat the members of the Working Committee and elect others.

3. "They (Congress ministers) resigned (not?) because they had not the support of their Assemblies. They resigned because while *de jure* they were responsible to their electorates, *de facto* they were responsible to the Working Committee of the Congress and the Higher Command. That is not democracy. That is totalitarianism."

You would not have said this, if you had known the full facts. The *de jure* responsibility of the Ministers to the electorate was not diminished in any way by their *de facto* responsibility to the Congress Working Committee for the very simple and valid reason that the Working Committee derives its power and prestige from the very electorate to whom the Ministers were responsible. The prestige that the Congress enjoys is due solely to its service to the people. As a matter of fact the Ministers conferred with the members of their parties in their respective assemblies and they tendered their resignations with their approval.

#### MOST DEMOCRATIC BODY

But totalitarianism is fully represented by the Government of India which is responsible to no one in India. It is a tragic irony that a Government which is steeped in totalitarianism brings that very charge against the most democratic body in India.

4. "India is unhappy in that the line of party division is the worst any country can have.....it is division according to religious communities."

Political parties in India are not divided according to religious communities. From its very commencement the Congress has deliberately remained a purely political organisation. It has had Britishers and Indians, including Christians, Parsis, Muslims and Hindus as Presidents. The Liberal Party of India is another political organisation not to mention others that are wholly non-sectarian.

That there are also communal organisations based on religion and they take part in politics, is undoubtedly true. But that fact cannot sustain the categorical statement made by you. I do not wish in any way to minimise the importance of these organisations or the considerable part they play in the politics of the country. But I do assert that they do not represent the political mind of India. It can be shown that historically the politico-religious organisations are the result of the deliberate application by the Government of the 'divide and rule policy.' When the British Imperial influence is totally withdrawn, India will probably be represented solely by political parties drawn from all classes and creeds.

5. "The Congress can claim at best barely more than half the populations of India. Yet in their totalitarian spirit they claim to speak for the whole."

If you measure the representative character of the Congress by the numbers of the official roll, then it does not represent even half the population. The official membership is infinitesimal compared to India's vast population of nearly four hundred millions. The enrolled membership began only in 1920. Before that the Congress was represented by its All-India Congress Committee whose members were mainly elected by various political associations.

Nevertheless the Congress has so far as I know, always claimed to speak the mind of India, not even excluding the Princes. A country under alien subjection can only have one political goal, namely its freedom from that subjection. And considering that the Congress has always and predominantly exhibited that spirit of freedom, its claim to represent the whole of India can hardly be denied. That some parties repudiate the Congress, does not derogate from the claim in the sense in which it has been advanced.

6. "When Mr. Gandhi called upon the British Government to quit India, he said it would be for the Congress to take delivery."

I never said that when the British quitted India, "the Congress would take delivery." This is what I said in my letter to H. E. the Viceroy dated 29th. February last.

"The Government have evidently ignored or over-looked the very material fact that the Congress by its August resolution asked nothing for itself. All

its demands were for the whole people. As you should be aware the Congress was willing and prepared for the Government inviting Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah to form a National Government subject to such agreed adjustments as may be necessary for the duration of the war, such Government being responsible to a duly elected Assembly. Being isolated from the Working Committee except Shrimati Sarojini Devi I do not know its present mind. But the Committee is not likely to have changed its mind."

7. "If this country or Canada, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa or the United States had abstained from action as the Congress in India abstained .....then perhaps the cause of freedom everywhere would have gone under.....It is a pity that the leaders of the Congress do not realise that glory is not to be won in India by abandoning the cause of mankind."

How can you compare India with Canada and other Dominions which are virtually independent entities, let alone Great Britain or the United States wholly independent countries? Has India a spark of the freedom of the type enjoyed by the countries named by you?

#### FREEDOM NOW

India has yet to attain her freedom. Supposing the Allied powers were to lose, and supposing further that the Allied forces were to withdraw from India under military necessity, which I do not expect, the countries you name may lose their independence. But unhappy India will be obliged to change masters, if she is even then in her defenceless state.

Neither Congress, nor any other organisation, can possibly kindle mass enthusiasm for the Allied cause without the present possession of Independence, to use your own expression either *de jure* or *de facto*. Mere promise of future independence cannot work that miracle.

The cry of "Quit India" has arisen from a realisation of the fact that if India is to shoulder the burden of representing, or fighting for a cause of mankind, she must have the glow of freedom now. Has a freezing man ever been warmed by the promise of the warmth of sunshine coming at some future date?

The great pity is that the ruling power distrusts everything that the Congress does or says under my influence which it has suddenly discovered is wholly evil. It is necessary for a clear understanding that you should know my connection with the Congress and Congressmen. It was in 1930 that I was successful in my attempt to sever all formal connection with the Congress.

There was no coolness between the Congress Working Committee members and myself. But I realised that I was cramped and so were the members, whilst I was officially connected with the Congress. The growing restraints which my conception of non-violence required from time to time, were proving too hard to bear. I felt, therefore, that my influence should be strictly moral.

I had no political ambition. My politics were subservient to the demands of truth and non-violence, as I had defined and practised for practically the whole of my life. And so I was permitted by the fellow members to sever the official connection even to the extent of giving up the four anna membership. It was understood between us that I should attend the meetings of the Working Committee only when the members required my presence for consultation in matters involving the application of non-violence or affecting communal unity.

Since that time, I have been wholly unconnected with the routine work of the Congress. Many meetings of the Working Committee have, therefore, taken place without me. Their proceedings I have seen only when they have been published in the newspapers. The members of the Working Committee are independent-minded men. They engage me often in prolonged discussions before they accept my advice on the interpretation of non-violence as applied to problems arising from new situations.

It will be therefore unjust to them and to me to say that I exercise any influence over them beyond what reason commands. The public know how, even until quite recently, the majority of the members of the Working Committee have on several occasions rejected my advice.

8. "They have not merely abstained from action, but the Congress has deliberately proclaimed the formula that it is wrong to help the British war effort by men or money and the only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance. In the name of non-violence they have led a movement which was characterised in many places by the utmost violence and the White Paper gives clear proof of the complicity of the Indian Congress leaders in the disorders."

This charge shows to what extent the British public has been misled by imaginary stories, as in the Government of India publication statements have been torn from their context and put together as if they were made at one time or in the same context.

The Congress is committed to non-violence so far as the attainment of freedom is concerned. And to that end the Congress has been struggling all these twenty years however imperfectly it may be, to express non-violence in action, and I think it had succeeded to a great extent. But it has never made any pretence of war resistance through non-violence. Could it have made that claim and lived up to it, the face of India would have been changed and the world would have witnessed the miracle of organised violence being successfully met by organised non-violence.

#### "INFLAMMATORY ACTION OF GOVERNMENT"

But human nature has nowhere risen to the full height which full non-violence demands. The disturbances that took place after the 8th. August were not due to any action on the part of the Congress. They were due entirely to the inflammatory action of the Government in arresting Congress leaders throughout India and that at a time which was psychologically wholly wrong. The utmost that can be said is that Congressmen or others had not risen high enough in non-violence to be proof against all provocation.

It surprises me that although you have admitted that "this White Paper may be good journalism but it is not so good as a State document," you have based your sweeping judgment on the strength of that paper. If you would read the very speeches to which the paper makes reference, you will find there ample material to show that the Government of India had not the slightest justification in making those unfortunate arrests on August 9th, last and after, or in making the charges they have brought against the arrested leaders after their incarceration—charges which have never been sifted in any court of law.

9. "Mr. Gandhi faced us with an utterly illegitimate method of political controversy, levying blackmail on the best of human emotions, pity and sympathy, by his fast. The only creditable thing to Mr. Gandhi about the fast was his ending it."

You have used a strong word to characterise my fast. H. E. the Viceroy has also allowed himself to use the same word. You have perhaps the excuse of ignorance. He had my letters before him.

All I can tell you is that fasting is an integral part of Satyagraha. It is a satyagrahi's ultimate weapon. Why should it be blackmail when a man, under a sense of wrong, crucifies his flesh?

You may not know that Satyagrahi prisoners fasted in South Africa for the removal of their wrongs; so they have done in India. One fast of mine you know, as I think you were then a Cabinet Minister. I refer to the fast which resulted in the alteration of the decision of His Majesty's Government. If the decision had stood, it would have perpetuated the curse of Untouchability. The alteration prevented the disaster.

#### THE FAST--AND A FALSE ACCUSATION

The Government of India communicate announcing my recent fast, issued after it had commenced, accused me of having undertaken the fast to secure my release. It was a wholly false accusation. It was based on a distortion of the letter I had written in answer to that of the Government. That letter dated the 8th. February was suppressed at the time when the communicate was issued.

If you will study the question I refer you to the following which were published in the newspapers:

My letter to H. E. the Viceroy dated, New Year's Eve, 1942.

H. E.'s reply dated, January 13, 1943.

My letter dated, January 19, 1943.

H. E.'s reply dated, January 25, 1943.

My letter dated, January 25, 1943.

H. E.'s reply dated, February 5, 1943.

My letter dated, February 8, 1943.

Sir R. Tottenham's letter dated February 7, 1943.

My reply dated February, 8, 1943.

And I do not know from where you got the impression that I ended the fast, for which supposed act you give me the credit. If you mean by it that I ended

the fast before its time, I would call such an ending a discredit to me. As it was the fast ended on its due date for which I can claim no credit.

10. "He (Lord Samuel) considered that the negotiations broke down on points on which they would not have broken down had there been any real desire on the part of the Congress to come to a settlement."

The statement made by the President of the Congress, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Nehru, who carried on the prolonged negotiations, I venture to think make it quite clear that no true man could have shown more real or greater desire for a settlement. In this connection, it is well to remember that Pandit Nehru was, and I have no doubt still remains, an intimate friend of Sir Stafford Cripps at whose invitation he had come from Allahabad. He could therefore leave no stone unturned to bring the negotiations to a successful issue. The history of the failure has yet to be written: when it is it will be found that the cause lay elsewhere than with the Congress.

I hope my letter has not wearied you. Truth has been overlaid with much untruth. If not justice to a great organisation, the cause of Truth, which is humanity, demands an impartial investigation of the present distemper.

Yours Sincerely,  
Sd. M. K. Gandhi.

"BAN ON ORDINARY RIGHT OF CONVICT"

The following letters passed between Gandhiji and the Government of India over the latter's refusal to forward the letter to Lord Samuel:

Home Department.  
New Delhi, the 26th May, 1943.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am desired to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of May 15th enclosing a letter for the Right Hon'ble Lord Samuel. I am to say that for the reasons which have been explained to you in another connection, the Government of India have decided that your letter cannot be forwarded.

Yours sincerely,  
Sd. R. Tottenham  
Detention Cam, 1st June, 1943.

Dear Sir Richard Tottenham,

I have your note of the 28th ultimo conveying the Government's decision about my letter to the Rt. Hon'ble Lord Samuel. I would just like to say that the letter is not political correspondence but it is a complaint to a member of the House of Lords pointing out misrepresentations into which he has been betrayed and which do mean injustice. The Government's decision amounts to a ban on the ordinary right belonging even to a convict of correcting damaging misrepresentations made about him. Moreover, I suggest that the decision about my letter to Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah is wholly inapplicable to this letter to the Rt. Hon'ble Lord Samuel. Therefore, I request reconsideration of the decision.

I am,  
Your sincerely,  
Sd. M. K. Gandhi.

Home Department,  
New Delhi, 7th June, 1943.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I am directed to acknowledge your letter to Sir Richard Tottenham dated 1st June 1943, on the subject of Government's decision regarding your letter to Lord Samuel and to say that Government regret that they do not see their way to alter that decision.

Yours sincerely,  
Sd, Coran Smith.

# The All India Hindu Mahasabha

Working Committee—Bombay—7th. & 8th. August 1943

## TEXT OF RESOLUTIONS

Proceedings of the meeting of the Working Committee of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha held on the 7th. and 8th. August 1943, at Dadar, Bombay.

The following members were present:

Dr. B. S. Moonje, Pt. Chandragupta Vedalankar, Pt. Nilkanth Das, Sjt. Anang Mohan Dam, Kuwar Guru Narain, Shreemati Janakibai Joshi, Dr. M. B. Udgaonkar, Sjt. A. S. Bhide, Pt. Anandpriyaji, Pt. Shivnath Sharma, Lt. D. L. Patwardhan, Sjt. Pyda Shrothi Garu, Sjt. V. B. Gogte, Sjt. S. R. Date, Sjt. Gulabchand Hirachand, Sjt. Ganapati, Sjt. M. N. Majumdar and Dr. P. V. Naidu.

## SAVARKAR ELECTED PRESIDENT

Dr. B. S. Moonje, General Secretary, All India Hindu Mahasabha, read a letter received from Veer Savarkar, President, All-India Hindu Mahasabha regarding his resignation. A resolution was proposed by Dr. P. V. Naidu and seconded by Kuwar Guru Narayan. It was passed unanimously. The following is the full text of the resolution:

"In view of the resignation tendered by the President, All-India Hindu Mahasabha, this meeting of the Working Committee resolves that pending the decision of the Working Committee on the question of resignation, which cannot be taken up in this meeting as it was not included in the Agenda of this meeting, to request Veer Savarkar to preside over this meeting and continue his presidency until the question is decided by the Working Committee.

After this Veer Savarkar explained his position. "As all of my colleagues here are unanimously pressing me to continue to be the President till the question of the resignation was finally decided, I shall abide by your decree to preside over sittings of this Working Committee Meeting."

Veer Savarkar then took the Chair.

The proceedings of the last meetings of the Working Committee held on the 9th and 10th May, 1943, were read and confirmed.

Veer Savarkar explained the position with regard to the resolution passed by the Working Committee on 9th May 1943 to the effect that disciplinary action should be taken against Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth. The President read out the following decision:

"That the resolution itself constitutes a sufficient warning in this case and consequently no further step is needed."

The following resolutions were then passed:

## SYMPATHY WITH MRS. GADGIL

"This meeting of the Working Committee mourns the accidental death of Mr. G. V. Gadgil, the famous pilot of Poona, who had won a great distinction in the Viceroy Cup Race. His career stands as an inspiration to Hindu youths to join Air force by hundreds, undeterred by accidents and learn the art for the Nation's freedom. This meeting shares in the grief with his relatives and especially his wife who is also a pilot."

—Moved from the Chair.

## VIKRAMA-JAYANTI CELEBRATIONS

"In pursuance of the Resolution passed by the Hindu Mahasabha in the Cawnpore Session, this meeting of the Working Committee calls upon the Hindus of India to take steps immediately to organise a central—Pan Hindu Committee to celebrate the second millenium in commemoration of the illustrious Hindu hero Shri. Vikramaditya, the founder of the Vikram Era. This meeting further desires that H. H. the Maharaja of Gwalior should be approached by the above Utsava Committee to act as a patron on these Vikrama celebrations. This meeting calls upon all branches of the Hindu Mahasabha throughout the country to co-operate with this Committee."

—Moved by Pt. Chadragupta Vedalankar.—Seconded by Pt. Anandpriyaji, (Passed unanimously.)

## JAIPUR AFFAIRS

"This meeting of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha regrets to note that ever since Sir Mirza Ismail has been appointed as the Prime Minister

of Jaipur State the administration has become anti-Hindu and pro-Muslim, as the following instances will illustrate :

(1) The solemn pledges which were given by Sir Mirza Ismail to the Mahasabha leaders regarding the status of Hindi in the State have not been fulfilled in the spirit in which they were expressed. We are sorry to note that the knowledge of Urdu has been made compulsory for all the servants of the State, although 96% population of the State is Hindu speaking.

(2) Attempts have been made to crush the Hindu Sabha movement in the State. *Jaipur Samachar*—a daily Hindu Sabha paper—has been banned under the D. I. R. in spite of the fact that the policy of the paper was neither against the war efforts, nor against the loyalty to the State. Its editor has been detained under D.I.R. Veer Singh Tawar—a Mahasabha worker has been ordered not to make speeches while Muslim preachers have been let loose. Veer Ramchandra Sharma who was one of the pioneers of Hindi movement in Jaipur has been externed from the State.

"This Sabha warns Sir Mirza Ismail to change his anti-Hindu policy and urges upon the Maharaja to remove Sir Mirza Ismail from the premiership of the Hindu State."

—Moved by Chandragupta Vadalkar. Seconded by Mr. Gulabchand Hirachand. ( Passed unanimously ).

The meeting was then adjourned till 10 A. M. the next day.

#### Resolutions—Second Day—8th. August 1943

On Sunday, August 8, Dr. S. P. Mookerji was present.

It was resolved that *Sgt. Kripa Narain*, Advocate, should be requested to draft the resolution in proper legal form after going through all the registration of the Hindu Mahasabha, and the resolution thus drafted be placed before the next meeting of the Working Committee.

The question of coalition ministries came up for discussion. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji initiated the discussion saying that the time had come for the Mahasabha to lay down certain principles in connection with the coalition ministries. He also said that he was not in favour of non-co-operation but in favour of responsive co-operation.

Then Dr. B. S. Moonje explained his views. He said : "I am generally in agreement with Dr. Mookerji. But there are certain points which want clarification." He also assured the House that there was no difference between Veer Savarkar and Dr. Mookerji on the question of coalition ministries. Dr. P. V. Naidu expressed his views citing the Madras example. Kunwar Guru Narain said : "We cannot make hard and fast rules at this stage. The best thing is that we should lay down certain general principles and should declare that we are in favour of coalition ministries and according to the Provincial circumstances we shall decide this question."

Other members also took part in the discussion and expressed their views on this question. Summing up the whole question Veer Savarkar explained that as far as coalition ministries were concerned, they all had agreed leaving the differences of details. Nobody wanted that Muslim League Ministries should be installed but if the Muslim League Ministry was inevitable, the Provincial Hindu Sabha must judge whether the Hindu interest would be better served by joining it and transforming it into coalition ministry or not.

Then Dr. Moonje asked some questions about the Sind Ministry and Veer Savarkar explained the whole situation to the complete satisfaction of the Committee. He made it clear that the Sind Hindu Ministers had signed the Hindu Mahasabha pledge, and were ready to abide by the decision of the Provincial Hindu Sabha.

At the meeting held at 3 P. M. the following resolutions were passed :

#### COALITION MINISTRIES

(1) The Working Committee is not against the formation of coalition ministries, although it recognises that such a ministry cannot be expected to carry into effect to the fullest extent the ideals and programme of the Hindu Mahasabha such as a Hindu Sabha Ministry by itself would be capable of doing.

(2) If the Hindu Mahasabha forms a coalition ministry, the legislature must have some members belonging to the Hindu Mahasabha to support the ministers, who on their part, should sign the membership of the Hindu Mahasabha and agree to a pledge to abide by the decision of the Hindu Mahasabha.

(3) Any coalition ministry formed with the support of the Hindu Mahasabha, must have a majority of members supporting it in the legislature.

(4) Where the Hindu Mahasabha forms a coalition ministry, it will adopt a programme in collaboration with the party or parties with whom it will work; such programme must in no way be prejudicial to Hindu interest.

The Hindu Mahasabha is not prepared to co-operate with the Muslim League and form a coalition ministry, until the Muslim League agrees that the Pakistan issue should be shelved during the period of the War and while such coalition lasts. If, however, in any Provincial Legislature the Muslim Ministers were to support a resolution in favour of Pakistan or to initiate a similar resolution on their own behalf, the Hindu Sabha Ministers will oppose such a resolution on the floor of the House and carry on all other activities in that connection. Should such a resolution be however carried through Moslem support, the Hindu Sabha ministers will resign, if the Provincial Hindu Sabhas concerned were so to decide.

(5) Subject to the foregoing principles being observed each Provincial Hindu Sabha will decide whether it will form a coalition ministry, and if so, will work out detailed lines of co-operation.

(6) All disputes and interpretations will be decided by the Working Committee of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha regarding the formation of Provincial Ministries.

—Moved by Dr. S. P. Mukerji,—Seconded by Dr. B. S. Moonje. (Passed unanimously).

#### MOSLEM IMMIGRATION IN ASSAM

"The Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha views with concern the influx into the Province of Assam of Mohammedans from outside the Province under the pretext of "Grow More Food" campaign and requests the Government of Assam to help the Hindus from the Districts of Sylhet and Cachar to settle in the Assam Valley and contribute to the Food campaign and calls upon the Government to see that the Moslems who are rush-in now, do not get any more facilities than Hindu cultivators and to extend full protection to the Hindu settlers."

—Moved by : *Sjt. Anang Mohan Dutt*—Second by : *Sjt. A. S. Bhide*. (Passed unanimously).

#### SLAUGHTER OF CATTLE

"The Hindu Mahasabha has received reports from various places and especially from Bihar and eastern parts of the country that cows and bullocks and other cattle are being slaughtered and exported in very large numbers for the use of the Army. It has resulted in reducing the number of cattle necessary for agriculture and has also caused scarcity of milk.

—Moved by *Pt. Shivnath Sharma*. —Seconded by *Pt. Nilkanth Das*. (Passed unanimously).

#### CONDOLENCE RESOLUTION

"This meeting of the Working Committee of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha records its deep sense of sorrow at the loss the country has sustained by the sudden and unexpected demise of *Mr. B. C. Chatterji*, an ex-Vice-President of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Sabha, who during his life-time has rendered immense service to the country and to his community, and also records its deep sense of sorrow at the loss to the country of *Mr. Gopalrao Chitale* of Poona who was the Secretary of the Poona Hindu Sabha.

( Moved from the Chair ).

#### MUSLIM RIGHTS IN HINDU STATES

"This meeting of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha calls upon the Hindu Princes not to tolerate any agitation started by the Muslims for reservation and weightages in services and public bodies over and above their population ratio, at the cost of the loyal Hindu subjects."

—Moved by *Pt. Chandragupta Vedalankar*. —Seconded by *Mr. M. N. Mitra*. ( Passed unanimously ).

#### FOOD SITUATION

"The Working Committee notes with concern and alarm the steady deterioration in the food situation throughout the country. It records its opinion that this is due mainly to the thoughtless emphasis laid by Government on military requirements in India and its failure in properly co-ordinating its plans and activities so as to protect the legitimate interests of the Indian people at large. The Working Committee has specially received alarming reports regarding the food situation in Bengal, Orissa, Malabar, Bijapur and other places. Reports of death, suicide and sale of children, of starvation and misery due to shortage of food-stuff reveal a situation in Bengal unprecedented in the history of the British India. The Working Committee emphasises that supply of food-grains to Bengal and other deficit

provinces must immediately be regarded as a vital war measure and any delay in doing so may lead to most serious consequences affecting internal peace and security. The Working Committee notes that the Bengal Ministry, actuated as it is by communal partisanship, has failed to ease the situation effectively. It urges upon the Government of India to arrange for immediate supply of wheat from Australia to India and to announce its scheme for 'equitable distribution of available food grains within India so as to save those areas which are in urgent need of assistance and to stop export from deficit provinces and from India as a whole. The Working Committee has read with astonishment the remarks seriously made by the Secretary of State for India in the House of Commons that there was no real shortage of food-grains in India and the people were suffering either for private hoarding or because of overeating by a section of the population. It is the elementary responsibility of any civilised Government to feed its people and the problem in India is so vast and complex that no private efforts, however laudable and desirable, can really tackle the grave situation that threatens some parts of India to-day."

—Moved by : Dr. P. V. Naidu. —Seconded by : Mr. M. N. Majumdar.  
( Passed unanimously ).

The meeting came to an end with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

## Mahasabha Silver Jubilee Celebrations

Amritsar—25th. December 1943

Cossimbazar Maharaja's address

"The entire nationalist movement in India in which the Hindus have always been in the vanguard never discriminated between races and religions, but sent a clarion call to all and sundry to join in the common movement," observed *Maharaja Sriish Chandra Nandy* of Cossimbazar, inaugurating the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha which commenced at Amritsar on the 25th. December 1943.

"This movement," the Maharaja added, "was not anti-British, and if properly handled, this should be one of the most constructive agents in making democracy a successful experiment in India."

Continuing, the speaker said : "But thanks to the introduction of communal electorates and other anti-democratic devices, affairs in India have taken a different shape, giving rise to political organisation based on racial or religious groupings. So long as, therefore, these communal systems stand, I do not see how Mr. Amery can escape from the proposition that he will have to negotiate with the Hindu Mahasabha, representing as it does the majority community in India. Mr. Amery as the representative of British democracy is responsible for bringing about the alignment of political groups in India on communal lines and in that sense the Hindu Mahasabha is his own creation. This is, therefore, the only legitimate body to whom Mr. Amery can transfer his 'burden.' As regards the protection of minority interests, this is evidently a domestic question for the future Indian democracy to solve, and the Hindus know fully well how to rise equal to the occasion and deal generously with the minority interests. The final say in this matter of shaping the future destiny of India rests ultimately with the British".

### THE BANE OF COMMUNAL ELECTORATES

Criticising the communal character of the measures of the British Government adopted for the constitutional and other development of India, the Maharaja remarked that, in spite of the best traditions of British statesmanship at home and their successful experiment with Parliamentary democracy in Britain herself, the British politician did not hesitate to introduce communal electorates in India by which the development of a common citizenship was hampered from the very beginning. The seeds sown in those fateful years had developed into a mighty anti-democratic force by now ; and Muslim intransigence had moved so far as to demand a vivisection of India into so-called Muslim zones and non-Muslim zones. The attitude of the British politicians was really interesting, as they had adopted something like a wait-and-see policy regarding this demand, and perhaps as a feeler, the germs of Pakistan had been injected in the Stafford Cripps' proposals.

A consciousness of Hindu strength was suggested by the speaker to be the only basis on which an abiding Hindu-Muslim unity could be achieved. Facts, he thought, were mere patch-works, as these, without the necessary mental background simply helped to aggravate the programme. It was his firm conviction that the hope of an eventual Hindu-Muslim unity on the basis of the recognition of mutual strength was sure to materialise in the near future if the Mahasabha built up its strength with the new orientation and new life imparted to it by *Mr. Savarkar*.

### Licence for Procession cancelled

*Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee* who arrived at Amritsar in the afternoon of the 25th. December to preside over the Silver Jubilee session of Hindu Mahasabha, was accorded a tumultuous reception at the railway station. *Dr. Mookerjee* was profusely garlanded. He drove to the "pandal" amidst cheering crowds.

Among those present at the station were *Raja Mahashewar Dayal Sethi*, *Dr. Moonje*, *Dr. Wadhvani* and *Rai Sahib Gokuldas*, two Hindu Ministers of Sind. There was a large crowd of people who had come from different parts of the province.

Before the procession started the Superintendent of Police visited the "pandal" and informed the members of the Reception Committee that under orders issued by the Punjab Government in regard to the restrictions of the wearing of "khaki" uniform the volunteers of the Mahavir Dal could not be allowed to join the procession in their "khaki" uniforms. At 6 p.m. the members of the Reception Committee conferred with *Dr. Mookerjee* whether the procession should be abandoned or the Government order be defied.

After two hours' consultation among themselves, the Mahasabha leaders decided to take out the procession. *Dr. Mookerjee* was seated on a richly caparisoned elephant lent by the Kapurthala State. Beside him sat *Sir Gokul Chand Narang*, Chairman of the Reception Committee. The procession had hardly proceeded a furlong when a local magistrate announced that the District Magistrate had cancelled the licence of the procession and ordered the processionists to disperse.

Afterwards, *Dr. Mookerjee* in a speech at Tilaknagar criticised the action of the local authorities and said that the situation arising out of the incident would be considered by the Working Committee at its night sitting.

### DISTRICT MAGISTRATE'S COMMUNIQUE

The District Magistrate, Amritsar, issued the following press communique:—

The licence of the Hindu Mahasabha procession included the condition that no one in uniform resembling that of the armed forces will be allowed to take part nor would any arms be carried. On arrival at the volunteers corps, I found a large number of volunteers wearing uniforms which definitely resembled those of the armed forces and some volunteers carried arms. I asked the organisers, including *Sir Gokulchand Narang* and *Lala Keshab Chander* to abide by the terms of the licence. After protracted discussion among the organisers, it was announced by *Rai Bahadur Mehr Chad Khanna*, the commander of the *Mahavir Dal* at the pandal, that they would take out the procession with volunteers in the original uniform. On receiving this information the Superintendent of Police cancelled the licence at 6.45 p.m. The procession had meanwhile started with some of the volunteers with naked swords. After the order cancelling the licence had been announced to the procession by the Magistrate in charge of the procession the procession dispersed peacefully.

*Dr. Gokulchand Narang* subsequently issued a statement pointing out that the communique issued by the District Magistrate was entirely against facts.

# The Open Session of the Hindu Mahasabha

Silver Jubilee Session—Amritsar—26th. Decembar 1943

## The Welcome Address

Amidst scenes of great enthusiasm and in the presence of over 50,000 people, representing all parts of India, the Silver Jubilee session of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha opened on the 26th December, 1943 at 3-30 in the afternoon at Tilak Nagar, Amritsar where the Indian National Congress held one of its historic sessions a quarter of a century ago. The pandal had been artistically decorated for the occasion and a large number of women in colourful costumes were present in the women's enclosure. Thousands of people who could not gain admission assembled outside the pandal to hear the leaders' speeches which were relayed over the microphone. Among those present on the dais, which accommodated over two thousand delegates and members were Dr. N. B. Khare, Overseas Member, Government of India, Dr. B. S. Moonje, the Maharaja of Coimbatore, Dr. Wadhvani and Rao Sahib Gokul Das the two Sind Ministers, Raja Narendra Nath, Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth, Bhai Parmanand and Mr. Khaparde, ex-Minister, C. P.

A unique ceremony took place as Dr. S. P. Mookerji, the President-elect entered Tilak Nagar amidst deafening shouts of "Dr. Mookerji ki Jai" and "Hindu Mahasabha ki Jai". A young student applied 'blood Tilak' to Dr. Mookerji's forehead—blood to wash off slavery from the face of India.

The proceedings began with the "Band-matram" song by local schoolboys. Messages wishing success were received from Veer Savarkar, Mr. K. M. Munshi, Commissioner Mr. Teang, Commissioner for the Republic of China in New Delhi, Sir Arok Kumar Roy, Law Member, Government of India, Sir Radhakrishnan, Sir Shadi Lal, Maharaja of Kapurthala, Sardar Baldev Singh, Development Minister, Dewan Bahadur Krishnaswami Iyengar, Mr. Jannadas Mehta and others.

The release of political prisoners and the appointment of a committee by the Mahasabha to devise an effective machinery for resolving the political deadlock created by the resignation of the Congress Ministries and the intransigence of those in power were urged by Sir Gokulchand Narang, Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcoming the President and delegates to the Silver Jubilee session of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha.

Sir Gokulchand Narang said: The 'no-party' leaders seem to have exhausted all their resources without making any impression on the Government. The Mahasabha has to consider whether it would not take the matter in hand and devise an effective machinery for resolving this deadlock. It may have to appoint a committee for going into this matter in a serious, determined and systematic manner. The committee, if appointed, will explore ways and means to compel the Government to abandon its policy of evasion and procrastination. This committee, if you decide to appoint one, would welcome the co-operation of those members of other communities who believe in the integrity of India and the emancipation of their country.

Dealing with the Mahasabha's relations with other communities, particularly the Muslims, Sir Gokulchand Narang said: "We value their friendship and co-operation and I have no hesitation in conceding that their co-operation would facilitate and expedite the settlement of the Indian question. In order to secure their co-operation we have made and would be prepared to make every kind of reasonable sacrifice. If they are prepared to be regarded 'citizens of India', we should be prepared to give them all reasonable assurances for safeguarding their religion, their culture and any other interests which they may consider, particularly theirs.

"There are, however, limits beyond which it will be suicidal not only for the Hindus but the country as a whole to go. We cannot, for example, agree to the vivisection of our country and must oppose every attempt to cut up India into opposing units. Nor can we agree that being in a heavy majority in the country, we should be reduced by constitutional jugglery to a position of minority or even to a position of equality with any other community or all communities put together. I have often publicly declared, that the bogey of Pakistan is being raised to frighten the Hindus, the real object being to secure 50 per cent or disproportionately high representation for the Muslims in the Legislature. If the choice lay between

the two alternatives I would sooner agree to Pakistan than to the disturbance of our clear majority in the Central Legislature.

Proceeding, Sir Gokulchand Narang pleaded that the Mahasabha should take in hand the preparation of a revised scheme of Government of India which would do justice to all with the help, if necessary, of the patriotic Muslims and representatives of other communities who believe in the integrity of India and democratic principles. Without anticipating what the Mahasabha or any of its representatives selected for the purpose might do, Sir Gokulchand Narang earnestly suggested, that they should try to get rid of communal electorates. He also emphasised that a mere reshuffling of the personnel or portfolios in the Executive Council would not satisfy the thirst for freedom with which the heart of India was burning. Such a reshuffling might serve as a temporary expedient during the war but nothing short of Dominion Status with all the privileges defined in the Statute of Westminster would satisfy this thirst. The Mahasabha, he said, should clearly declare this as its immediate goal with the co-operation of all those, irrespective of their religious or political creed, who would love to see their country free and would be prepared to strive and suffer in the cause of India's freedom.

#### TREATMENT OF HINDUS IN PUNJAB

Sir Gokulchand Narang also related the wrongs that a bigoted and fanatic majority consisting mostly of ignorant villagers in the Punjab was inflicting on a minority. He said : "While in the Hindu majority provinces scrupulous care was taken to safeguard the cultural interests of the Muslims, the cultural interests of the Hindus in the Punjab are being ruthlessly sacrificed at the altar of Muslim communalism. Their industry and commerce have been crippled. A large section of the population have been deprived even of the valuable freedom which they possessed in the pre-autonomous days, viz., the freedom to seek redress in civil courts. The Punjab has in fact already been converted into Pakistan and the mere fact that the Government of the Punjab is called a Unionist-Government is only a camouflage. In reality it is nothing but a Muslim League or a Pakistanist government under a false label. The Ministry is with one exception entirely recruited from one class of people and the one, forming the exception, has openly declared that he represents no community or class in particular as he was returned from a non-communal constituency, viz., the Punjab University. He has been described at public meetings by one of his own colleagues as a 'talethoo' or an underling. The main body of the Hindus of the Punjab have, therefore, no one in the Government to look after their interests.

Sir Gokulchand Narang placed before the Hindu Mahasabha a comprehensive programme for Hindu sangathan and stressed that every effort should be made by public men and various Hindu organisations to minimise the differences between one religious sect and another, between one organisation and another and between one group of Hindus and another. He said : "The Hindusabhites should not look upon the Congressmen as untouchables and the Congressmen should not look upon the Hindusabhites as untouchables. The goal of both is the same. The Hindu sabbites are nationalists to the core and have complete independence as their ultimate goal. They are attached to the Hindu Sabha because they consider that so far as the particular interests of the Hindus are concerned they can be guarded by the Hindu Sabha alone. The Hindus are the mainstay of the Congress and if they are weak the Congress will also become weak."

#### Presidential Address

After Sir Gokulchand Narang had read his address, Dr. B. S. Moonje, General Secretary of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, proposed the name of Dr. S. P. Mookerji for the presidential chair. The proposal was seconded by Bhai Parmanand of the Punjab and supported by delegates from various provinces. Dr. Mookerji was unanimously voted to the chair and received a great ovation from the audience.

He was garlanded by Sir Gokulchand Narang as he occupied the chair. Dr. Mookerji then delivered his presidential address. The following is the full text of Dr. Mookerji's speech :—

✓ In the unavoidable absence of our President-elect, Veer Savarkar, due to illness which we deeply regret, I have been called upon at a very short notice to preside over this session of the Hindu Mahasabha. It will not be, therefore, possible for me to survey in full detail the activities of the Hindu Mahasabha during the last year or to lay before you a comprehensive programme of work such as a President under normal circumstances would like to do. I am, however, sensible of the

honour done to me and the responsibility placed on me and I would confidently ask for your full co-operation in the conduct of the deliberations of the session.

The great province where we meet and the historic city where we assemble have played their part nobly in the chequered history of India, sharing proudly the joys and sorrows alike of both a Free Hindusthan and an oppressed India. We meet today at one of the most critical periods in the history of British India. Vast and intricate problems have to be solved in the furtherance of political and economic, social and cultural emancipation of India, affecting the rights and liberties of millions of Indian people. It is our special responsibility to examine them at every step both from the standpoint of India as a whole and of the welfare of Hindus, the protection of those paramount interests must be our constant care.

Let me in the first instance convey to you and through you to the rest of India the deep gratitude of Bengal for the spontaneous sympathy and solicitude displayed by one and all during the recent famine crisis. We have special reasons to thank the Punjab for what she has done for us. I shall not dwell at length on this great catastrophe which must have involved the loss of more than a million of human lives. But let me emphasise that the famine was not due to any pranks of nature but was the product of maladministration and misrule. It is indeed the greatest blot on British rule in India. Relief measures have been conducted through official and non-official channels but the people of Bengal do not wish their existence to depend on charity. No Government which calls itself civilised has the right to exist unless it can so formulate and administer its policy as to keep the people under its charge free from minimum want and privation. If one-thousandth part of the misery that fell on Bengal had taken place in England or America, it would have shaken the very foundation of any existing Government. Today there are hope and cheer in many quarters on account of the enormous rice crop with which nature has just blessed Bengal. Let us not forget, however, that if Government bungles in the coming months as it has during the past, even a bumper crop will not save Bengal. Again, the suffering people have become so devitalised and diseases are so rampant that death-roll will not decrease in any appreciable manner unless effective measures are forthwith taken for better nutrition and treatment. The entire social and economic structure of Bengal has received a terrible shock and Bengal must pass through an intensive and extensive programme of rehabilitation. This is a gigantic task which can be performed only by the joint efforts of Government and the people. This co-operation is absent today because the ministry now in power lacks in both efficiency and integrity and does not enjoy the confidence of large sections of the people of the province.

#### DEADLY WAR

We are passing through a war which both in respect of its enormity and brutality is unprecedented in the history of mankind. India has been dragged to this war not of her own free will but on account of the decision of your rulers. There has been a lot of discussions regarding the aims of the war and of the peace that is to follow. The Hindu Mahasabha took up the most realistic attitude consistent with India's dependence. It was not prepared to put undue reliance on the declared war or peace aims of great Britain or the Allied Powers until it had a clear proof of their genuineness with reference to our own country. If the war is being fought today for a new world order that would be based on justice and fairness and not on domination and exploitation, India's claim for freedom becomes irresistible. The principal sphere where the Hindu Mahasabha under the wise guidance of Veer Savarkar has asked the Hindus to take the fullest advantage of the war situation is in respect of recruitment to the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. India has been kept unarmed by her rulers mainly out of a policy of fear and distrust. To day the war emergency and British interests have demanded a revision of its policy. A country that is unarmed and unprepared to defend itself from military aggression cannot retain its freedom even for a single day. The Hindu Mahasabha has consistently held the view that it would be suicidal for Hindus to throw away this opportunity for militarisation. When the war started, the proportion of Hindus including Sikhs in the Indian defence forces was less than one-third. Today it is nearly three-fourth of the total strength of the different defence units of India. India has demonstrated that her youth is capable of the highest skill and bravery in various spheres of military activity and to them I offer my sincere gratitude for their patriotic zeal and achievement. A stigma on your national fitness, arbitrarily imposed in the past, is thus completely eradicated. If our country were politically free, how larger could the defence forces have become

and how energetically would all have thrown themselves into action for the defence of their own motherland. History affords us numerous examples which go to show that while a paid army, however trained, fails to rise equal to the occasion when it has to face a crisis, such as in Burma, an army, composed of the children of the country whose freedom is at stake, valiantly defies death before yielding to the enemies of their motherland, such as in China and Russia. Mr. Churchill proudly expressed his satisfaction by stating that India today had more white soldiers than she ever had in her history. Recently the number of negro soldiers has also been considerable. Here again is an instance of wilful distrust exhibited by our rulers against Indians. If the Indian defence forces are good enough to fight decisive battles in stormy fields outside the Indian soil, why should they not be concentrated in the discharge of the sacred task of defending their own country?

The political deadlock continues and there is no sign that the British Government is going to end it during the war. The speculators from Bombay and Delhi tried to anticipate the Viceroy's Calcutta speech and proved to be false prophets. The British Government today wants the world to believe that all is well with India and if she is not politically free it is not due to British refusal, but her own disunity and disruption stand in the way of full political progress. I have no desire to narrate here the eventful history of the Indian struggle since 1939. Be it said however that notwithstanding vigorous propaganda conducted by the British Government, the fact remains that there is no settlement today because our rulers do not wish to part with power. The British Prime Minister frankly state that he had not become his King's Prime Minister to liquidate the British Empire. There was a time not even a quarter of a century ago when Indians were repeatedly told that India was not fit for self-government and that was why Indian freedom was delayed. Today the cry has been modified and the blame is attributed to religious differences in India which alone prevent England from parting with power. The Secretary of State often shudders to think how anarchy and civil war will raise their heads and spread their fury if there was a full transfer of power to Indians. Mr. Amery forgets that India is governed today through a machinery that is ill-suited for a national crisis and is already passing through a state of organised anarchy with her civil liberties crushed and her national life choked against the will of her people. Indeed the conclusion is irresistible that neither will the British easily offer a settlement that will give India what she wants nor will the Allied Powers who are themselves in troubled waters, take an active interest in giving India a fair deal. Every strong country in the world dreams of consolidation and expansion of its economic and political power and looks upon India as a veritable milch-cow.

#### INDIAN PROBLEM IN COLD STORAGE

It is almost certain that there will be no solution of the Indian problem during the war. Will the solution improve after the war? If the Allied Powers do not win the war, what will happen to India need not be discussed at this stage. But consistent with recent events, if the Allied Powers win the war, there is no guarantee given by Great Britain that India will get a fair deal, even though there may not be a previous communal settlement due to the obstructive tactics of the Moslem League. At the Peace Conference every nation will have its own problems to look after and India, if represented by the favourite nominees of the British Rulers themselves, specially tutored to prove the much advertised diversity of Indian life, may well become an object of pity and contempt in the eyes of the rest of the world. India will not then become a lost dominion to England but will be safely restored to her perpetual care. I may be accused of harsh judgment. But in view of our past experience of broken promises and pledges, we should not hesitate to speak out our mind and frustrate, if possible, any design to keep India under perpetual bondage.

There is another school of thought in foreign lands regarding themselves as friends of India, who assert that however reactionary British policy may appear to be during the war, public opinion in allied countries including England will compel the British Government to agree to a fair deal for India after the war. There is no doubt that the war which is costing the lives and happiness of millions of people is shaking the foundations of many beliefs and dogmas and as an aftermath of this colossal suffering they look forward to the building up of a new world order based on justice, freedom and equality. But did such people in the past or will they in future succeed in rightly controlling the dominant policy of their country's administration against a powerful combination of vested interests, economic and imperial?

In any event if we simply wait for freedom to fall on our lap as an act of spontaneous mercy from our rulers or foreign allies, if any, we shall either remain slaves for ever or the so-called freedom that will then come will not be worth having at all. Today the main obstacle to Indian freedom according to our rulers is Hindu-Muslim disunity. The history of this division will show how it has been kept alive and fanned by a well-regulated State policy of "divide and rule." The absence of communal agreement did not stand in the way of British Government promulgating fundamental constitutional changes, good and bad, during the last 35 years. Having lavishly decorated the framework of the Indian constitution with religious and communal colouring the British Government now innocently expects its own pampered agents to give up their close preserves and stand for a higher ideal of Indian unity and nationalism. This policy of fomenting disruption and disunity has not remained confined between Hindus and Muslims as such but has spread amongst various tribes, castes and classes. The only solution of the Indian problem is rigidly to exclude all extraneous considerations, based on caste and religion from the field of politics. We stand for equal political citizenship of all without any distinction. I admit that there are classes and communities which are backward and which have to be given special protection for educational and economic advancement. The constitution itself should guarantee the preservation of religious, social and cultural rights of different classes. It is easy to conceive how bitter would be the fate of any country in this world, even including England, if it is placed under the political domination of an unscrupulous imperial power which will aim at emasculating its manhood, draining its resources and fanning disruption among its subjects based on social, religious or other differences. How easily can it not thus create compartmental rights within the frame work of the country's constitution? Today India's real voice is choked and it never reaches the four corners of the world without ruthless censoring. If justice is to be done to India Government has to retrace the mischievous steps it has taken for consolidating its power in India and hand over power to the representatives of the people, based on a constitution recognising equal rights of citizenship for one and all. The Hindu-Muslim question has been a thorn in the way of Indian freedom. The policy of appeasement pursued by Hindu leaders, sometimes actuated by sound motives, has not produced any tangible results. There have been Moslem leaders in India, well-known for their courage, patriotism and breadth of vision but they have received no recognition as their community's representatives from the hands of our rulers. Others were brought on the scene who were uninfluenced by the higher considerations of the welfare of their country and concerned themselves with the so-called advancement of their own community.

#### UNCOMPROMISING ATTITUDE.

Patriotism can never be purchased at the market place by an open bidding. If the Indian National Congress, as the mouthpiece of progressive Indian public opinion, was prepared to concede even of fundamental issues affecting national solidarity and self-respect for the sake of winning the support of Moslem leaders, the British leaders, the British representatives were always ready at hand to offer a higher price at every stage and thus frustrate a combination between the two great communities of India. To day, the Moslem League which is acknowledged by Government as perhaps the only spokesman of Moslem view-point in India, has raised the cry of breaking India into fragments as a condition precedent to political settlement. None knows better than the British Government itself that Pakistan is a sheer impossibility. We oppose it not merely because Hindus cannot tolerate the idea of vivisection of their Motherland but because both economically and politically such a division will be dangerous to the welfare of India as a whole.

The Bengal famine of 1943 has demonstrated the unity of India and the economic absurdity of Pakistan. The British Government knows this simple truth, it however suits its purpose to encourage Moslem League to carry on its present campaign for it deepens communal animosity and bitterness and affords an easy excuse to our British masters to justify their over-lordship of India. Let it be clearly understood that there can be no settlement with the Moslem League on the basis of Pakistan. The Hindu Mahasabha has made efforts to come to an agreement with all political parties so as to present a united front. Its representatives even approached the Moslem League on the subject. It endeavoured to find out the maximum agreement on fundamental issues so that a joint demand may be put forward for an interim national government during the war with the co-operation of all important political parties including the Indian National Congress. It

received no encouragement from the representatives of Government nor from the Muslim League. I do not believe in patched up pacts and compromises. If a settlement with the League is not possible in view of its obstructive and anti-national policy, it does not mean that we should be slow to offer our hand of comradeship to those Moslems and members of other communities whose political ideals are consistent with the unity and freedom of India.

So long as communal considerations loom large in the field of Indian administration and sinister Anglo-Moslem conspiracy continues, the Hindu Mahasabha must function as an active and fearless political organisation which can both defend the rights of the Hindus and of India as a whole. The Indian National Congress has undoubtedly played a valiant part in the battle of Indian freedom during the last 40 years. There can be no political settlement in India without the Congress and the continued detention of its leaders and workers retards the well-being of the country. People ask why the Hindu Mahasabha should continue as a political organisation at all and not leave the field entirely to the Congress. It is well-known how in the past the rights of the Hindus were jeopardised in political spheres because of a misguided policy of appeasement pursued by some Congress leaders. That danger is not yet over and the more vigilant and powerful the Mahasabha becomes, the greater is our chance of averting the disaster. The Congress claims the right of representing all. It has always been anxious to avoid being dubbed as a Hindu organisation, although the vast majority of its supporters are Hindus. So long as a third party remains in India and an aggressive, anti-national and anti-Hindu-Muslim League party holds its sway over the Moslem masses, enjoying the favours of the British Government, and planning to veto the elementary rights of the majority, Hindus for their sheer existence must have their own political organisation to fight for their own rights and liberties. The political goal of the Hindu Mahasabha is complete independence of India. The Hindu Mahasabha stands for joint electorate, if necessary, with reservation of seats. It asks for no special favour for Hindus in any part of the country. While the Hindu Mahasabha feels that the rights of minorities should receive due protection and the culture and religion of all should be held sacred, the essential services of the State must be kept pure and efficient and not made the playing of communal or party-politics. Its aim and policy are therefore consistent with the welfare and advancement of India as a whole. If a time comes when religious and communal considerations disappear from the field of Indian administration and all parties are swayed by one common national ideal, there may be no need for a separate political organisation for Hindus as such. Politics detached from realities is not only meaningless but dangerous. Let us not forget what we really are today. Unarmed and emasculated, we are kept down-trodden as slaves; it is because Hindus unfurled the flag of revolt and claimed for their country, irrespective of caste, creed or community, that free political status which is its birth-right that they became the eye-sore of their alien rulers. That is the reason why at every step in the course of the Indian political struggle it is the Hindus who have dared to revolt and suffer for the emancipation of their country. To curb and cripple the Hindus, the British Government knows it, is to give a death-blow to the cause of Indian freedom and nationalism. If that is a reality, let us have the courage and statesmanship to face it boldly and to devise ways and means to struggle against it. We offer our hands of co-operation to all parties and communities. We want to see built in India a constitution that will give freedom to every son and daughter of this great country and any one who feels ennobled by this ideal will be received by us with open arms.

#### SEVERAL FIELDS OF ACTIVITY

It is not in the sphere of politics alone that the Hindu Mahasabha has to play a vigorous part. It is true that until we gain our political freedom we cannot get rid of our economic slavery. India's expansion in the sphere of trade, commerce and industry cannot develop on lines consistent with her maximum welfare until and unless her affairs can be administered by her own chosen representatives freed from the domination of foreign exploiters. At the same time we cannot sit idle and allow the present policy of drift to continue without serious detriment to our future existence. Every Provincial Hindu Mahasabha must make it a point to explore the reasons for the continued deterioration of certain classes of Hindus in economic spheres and formulate its own programme for rehabilitation. In the field of social reform the Hindu Mahasabha has a tremendous responsibility to discharge. Today Hindus are divided into castes

and sub-castes which have led to a severe weakening of the entire fabric of Hindu society. It is not for me to discuss the merits and demerits of the caste system, but I do plead with all the earnestness in my command the supreme need for *sanghatan*. The Hindu Mahasabha must instill into the minds of all Hindus an imperishable idea of oneness, irrespective of any caste distinction. Be it remembered that persons belonging to the so-called lower castes are often the source of indomitable strength and courage among the Hindus. It is amongst them more than amongst others that Hinduism burns in an atmosphere of unselfish devotion and piety and to allow them to be weakened either socially or economically is to strike at the very root of Hindu consolidation in India. Indeed we want a new race of preachers and workers who will be imbued by the age-old message of equality and service propounded by Hindu Dharma, armed with an enlightened outlook consistent with the needs of modern age. They should spread themselves far and wide and carry with them a new message of hope and good will. There is also a special need for progressive organisation amongst Hindu women. If the society is to be revitalised, our mothers and sisters have to play their due part in the re-building of the Indian nation. It is a matter for gratification that steps have been taken by some of our enlightened sisters from western India to consolidate Hindu women under the banner of Hindu Mahasabha. The Hindu Mahasabha must give this new venture the support that it undoubtedly deserves.

No organisation can ever succeed to influence the minds of the people unless it is based on truth and justice. The peril that confronts India today needs a Hindu organisation which will be fully alive to the undying national spirit of India. We have however to guard against petty jealousies and party factions. Today the Hindu masses have to be guided and made to understand where the national peril lies. If the Hindu Mahasabha is utilised merely for factional purposes or is usurped by people who have no contact with the masses but merely cling to the organisation for their own personal ends, the Hindu Mahasabha will never take root in the country. I, therefore, earnestly call upon all our organisations to re-organise themselves and to do everything possible to avoid weakness and disunity in their ranks. We must also give the fullest opportunity to new recruits to come to our organisation and carry forward a well-planned scheme for progressive expansion. Every six months there should be a vigorous drive for increasing our rolls and our work should not remain concentrated in cities and towns but must touch the lives of the remote villagers. Let us not make the mistake of concentrating on politics alone. Let us build up a new social and economic order within our present limitation and make every Hindu feel that poor and helpless individually he may be, that there is a powerful organisation behind his back which will uphold his rights whenever trampled upon. We do not intend to go out of our way to harm anyone but if others unjustly encroach upon our rights and liberties, we must be trained to stand united and resist such attacks without fear or hesitation. Communal peace will come automatically if both communities remain strong in thought and deed actuated by a common endeavour to serve their common motherland. The definition of Hindu enunciated by Hindu Mahasabha includes every son and daughter of Hindusthan who regard this country as their fatherland and pursue any religion born of this land. It is from this stand-point that I specially ask the Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists and others to come and stand by the Hindu Mahasabha and not permit themselves to be swayed by the sinister tendencies of division practised by our rulers.

#### SILVER LINING

India has occupied a unique place in the history of human civilisation. Though political freedom has been denied to India for the last 200 years and her original inhabitants were for many centuries deprived of their supreme hold upon their own country, Indian culture has remained unconquered from generation to generation. The invader came and went. Kings, emperors and generals appeared and disappeared but the soul of India remains unconquered. It is her remarkable spirit of assimilation which turned generations of invaders into ultimate contributors to the growth of the mighty Indian civilisation. Hindus and Moslems sometimes fought with each other and at other times lived together in amity and brotherhood, both contributing to India's welfare. I believe now more firmly than ever before that as soon as the third party withdraws communal peace will reign again in India. It may be that during the period of transition out-

bursts of mutual distrust and jealousy may disfigure the Indian soil. Ultimately the choice before the two communities must be either peace based on mutual tolerance and understanding or civil war. I plead with all the emphasis at my command that the former may be the final outcome of Hindu Moslem relationship in India. We have both witnessed the bloodbath that is washing mighty territories in this world, governed by people claiming to have reached the highest pinnacle of civilisation during the last one hundred years. This nauseating display of brute force and furious mutual onslaught in which countries that called themselves civilised are taking part today serve as a stern reminder both to Hindus and Moslems in India that the path towards India's safety and liberty lies in mutual tolerance and understanding based on truth, justice and freedom. If ever that settlement comes, Hindus must watch and see that their rights are properly protected. If on the other hand, goaded by the present anti-Hindu policy of our rulers, the Pakistani mentality deepens amongst Moslems of India, there can be no peaceful settlement of the Hindu-Moslem problem in this country. If that happens, then also the Hindu Mahasabha must remain ready and has to play its part in defending and maintaining the integrity and safety of India, no matter at what cost.

The future that lies before us appears to be dark and dismal. Our country is today invaded by a foreign enemy and being ourselves bound to the chariot-wheels of a foreign power, we cannot mobilise our unlimited resources in men and materials, according to our own light, to resist the invasion. We want India to be the mistress of her own destinies. We want no foreign rulers, either of the Eastern or the Western brand. If this is a crime, every patriotic Indian is ready to face the consequences. It is true no country can live by itself and it must make alliances. The countries with whom a free India will make alliance will depend entirely on the treatment that such other countries will accord to India. The future of the world will be saved and a third great war will be prevented, only if the great powers uproot from their minds all ideas of domination and exploitation. There must be a confederation of free nations which must be bound together for protecting human civilisation being battered to pieces as in the past. In this gigantic task of world reconstruction, India with her eternal message of simple living and high thoughts, of love and justice, truth and tolerance can play a tremendous part which few other nations can do. This message, however, India can impart faithfully and well if she can act as an independent entity and not as a hired agent of the British Government. The struggle for Indian liberty must go on from generation to generation until our goal is reached. Today vested interests created by British patronage have deadened the activity of large sections of Indians. Let the Hindu Mahasabha not base its activities merely on negative or destructive slogans nor on hatred and bitterness. To fight oppression and injustice is a virtue and let us practise this virtue whenever occasion arises, but let us at the same time prepare the minds of our countrymen on positive and constructive lines which alone can make them better fitted to offer resistance fearlessly and without expectation of favour. Not by an emotional abandon but by rigid self-discipline, by constant self-sacrifice and elaborate national preparation can we hope to turn a country of slave into a land of free men. Generations of brave soldiers may die before the light of real freedom dawns on Hindusthan. Let us feel inspired by the justice of our cause. Let the sacredness of our right for economic and political liberty touch the heart of every man and woman of India with an undying restlessness and fervour so that they may be completely identified with the great cause. If it be ordained that they will die before achievement comes, may they be born and reborn in this holy land of ours until freedom is completely achieved. Oppressed though we are, let us gather in our own the voice of Mother India and proclaim that we are not beaten. Indeed, let us say without fear that the greater the repression, the more undaunted will be our spirit and fearless our heart. Let us sound the clarion call of unity and action in full remembrance of the stern realities of our nation's dangers and pitfalls and resolutely carry the flag of a free Hindusthan to be unfurled for ever and always in that cherished Temple of Liberty, Harmony and Justice which will be India's greatest offering to the cause of uplift of human civilisation.

**Resolution—Second Day—27th. December 1948**

#### CONDOLENCE RESOLUTION

The second sitting of the Silver Jubilee session of the Hindu Mahasabha commenced at 4 P. M. to-day in the Pandal. About 50,000 men and women were

present, including delegates from the various provinces who were seated on the dais with the Mahasabha leaders and the members of the Reception Committee.

Dr. *Shyama Prasad Mukherjee* received a tremendous ovation as he entered the Pandal and took his seat on the dais. The volunteers of the Bajrang Akhara from Rawalpindi were in charge of the arrangements in the Pandal and they had a hard time in controlling the crowds.

The proceedings commenced with the recitation of Vedic Mantras.

The first resolution moved from the Chair, expressed "profound sense of loss and sorrow at the death of Shyt. *Ramananda Chatterjee*, the veteran journalist, who, as a former President of the Hindu Mahasabha and as a fearless exponent of the nationalist cause, has rendered signal service to his community and his country."

The second resolution mourned the deaths of Sir *Ganesh Dutt Singh* of Bihar, Lt. Patwardhan, and the Maharaja of Bikaner, the Maharaja of Jhalwar and some other Hindu leaders.

Moving the above resolutions from the chair, Dr. *Shyama Prasad Mukherjee* said that the gentlemen mentioned above were great sons of India and they were united in serving the cause of their community and their country as a whole.

The two resolutions were passed.

The third resolution, which was also moved from the Chair and adopted unanimously, read: "This session of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha views with great concern the continued illness of Veer Savarkar and prays to the Almighty for his speedy recovery and restoration of his health."

#### HINDU SANGHATIAN MOVEMENT

Mr. *Kharpurde* moved:

"In order to promote Sanghatan among Hindus, the Mahasabha makes the following recommendations to Hindus all over the country and calls upon them

(a) To develop a spirit of determined insistence on Hindu rights and of stubborn resistance to all encroachments on their rights and interests.

(b) To mitigate the rigour of caste as far as possible and to make determined efforts to abolish sub-castes among the various main castes.

(c) To take immediate and effective steps for the assimilation and economic amelioration of the Depressed Classes.

(d) To eliminate or minimise, as far as possible, all points of difference between various organisations and sections of the Hindus and emphasise and maximise points of agreement by eschewing all kinds of avoidable controversies.

(e) To popularise Hindi language and Devanagari script by making it compulsory in all Hindu educational institutions and by other available means. In order to universalise Hindi script, this Sabha appeals to the people of Bengal, Utkal and Gujrat to adopt the Devanagari script in place of their respective scripts.

(f) To provide occasions for meeting and dining together and exchanging views and ventilating their grievances by holding district and provincial conferences at regular intervals and to establish local Sabhas all over the country to serve as vigilance centres to keep an eye on the day-to-day happenings in their respective localities, so that whenever there is any encroachment on Hindu rights, they may raise their voice and make contacts with the rest of Hindu India.

(g) To make arrangements for congregational prayers in all places of worship at fixed hours, particularly at Hindu festivals and at places of pilgrimage, for congregational prayers on occasions like the Kumbh, etc., in which all pilgrims should be invited to join, to recite after their usual daily prayers the following Vedic text which embodies an injunction to all to march together, to speak with one voice and to work with one mind, namely,

(h) To take necessary steps for the protection of Hindu widows and orphans with a view to prevent leakage of numerical strength of the community and to make them useful members of society.

(i) To maintain and emphasise regard for the cow as a powerful unifying factor and also on account of its economic importance.

(j) To make arrangements that the Hindus of various provinces may keep in touch with the march of events in other provinces and may take necessary steps to prevent any injustice being done to their brothers in any particular province. It is incumbent upon the Hindus of those provinces where they are in a majority to take special care of the Hindus of those provinces where they are in a minority.

(k) To promote physical fitness amongst the Hindus by providing Akhadas, gymnasiums, playgrounds and necessary equipment for physical culture all educational institutions, Hindu Sabhas and other organisations.

(1) In order to consolidate and maintain the integrity of the Hindu community and in order to add to its strength, this Sabha calls upon the Hindus to be on their guard and take necessary steps to prevent any apostasy among them, to reclaim the apostates and to provide facilities for the acquisition of fresh adherents to their ranks."

Mr. *Khaparde* said that if the Hindus undertook to work together on the above-mentioned lines they would be united and no one would be able to do them any injustice or attack their rights.

The resolution was seconded and supported by Mr. *Vishwa Nath* (Calcutta), Mr. *Prithvi Singh Azad*, General Secretary of the All-India Depressed Classes League, and *S. Lal Singh Samundri*. Mr. *Azad* said that the Harijans were part and parcel of the Hindus. He was sorry to say that even the Hindu Shastras were misrepresented and *Manu* was quoted to show that the treatment which some misguided Hindus accorded to the Harijans had the sanction of the Shastras. He had no doubt that the Harijans would form the vanguard of the Hindus. He expressed the hope that any injustice which had been wrongly done by some misguided people to the Harijans would no longer be tolerated by the right-thinking Hindus.

*Sardar Lall Singh Samundri*, an old Akali, supported the resolution. He referred to the controversy among the Akali and the Hindus. While condemning the utterances of some of the Akali leaders, he said that the Hindus and the Sikhs were followers of the same culture and civilization and the Sikhs were a branch of the same tree. He referred to the sacrifices which the great Gurus of the Sikhs had made for the protection of the Brahman and the cow. No one could ever divide the Hindus and the Sikhs and any attempt which might be made by any section of the people, either from among the Hindus or the Sikhs, to divide them must be condemned most strongly.

The resolution was passed.

#### MAHASABHA & POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. *L. B. Bhopatkar* (Poona) moved the following resolution:—

"This Sabha declares with all emphasis it commands that it is All-India Hindu Mahasabha alone which is competent to carry on any political negotiations with the Government or any other party on behalf of the Hindus and that any decision or agreement arrived at without the consent of the Mahasabha shall not be binding on the Mahasabha and the Hindus."

Mr. *Bhopatkar* said that at a time when efforts were being made to have a new constitution drafted for India it was absolutely necessary that it should be made clear beyond any doubt that the Hindu Mahasabha alone represented the Hindus of India and if any settlement regarding the future constitution of India was to be made it must be made with the Hindu Mahasabha. The right of the Congress to represent the Hindus was denied as the Congress could not represent the Hindus and any settlement which did not have the sanction and support of the Hindu Mahasabha must be discarded by the Hindus.

The resolution was seconded by Prof. *Deshpande* (Nagpur) who criticised the Congress for following a policy of appeasement of the Mussalmans and held the Congress responsible for having encouraged Muslim communalism.

*R. B. Kunwar Guru Narain*, supporting the resolution thought that there was no Hindu in India today who did not believe in the aims and ideals of the Hindu Mahasabha. It was on account of the existence of Hindu Mahasabha that the Cripps' proposals, which entailed Pakistan, could not be accepted in spite of the efforts of Mr. *Rajagopalachariar* and men of his way of thinking. There were people among the Congressmen who were anxious to have the proposals accepted but it was because of *Veer Savarkar* that the real game of the sponsors of the proposal was exposed and the proposals fell through. He maintained that the Hindu Mahasabha would not let Pakistan be established. They would resist its establishment. He declared, "I have no doubt that the province where Pakistan was born would provide its 'Kabaristan' also". The speaker extended an invitation to the Congressmen to cease to feel shy of the Hindu Mahasabha and join that organisation which was a truly representative and national organisation of India.

The resolution was adopted unanimously.

#### SATYARTH PRAKASA

A resolution condemning the "agitation started in certain quarters against the publication of *Satyarth Prakash*, an old book held as sacred by the Hindus in

general and the Arya Samaj in particular," and trusting that the "Government would not be led by any mischievous propaganda to take any steps against this old and sacred book," was moved by *Kunwar Chand Karan Sharda* and seconded and supported by *Mr. Anand Priya* (Baroda) and *Mr. Kuntan Lal Lamba*.

*Mr. Chand Karan Sharda* moving the resolution, said that he would not let any one interfere with their sacred book, the "Satyarth Parkash" and they would shed their last drop of blood to protect it. Referring to the speech of *Mr. Aurangzeb*, Premier of N. W. F. P., the speaker said, "if the Mussalmans hold out the threat that there would be Aurangzebs born in India again, let them know that if that happened there would be born *Shinujis* also." *Mr. Anand Priya* said that if the Mussalmans would persist in their demand for getting the "Satyarth Parkash" proscribed the Hindus would be forced to ask that the Koran might also proscribed.

*Mr. Kuntan Lal Lamba* expressed the view that the agitation which was now going on for getting the "Satyarth Parkash" book proscribed appeared to be a foretaste of what Pakistan would be like. The agitation had convinced the Hindus that if Pakistan came to be established, even one of their religious books and the whole of their literature might be proscribed. *Mr. Lamba* declared that the Hindus would defend their religion with all their might and he suggested that as a counter-blast to the present movement every Hindu should make it a point to have a copy of "Satyarth Parkash" in his or her house. The resolution was passed amidst loud applause.

#### VIVISECTION OPPOSED

*Lala Khushal Chand Anand* moved the next resolution "re-affirming the Mahasabha's faith in the integrity of India and its determination to resist all attempts made in any quarter for its vivisection." The mover maintained that the establishment of Pakistan was not a possibility and those who were demanding Pakistan might at the most get a Kabaristan. The best antidote to Pakistan, in the opinion of *Lala Khushal Chand*, was that every neo-Muslim of India should be reconverted to Hinduism because once everybody in India became Hindu there would be left no need for anyone to make a demand for the establishment of Pakistan. The first sad experience of what a Pakistan would be like was by now known to the people of Bengal who had suffered most terribly and he had no doubt that the combination of the physical strength of the Punjab and the intellect of Bengal would not let Pakistan be established.

*Raja Narentra Nath*, seconding the resolution in a short speech, said that the demand for the establishment of Pakistan was a senseless demand. He had no doubt that this would never be realised. It was an impracticable demand. He mentioned how any transfer of population between the various provinces was impossible. *Mr. Jinnah* was a very shrewd man, and the *Raja Sahib* had no doubt that he himself knew that the demand for Pakistan was an impossibility. He was merely using it as an appeal to communal passion.

*Mr. Bhoj Raj Ajrani* (Sind) supported the resolution and said that not a single Hindu in his Province would agree to the demand of Pakistan.

*Mr. Karandikar* (Poona), who supported the resolution, maintained that he had no doubt that the brave Hindus of the Punjab, who had a glorious history of sufferings and sacrifice, would never let Pakistan be established. They had a long and unique Sikh history at their back which had perhaps no parallel anywhere, and even the modern history of the sacrifices of the Sikhs of the days of *Guru Ram Singh* was a guarantee against any attempt at the vivisection of India.

*Mr. Ram Kishan Pandey* (Mahakoshal) supported the resolution which was also supported by *Mr. Devenutra Nath Mukherjee* from Bengal and *Devan Dalip Chand* (N. W. F. P.). *Mr. Pandey* had no doubt that the great provinces of the Punjab and Bengal would never yield to the proposal of Pakistan. *Mr. Mukherjee* said that the Pakistan cry was the result of a conspiracy between the British Government and the Muslim leader *Mr. Jinnah* to weaken the Hindus. This move, he said, would never succeed. The resolution was passed unanimously. The session then adjourned.

#### Resolutions--Third Day--28th. December 1943

The Silver Jubilee Session of the Hindu Mahasabha concluded to-night after passing a number of important resolutions.

The proceedings started at 3-30 P. M. amidst scenes of unabated enthusiasm. About 50,000 men and women were present. On the dais were seated All-India Hindu leaders, including *Dr. Moonje*, *Mr. Khaparde*, *R. B. Mehr Chand Khanna*,

*Mr. N. C. Chatterji, L. Narain Datt, Mr. Kanwar Chand Karan Sharda, Raja Maheshwar Dayal, Kunwar Guru Narain, Mr. Advani* and other presidents of the various provincial Hindu Sabhas.

There were seated on the dais also *Sir Manohar Lal*, Finance Minister, Punjab, *Sir Tek Chand, R. S. Gokal Dass* and *Mr. Heman Das*, two Sind Ministers.

*Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerji* was loudly applauded as he entered the pandal and was greeted with loud shouts of "*Dr. Shyama Prasadki Jai.*"

Before *Dr. Mukerji* came to the pandal, there was an unhappy incident which annoyed a large section of the audience, which demanded repeatedly an apology from some one sitting on the dais, who had uttered something against the Congress. The incident happened when *Mr. Khushdil*, who was a popular poet with the audience was reciting a poem in which he referred to the sacrifices made by the Congress and its leaders. While the poem was being recited, the mammoth gathering raised loud and continued shouts of "Congress Zindabad," "Mahatma Gandhiki Jai." At this, some one sitting on the dais made some objectionable remarks against the Congress which appeared to have enraged the audience and they repeated shouts of "shame, shame" and "withdraw." *Mr. Keshab Chander*, General Secretary of the Reception Committee, tried to pacify the crowd but the audience continued to demand the withdrawal of the words uttered against the Congress. This went on for some time without order being restored.

When, however, *Dr. Mukerji* came and occupied the presidential seat, he was made aware of what was happening. *Dr. Mukerji* got up to pacify the crowd. The President of the Hindu Mahasabha, addressing the crowd, said that he was sorry to learn that during his absence, some misunderstanding had been caused by the remarks of some one sitting on the dais. He begged of the audience to remain calm and quiet and if any unjust reflection had been caused by some one's remarks against Gandhiji or the Congress, he was standing before them as the President of the All India Hindu Mahasabha to offer his regrets. This was greeted with deafening cheers and loud shouts of "Congress Zindabad" and "Mahatma Gandhiki Jai."

Continuing, *Dr. Mukerji* said that he had himself, on several occasions, criticised the Congress with regard to its policy and even Gandhiji's policy, but there was no justification for any Congressman to run down the Mahasabha as there was no justification for any Hindu Mahasabha member to run down the Congress. Every one had his greatness and they were not there to defame each other.

Concluding amidst loud cheers, *Dr. Mukerji* said : "Those stalwarts who have built up the Congress with their sacrifices will be remembered with the deepest affection not only by us but also by the coming generations." This declaration pacified the whole audience.

#### GRIEVANCES OF HINDUS

*Mr. Bhoj Raj Ajwani*, General Secretary of the Sind Provincial Hindu Sabha, moved the following resolution :—"In view of the fact that the Hindus of Moslem majority provinces have repeatedly complained to the Hindu Mahasabha regarding the unjust and oppressive treatment meted out to them by the Muslim Government of these provinces, this Conference requests the President to appoint a Committee of 2 persons to enquire into the grievances with instruction to submit their reports as early as possible."

Moving the resolution, *Mr. Ajwani* said that there existed no law and order in Sind so far as the Hindus were concerned. No day passed without dacoity being committed somewhere in Sind and it was surprising that in almost every case the victims of these dacoities were Hindus. There was no Hindu house in Sind which was considered safe and neither the property nor the women of Hindus had any protection of law under the present administration. *Mr. Sayed*, who was a prominent Muslim Leaguer in Sind, had started a new movement called "Liberation from the Hindus". This was the most ill-conceived movement which had encouraged the Muslims who were now not afraid of even taking forcible possession of the lands belonging to the Hindus. The Hindus had a most negligible share in the services and in key posts they were almost nowhere. There was a wave of communalism which had swept over the whole province. It was time that the plight under which the Hindus were living was enquired into and the injustices which were being done to them under the Muslim League Ministry be made known to the world.

The resolution was seconded by Pandit Jagannath Dutt (Punjab), Mr. A. S. Satyarthi (Punjab), Swami Sutikshsan Muni (Sind) and Mr. Mangal Sain (N. W. F. P.). Mr. Satyarthi referred to the grievances of the Hindus in the Punjab under the Unionist Ministry. He mentioned how a licence for opening a slaughter house in Nurpur was granted which had given cause for annoyance to the whole community and was against the established practice of that area. Then again education in the Primary School was being Muslimised by affording no facilities for the teaching of Hindi in the Primary Schools. Provincial autonomy in the Punjab had proved a curse. He appealed, on behalf of the Hindu mind, which he claimed to represent, to Sir Manohar Lal, Finance Minister of the Punjab to use all his influence to have status quo maintained in the above-mentioned matters. He hoped that Sir Tek Chand would also see that the slaughter house which had been allowed to be opened in his own home would not be allowed to remain there.

Mr. Harish Chander Ghosh supporting the resolution further said that an irresponsible Ministry had been installed in the office and that the Ministry had been responsible for treating the Hindus of Bengal, who were really the makers of modern Bengal, most shabbily. Their religious rights were being trampled under foot. He accused the official agency for conniving at the misdeeds of the Muslim rulers who were allowed to go simply because they happened to be Mussulmans even though they might have committed most heinous crimes. Mr. Ghosh said that the intellect in Bengal was being suppressed by intellectual dwarfs and what was most disgraceful and painful too was that the language and literature of Bengal was being Muslimised.

The resolution was adopted unanimously.

#### POLITICAL SITUATION

R. B. Mehar Chand Khanna moved the main resolution on the political situation in the country. The resolution ran as follows:

"That, in view of the deplorable political situation prevailing in the country and in view of the deepening sense of frustration paralysing the national will, the Conference expresses its deep resentment at the attitude adopted by the British Government inasmuch as they have not yet responded to the national demand for the immediate declaration of Independence and of the immediate formation of a National Government.

"The Conference records its opinion that the latest speech delivered at Calcutta by Lord Wavell is profoundly disappointing, and in the interest of the effective of India and economic rehabilitation of the country, it is essential that Mr. Amery should be removed from the position of the Secretary of State for India that the political deadlock should be ended, that all the political prisoners and detainees should be released forthwith and that negotiations be started for co-ordination of all nationalist elements in the country and for mobilising the resources of India for national defence.

"This Conference reaffirms its adherence to the principle of preserving the integrity of India and urges the introduction of federation in the future constitution of India with a strong Centre. It demands that no freedom should be accorded to the provinces or to any community or section to secede from the Indian federation. It also demands that representative assemblies, both in the Centre and provincial spheres, should be constituted on the principle of joint electorate and 'one man, one vote.'

Commending his resolution to the session, R. B. Mehar Chand Khanna referred to the political history of the past years. But that period, he said, was not a very long time in the history of the nation. They knew how the promises made during the last Great War were fulfilled by the Britishers in the form of Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh and it was, therefore, no surprise that they could not depend upon mere promises which might be made now for granting India independence after the present war. He was glad that the Cripps' proposals, which were full of poison, had been rejected by the nationalist India. If the British claim that they were fighting for freedom and democracy was true and sincere, Mr. Khanna asked why the Atlantic Charter was not applied to India. India had been rewarded even before the end of the war in the form of ruthless repression which was started on the 8th of August, 1942, after the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and other Congress leaders.

The Hindus were being depicted by the British propagandists in America as fifth columnists and pro-Japanese. The significance of this propaganda, said Mr. Khanna, would be well understood by the Hindus of India. He, however, declared

that the Britishers or their propagandists would not be able to deceive India or the world for a very long time though they might succeed for some time. India was now awake and would not tolerate any humiliation. It would not tolerate the Peggising Act, the White Australian policy. Addressing those who, according to Rai Bahadur Mehr Chand Khanna, believed in a New World Order and who, according to him, were today busy forming an Anglo-Saxon alliance, the speaker said that if they would form an Anglo-Saxon alliance, they in India and the East also believed and would form an Eastern Federation. To his British friends R. B. Mehr Chand Khanna wanted to say that when it was a fact that they would have one day to go from India it was better that they left India as India's friends. Concluding Mr. Khanna said that if Mr. Churchill would not like to preside over a Cabinet under whose care the King's Empire would be liquidated he had no hesitation in saying that India had not produced great men like Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Veer Savarkar to see India remain in chains.

Dr. Moonje, who seconded the resolution, stated that the resolution provided an irrefutable proof of the fact that the Hindu Mahasabha was not a communal organisation but represented the Nationalist India.

Mr. Neelkanth Das M. L. A., (Central), supporting the resolution, said that the resolution before them represented the National demand. This demand would not be conceded by the Britishers in their present mental mood. The Britishers said they were prepared to part with power if the people of India would agree between themselves. That was an impossible condition, said Mr. Neelkanth Das, so long as the third party remained. He declared, "let Englishmen clear out. This will make it possible for the two parties to come to an agreement without any fear of each other or the fear of Pakistan. The Englishmen are sandwitching India between British Imperialism and Pakistan which is their creation."

Continuing, Mr. Neelkanth Das said that if the Britishers wanted to remain in India on the plea that they had to discharge their responsibility to the minorities and other interests then they must cease to talk of parting with power in favour of India. He asked the British Government to be sincere in what they said and reminded them that they were committed to the Federal Constitution for India and they should make no attempt at dividing this country. He further said that he wanted not merely the removal of Mr. Amery from office because if Amery goes a Schuster might come. He therefore stood for the abolition of the office of Mr. Amery lock, stock and barrel.

Raja Maheshwar Dayal (U. P.) said that while nations were busy fighting the battle of freedom and democracy, whatever little freedom India enjoyed had evaporated and in the Hindu majority provinces one would find Governors' dictatorships established and those who demanded freedom had been put behind the bars. The speaker said India did not want to wait and could not depend upon promises to be fulfilled after the war. Political freedom was the only remedy for the ills of India, and he said that the Anglo-Muslim conspiracy to impede the efforts for the attainment of India's freedom should not be allowed to succeed.

Messrs Ashutosh Lahiri (Bengal), Shastri (Behar), Loka Mal (Sind) and Dr. Narang further supported the resolution. Dr. Narang, in the course of his speech, referred to the policy of appeasement which, he said, had failed because the appetite of the Muslims continued to increase as they were given more and more to eat. The Muslim Leaguers had also used the slogan 'quit India' but their position was that the Britishers should divide India before going away. The speaker thought that there was not a greater opponent of India's freedom than Mr. Jinnah who was undoubtedly the biggest impediment in the way of India's liberation. Dr. Narang thought that India's freedom depended solely upon the solidarity of Hindus whom he advised to unite and resolve with full determination to do the great thing without any fear.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

#### HINDI BANNED AMONG DETENUS

Mr. Kundan Lal Lamba moved a resolution condemning the Punjab Government's action in prohibiting the political prisoners and detenus in the Punjab Jails from using Hindi as the medium of their correspondence with friends and relatives. The resolution demanded that the right for writing letters in Hindi should be restored. Mr. Lamba condemned the Punjab Government's attitude towards the Hindus and their language. The resolution after being seconded by Mr. Rameshwar Mishra (Bihar) was passed.

## BENGAL FAMINE

*Mr. N. C. Chatterji* moved the third resolution regarding the famine situation in Bengal which ran as follows :—

"This Conference records its opinion that the Bengal Famine, which is responsible for the loss of lacs and lacs of lives and for widespread misery, destitution and malnutrition affecting over a crore of Bengal's population, is a man-made famine. The food crisis and the sufferings of the people were accentuated by the bungling and inefficiency of the Moslem League Ministry which was installed in office by manoeuvring on the part of the then Governor of Bengal. The price racket and the black market were encouraged by the policy of the League Ministry which appointed its party supporters as Government agents for the purchase of rice in famine-stricken Bengal and who were advanced more than five crores of rupees for such purpose.

"This Conference offers its heartfelt sympathy to the victims of famine and their families and calls upon the British Government to appoint an impartial commission to enquire into the causes of the famine and to report as to how the persons responsible for this famine should be dealt with.

"This Conference calls upon the Government to appoint a representative Committee composed of the leaders of all parties to formulate a scheme of rehabilitation in order to restore the social and economic life of the Province."

*Mr. N. C. Chatterji*, while proposing the resolution, gave a detailed account of the distress in Bengal caused by the famine conditions. The claim that one of the biggest blessings of English Rule in India was that famine for all times had been ended had once again been proved to be false. It was a pity that in the province of Bengal, the home of *Desh-Bandhu Chitta Ranjan Dass*, whose charity knew no bounds, people had died for want of food. Rice had been sold at Rs. 80 to Rs. 130/- per maund with the result that the poor man was not able to purchase rice for personal consumption. He pointed out that the Bengal Government had failed to serve the people of Bengal in their distress.

*Dr. Moonje*, seconding the resolution, said that Bengal represented the intellect of India and if intellect was in danger, then the whole body becomes useless. It was therefore necessary that intellect should be saved.

*Lala Brij Lal*, Inspector, Arya Schools, while supporting the resolution delineated the sad story of Bengal famine and referred to the useful work which the Arya Samaj had done to help the people of Bengal. He stated how *Lala Khushal Chand* and the speaker himself with other workers of Arya-Samaj had gone from village to village, helping the dying people.

The resolution after being further supported by *Mr. Ram Niwas (Agra)* was passed.

## LATHI-CHARGE

*Mr. Rama Nath Kalia* moved the resolution regarding the lathi-charge on the presidential procession at Amritsar. The resolution ran as follows :

"Whereas the police of Amritsar committed assault on the procession organised by the Reception Committee in honour of the President of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha Session, Amritsar, when it was proceeding in perfect peace and order and thereby caused injuries to a large number of innocent persons by indiscriminate lathi-charge, the Conference places on record its strong condemnation of the action of the district authorities and urges the Government to take action against the local officers who acted in a thoroughly irresponsible way."

While *Mr. Kalia* was commending the resolution to the meeting, there was a hostile demonstration and uproar in the huge gathering which demanded of the mover to tell them what practical steps were being taken to "avenge the insult offered to the Hindus." The audience did not allow *Mr. Kalia* to proceed and order was restored by *Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerji* with a little difficulty.

*Dr. Mookerjee* addressing the gathering, said that none felt more humiliated than the speaker himself over the insult that had been offered to the procession. The sense of humiliation was all the more because they were all unarmed and those who dispersed them were fully armed. He said that it was not for the Hindu Mahasabha to decide what action they should take in the matter but it was for the people of the Punjab and more specially of Amritsar to consider and to decide how to answer that deliberate insult which had been offered to them. He wanted to remind the audience that he and other delegates were their guests and they could not do anything without their fullest consent and without them. *Dr. Mukherjee* said : "I can tell you, however, one thing for myself that if you, the people of Amritsar decide to take out any procession at any time you will have

only to send me an intimation and wherever I might be I will come to you at once to join that procession." But Dr. Mukherjee wanted them to remember that nothing should be done without proper preparation. It was not wise to go to face one's opponent unarmed. He regretted that the local authorities had found a very lame excuse and "fell upon innocent processionists in the darkness of the night." He was sorry to say that the communique issued regarding the incident was a tissue of falsehood and the action was so unwarranted that the authorities did not seem to acknowledge it. Dr. Mukherjee said that when he talked about the matter to Sir Manohar Lal who was with him this morning, he was surprised to learn from him that the highest officers had been told that there was no lathi-charge. Sir Manohar Lal was shown the injured persons and the speaker hoped that an enquiry would be made though he was unmindful whether an enquiry was conducted or not, because his main consideration was that the truth about this cowardly attack be made known to the world outside.

After this Dr. Mukherjee put the resolution to the House which accepted it.

There were, however, loud protests from a large section of the public who told Dr. Mukherjee that the provincial leaders would not do anything in the matter. Shouts against Sir Gokal Chand were raised by a section of the crowd who demanded from him to give up his Knighthood. Dr. Mukherjee however, succeeded in pacifying the audience.

#### (OTHER RESOLUTIONS)

A number of resolutions were moved from the Chair which were all passed. These resolutions included assurance to the Hindu ruling chiefs of Mahasabha's fullest support in any agitation against them by non-Hindus and pressing upon them the necessity of introducing progressive reforms in the administration of their States. A resolution regarding Kashmir State was also passed and Muslim League propaganda against the State was condemned. Dr. Mukherjee said that the Maharaja of Kashmir would have their support in his effort to prevent any onslaught of communalism for which preparations were being made. Resolutions regarding the Hindus of Baluchistan and the administrations of Hyderabad and Bhopal States vis-a-vis the Hindus, the formation of a constitution sub-committee, the establishment of all-India Hindu Women's Conference and protesting against the licence for a slaughter house at Nurgur, and the appointment of a vigilance committee and to safeguard the interests of the Hindus in the minority provinces were passed.

In the course of his concluding remarks, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee while thanking the Reception Committee, said that he and the delegates had been deeply overwhelmed by the kindness of the people of the Punjab and the wonderful response while the Punjab had given to the cause of the Hindu Mahasabha. It appeared to him that the heart of the brave Hindus of the Punjab had been touched and he appealed to the Hindus of the Punjab that they should build up the Mahasabha and make it a living organisation. The Punjab of Lajpat Rai stood as an ideal for the whole of India and even though Bengal had produced great men, yet the name of Lala Lajpat Rai was a household word in Bengal. Lajpat Rai and others were great leaders of yesterday and the present Hindu youth was going to provide leaders of to-morrow; and if any one of them thought that the present leadership could not do better, he appealed to the youths not to sit idle but take up the work in their own hands. He wanted new blood to be infused in the Mahasabha not for solving the problems which confronted the Hindus of the Punjab and Bengal but the whole of India. He said: "If we can unite, we can keep the Eastern and the Western gates of India well-guarded and the Punjab and Bengal can thus maintain the integrity of glorious India." He wished to make it clear that the Hindus of Bengal and the Punjab and other minority provinces were not opposing Pakistan for their own sake but as sons and daughters of the great India.

He appealed to the Hindus of the Punjab to take full advantage of the enthusiasm which had been created and organise themselves. The Mahasabha was a democratic organisation and any one could become its member by paying four annas and those who thought that the Mahasabha leadership was not doing good work, should join it and give it an impetus. He wanted the Hindus to stand on their own legs to protect their rights and the rest would follow.

Referring to the resolution regarding the political demands, Dr. Mukerji said that the demands contained in that resolution were in fact the National demands. Referring to the Muslim League, the President of the Mahasabha said that at Karachi the cat had come out of Mr. Jinnah's bag, where he demanded

British to quit India after dividing it. It seemed that having lost all hopes of getting Pakistan from the Hindus he was now looking to his British friends and asking them to divide India and then quit this land. What a colossal ignorance of practical politics it was. Dr. Mukerji was, however, glad that Mr. Jinnah had at least learnt to use the term "quit India" and he hoped that he would very soon forget the demand from the British to divide India and would work for the first part of the demand. Dr. Mukerji said that he was prepared to let the Britishers live in India as employees and not as masters. He said that the Mahasabha was opposed to no one but it wanted to maintain the liberty and integrity of India because for the Hindus there was no other country but India and they could not have their holy Ganges and the Jamuna divided by the support of British sword. No one could cut India into pieces if the Hindus were determined to maintain its integrity and he, therefore, appealed to every Hindu youth to instil in his own mind the ideas and ideals of Hinduism which preached fraternity and equality. Referring to the significance of the sword on the Hindu flag, Dr. Mukerji said that the sword was not meant to kill others but to afford protection. Dr. Mukerji made a passionate appeal to the Hindus to learn not to fight shy of realities but face facts and set their own house in order. He concluded the speech amidst loud applause.

## The A. I. Hindu Students' Conference

Second Session—Amritsar—28th December 1943

### Presidential Address

"In this storm-tossed world with its racial prejudices, machine-guns and U-boats, with its narrow nationalism, make the democratic teaching of the 'Vedanta' the leading principle of social ethics for humanity at large." This observation was made by Mr. N. C. Chatterjee, Working President of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Sabha presiding over the Second Session of the All-India Hindu Students' Conference held at Amritsar on the 28th December 1943.

Referring to Pakistan, he said: "In spite of all financial or other considerations we must refuse to exchange our undivided and indivisible India for any independent fragmented units. Pakistan would mean the crippling of both the Hindus and the Muslims in Bengal and in the Punjab and if the Bengalees and the Punjabees unite, Pakistan shall vanish into oblivion.

Mr. Chatterjee said: "I thank you for electing me to the Chair. The land of the Vande Mataram offers its respects to the land of the Vedas. The greatest achievements of the Indo-Aryan race were accomplished in this sacred land of the five rivers. Since the dawn of human civilisation the Punjab has been the birth-place of Indo-Aryan culture. This Holy City of Amritsar is sanctified by the sacred memory of the Sikh Gurus and martyrs and by the tragedy of Jalianwalla Bagh. There has been a close spiritual and political contact between the Punjab and Bengal, which was reinforced by the inspiring messages delivered by Surendranath Banerjee, Bipin Chandra Pal and Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das.

The Punjab was and is indissolubly linked to the rest of Hindusthan and, God willing, with your devotion and sacrifice, the Punjab shall never be severed from Hindusthan.

### SANGHATAN

Remember the future of Akhand Hindusthan will depend on the success of Sanghatan. Do not divide, do not alienate, bridge all gulfs. Hindu-Sikh concord will dispel all fears of Pakistan. If the Bengalees and the Punjabees unite, Pakistan shall vanish into oblivion.

Famine-stricken Bengal has special lessons to impart to the student world of Hindusthan. Due to starvation, malnutrition and diseases millions of our people have perished. We are grateful to the Punjab and other provinces for the spontaneous assistance rendered to famished Bengal. Particularly, the splendid work done by the Arya Samaj deserves mention.

Bengal is now in the grip of malaria and cholera and there is paucity of quinine and other drugs which can save human lives. In some villages in East

Bengal more than half the population had been swept away by famine and its aftermath. In some places in Midnapore skulls are lying on the road side, the jackals having devoured the rest of the famished victims of the famine.

This famine has clearly demonstrated that a strong Central Government is essential to cope with such a crisis and to co-ordinate the activities of the provinces. It will be a blunder to weaken the Centre in the future Constitution of India.

#### YOUNG MIND AT SEA

The young mind in Bengal and different parts of India has been in a state of ferment. There is a feeling that the present political and social fabric has merely tended to perpetuate the wretchedness of the masses. The old slogans and shibboleths do not work any more. The young people, particularly the students, are demanding a more realistic and more humane ideal. The idea of mere charity is repulsive to the poor masses. The starving and famished people demand justice upon this earth. Those of you who have toured in the famine-stricken areas and have actually seen people dying of hunger and have seen men and dogs fighting for a morsel of food, can realise how a frightful mental chaos comes upon the young mind when it comes in contact with such unfathomable depths of misery. After two centuries of civilised rule there has been little effort genuinely made for the redemption of the masses. It is clear that another means of salvation must be found.

Freedom from famine can be secured by freedom from alien bondage. India wants her freedom. Unfortunately Mr. Churchill has denied it. We wanted to fight as a free nation side by side with the united nations. The Hindu Mahasabha was practical. It gave a lead to the country to militarise and to equip our people in order to defend our country. Mr. Churchill has declared that he has not become the first Minister to work for the liquidation of the British Empire. The Atlantic Charter has been drowned in the Bay of Bengal. Truly, India has confronted Britain with a first class moral problem in this war. It is foolish to say that our people are pro-Japanese. Our sympathy and spontaneous help to the cause of freedom transcends all bounds of classes or creeds or parties. We want to play a creative role in human history, provided our own country is assured of freedom and democracy. We want Britain to demonstrate in actual practice that this is not an imperialistic war. In this moment of perplexity boldly face and examine the problems of the day.

We are convinced that the defeat of Hitler is certain. We are also convinced that with the collapse of Fascism Imperialism shall die. Independence shall come. The world forces are all operating in our favour. Neither Churchill nor Amery nor any combination of politicians can prevent Hindusthan from achieving freedom. You must be building up your organisation and your character in such a way as to be ready for Independence when it comes. However much the differences in India may be exaggerated or exploited, whatever may be the propaganda of the nominated emissaries of the British Government in the various countries, India is to-day determined to get both justice and freedom this time.

Many Indian leaders are still rotting in jail and the cleavage between India and England is widening. The powerful apparatus of British propaganda has been working in full swing against them. We wish Sir Stafford Cripps had not taken up an attitude of "either take it or leave it." The break-down of Cripps' negotiations was a first class political tragedy. But how could we conscientiously accept the scheme which wanted to poison the constitution in India with the germ of vivisection? How can we willingly be a party to a scheme which had a big dose of Pakistan? You should realise the difference between the redistribution of provinces and the self-determination of provinces. Every Hindu is a Federalist. The cardinal principle of federation is that it should be an indissoluble union of indissoluble states. Pakistan would mean the crippling of both the Hindus and the Muslims in Bengal and in the Punjab. The grim realities of famine have demonstrated beyond the shadow of doubt that in order to feed our starving people food-stuff must come from Hindusthan. Pakistan would have completely converted Bengal into a Kabarakhan!

#### OPPOSE PAKISTAN

Remember that we are opposed to Pakistan because our ideals, principles and objects are diametrically opposed to those of the Muslim League. The Muslim League wants vivisection of our country and keep it practically under British subjection and want to assert that the Muslims are a nation whose political destiny must be different from that of the Hindus. Some misguided Hindu leaders hav

fallen into traps of the Pakistanists and encourage the idea of separation on financial grounds. They think that we shall get rid of the financial drags and subventions if we accept Pakistan. As a matter of fact Pakistan will be economically bankrupt and will be devoid of those economic resources without which civilised states cannot function. But in my opinion in spite of all financial or other considerations we must refuse to exchange our undivided and indivisible India for any independent fragmented units. Remember, sentiment and ties of culture and historical affinity are the strongest forces in human life.

In this storm-tossed world with its racial prejudices, machine guns and U-boats, with its narrow nationalism, make the the democratic teaching of the Vedanta the leading principle of social ethics of humanity at large. The Hindu must shake off their inertia, their listlessness, their decaying and drifting attitude, infuse into our social system a new vitality, a new consciousness and stamp out all flagging among the youth."

## The Assam Provincial Hindu Sabha

### Muslim Penetration in Assam

At an emergent meeting of the Executive Committee of the Assam Provincial Hindu Sabha held at Nowgong on the 4th. September 1943, the following lengthy resolution was adopted. The resolution runs as follows:—

(A) This meeting of the Assam Provincial Hindu Sabha views with alarm and indignation the decision of the Government of Assam as embodied in their resolution on Land Settlement published in the Assam Gazette of 25th August, 1943, and considers the said decision as wholly unwarranted and calculated to affect the interests of the Hindus most injuriously and as such condemns the same for the following among other reasons:—

(i) That the Land Settlement Policy as adumbrated in the said resolution is to all intents and purposes nothing but the reneuvelling under new and hollow pretexts of the ill-conceived Land Development Scheme of June 1910 which was hatched in the teeth of vehement Hindu opposition by the last Saadullah Ministry with the mischievous motives of letting down the Hindus of the Province to a state of political non-entity and perpetual serfdom by reducing their numerical strength.

(ii) That *fortunately* for the Hindus His Excellency the Governor of Assam took up the administration of the Province into his own hands after the liquidation of the last Saadullah Cabinet, and the chorus of protests raised by the Hindus persuaded His Excellency to give a decent burial to the hated Land Development Scheme. The abandonment of the said Scheme was an act of superwisdom on the part of His Excellency in as much as it averted the acceleration of communal ill feeling. The revival of the very same Scheme at the present moment when the enemy is already battering at our doors, and when perfect unity among the communities is indispensably necessary for successful prosecution of War efforts and for warding off aggressions, is an act of colossal unwisdom and betrays the reactionary policy stubbornly pursued by the Moslem Majority Ministry regardless of the well-being of the province. The faked purposes set out in the preamble to the resolution have been ingenuously contrived to hoodwink the people and camouflage the most ignominious design for perpetuation of Moslem domination in the province.

(iii) That the Ministry have miserably failed in their duty of protecting and safeguarding the interests of the different non Moslem communities of the province and by allowing settlement of lands to the Moslem immigrants far in excess of the area warranted by the percentage basis have deliberately perpetrated a wrong of the highest magnitude to the indigenous people, and to the Hindu general. As a matter of fact 98 p.c. of the lands hitherto thrown open for sale have been allotted to immigrant Moslems. The resolution published in the Assam Gazette of 25th August, 1943 does not contain any safeguard for the any provision for bringing about parity in the allocation of lands to the communities according to percentage on the population basis. The

cation of lands in surplus portion of Grazing Reserves to different communities "in proportion to their needs" is but a design underlying the entire Scheme and is but an instance of the application of the opportunity policy pursued by the Moslem Leaguers whenever and wherever the percentage basis does not suit or ill-fits their own purposes.

(iv) That the attitude of the Government towards the professional graziers has always been characterised by callous indifference and gross apathy and the gradual opening of lands referred for professional graziers has not only grievously hurt the interests of such graziers but has also culminated in an appalling dearth of milk, which in its turn has had the natural effect of working as a insidious poison corroding the very life and vitality of the people. Further curtailment of lands reserved for professional graziers will immeasurably intensify the difficulties of milk-supply and will therefore be a positive menace to the health and growth of people. The present move of the Ministry as envisaged in the resolution in question is therefore anti-national in the extreme and betrays an unscrupulous disregard for the real welfare of the people. The insertion of the clause—"when these are found to be surplus to requirements" in para 2 (a) of the Government resolution is nothing but an eyewash and a clever ruse for warding off adverse criticisms. The professional graziers who are practically all Nepalese have not received as much attention as they so richly deserve both from the point of view of the vital problem of milk-supply and also from that of the tremendous sacrifices of the Nepalese people for the cause of the King Emperor and the Country. The present move will surely place insurmountable hurdles on the way of prosperity and expansion of their profession.

(v) That the deforestation of vast areas of lands has already caused a decrease in the rainfall and so the production of crops has not shown any appreciable corresponding improvement and increase, notwithstanding large areas of land being settled with Moslem immigrants during recent years. Further deforestation as contemplated in the Government resolution will still more lower the rainfall and affect the climatic conditions of the Province and also increase the possibility of frequent heavy floods with disastrous effects on crops. The revenue derived by one hand will be spent by the other in giving gratuitous relief and in combating the concomitant evils of either floods or draughts. The golden vista of increasing the provincial revenue and of flooding the country side with abundance of crops may in consequence prove itself to be an ethereal project never destined to materialise as a tangible reality.

(vi) That Government resolution has now the natural effect of emboldening the land-hungry Moslem immigrants to carry on according to plan, a tremendous onslaught on all types of Government Reserves without waiting for the authorised allotment of lands on just and equitable considerations. An orgy of lawlessness has already been let loose with the blessings of the single-group Moslem Majority Ministry behind it, and reports of mass-encroachments on a well-organised scale on almost all places of vantage by the Moslem immigrants are daily pouring in. The District authorities have become helpless and passive onlookers only on account of the Ministry having given a long rope to Moslem immigrants for trampling down the existing laws of land settlement with unrestricted license.

(B) This meeting of the Assam Provincial Hindu Sabha in view of the facts and reasons stated above strongly urges on the Government to drop the entire Scheme of Land Settlement as embodied in their resolution and for vindication of law and order to take immediate drastic measures against the encroachers on Government land in different parts of the Assam Valley.

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# The All India Muslim League

## Council Meeting—New Delhi—14th. November 1943

MR. JINNAH RE-ELECTED PRESIDENT

The All-India Muslim League Council which was held at New Delhi on the 14th. November 1943 re-elected Mr. M. A. Jinnah as the President of the League for the coming year. The Secretary's announcement that no other name had been suggested by any Provincial League was greeted with loud applause.

The Council passed a resolution strongly condemning "the dastardly and insane assault" made on the person of Mr. Jinnah in Bombay and thanking Almighty God for saving the life of "the beloved leader of the Mussalmans."

The Council further congratulated Mr. Jinnah on his providential escape and prayed that he might be spared long to guide the hundred million Muslims of India under his great leadership to their cherished goal of Pakistan.

The resolution was moved by *Nawabzada Rashid Ali*, President, Lahore Muslim League, and supported by Moulana Jamal Mian and Khawaja Sir Nazi-muddin, the Bengal Premier.

### Mr. Jinnah's Address

"This manœuvring on the part of the Government to create the impression that there should be a united Central Government of India shows that the die-hard Tories who rule Great Britain do not wish to release their hold on this country," said Mr. M. A. Jinnah, addressing the League Council to-day.

Mr. Jinnah said he not only wanted the Muslims but every man in this sub-continent to realise this. When the British talk of Central Government, the sole object was that neither Hindus nor Muslims were to be freed. It meant the continuation of British domination and British rule.

Pakistan, he said, postulated freedom for Hindus as well as Muslims. There could be no Pakistan without the Hindus getting freedom in their Hindustan.

Referring to the proposal of Akhand Hindustan or National Government he said the crux was the establishment of Hindu Raj and Hindu dominated Government in this country. The results of this were so obvious to Muslim India, that they were to be transferred to a Hindu Raj and instead of the British garrison they would be kept under order by the Hindu garrison. Was it possible for the Hindu leaders, he asked, to accomplish or achieve this when the Muslims were fully alive, alert and vigilant? Could they expect Muslim India to sign their own death warrant?

Around these three rival schemes centred all the propaganda that filled the press and issued from the platform, since the Council last met, and barring this Mr. Jinnah saw nothing that had happened on the political horizon of India, that he should comment on. He was mentioning these issues merely in order to refresh the Council's memory.

Mr. Jinnah expressed concern over the developments in Lebanon and said that a resolution on the subject would be placed before the Council to-morrow.

Turning to the food situation, on which a resolution is to be moved to-morrow, Mr Jinnah said that the Working Committee had given serious consideration to the matter and would not only make carefully considered proposals but also facts about the situation. He defended the Ministry in Bengal and declared they were doing their very best. When they got in, the conflagration had already started and Bengal was over-whelmed with a crisis. Some one was responsible for that conflagration. The Nazimuddin Ministry went there as a fire-brigade and were doing their utmost to put out the fire. He deprecated the activities of those who "even in the presence of death were wickedly using the occasion for political propaganda and for the attainment of ulterior objects." He said the famine in Bengal was man-made and was the greatest blot on the British Administration in India.

Mr. Jinnah referred to the affairs in Kashmir and said the situation there was really very serious. If the accounts reaching him were to be believed, he would say the situation was appalling. He appealed to His Highness the Maharaja to look into the matter and discharge his great responsibilities as a Ruler of the State, and the duty that he owed to his people, nearly 80 per cent of whom were Mussalmans. He should not allow this state of things to continue.

What is our proposal, asked Mr. Jinnah, offering a new definition of Pakistan as freedom for Hindus and Muslims alike. Without Pakistan forming the basis of

constitutional negotiations, he feared that no fruitful results would materialise, but he betrayed real anxiety that such a discussion should not be delayed any longer since loss of the present opportunity for mutual understanding would land both Hindus and Muslims in disaster. Failure to reach a settlement by negotiations, according to his reading of the situation, would be playing into the hands of our enemies. Who they are he left his audience in no doubt—British Raj means, he said, slavery for both Hindus and Muslims. He claimed to see through the sudden discovery by British publicists, new arguments underlying the necessity to maintain the unity of India, the famine in Bengal providing the latest text for such propaganda. Could the Central Government be really stronger than it is to-day, he wondered, if the Bengal Government shed any of its limited authority under Provincial Autonomy. Nevertheless the purpose of all this manoeuvring on the part of Britain was to perpetuate the system of Government under which Englishmen would remain at the top.

Only when Mr. Jinnah referred to the food situation in Bengal in the concluding portion of his address—that too after a gentle hint from *Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan*—did he seem to realise that the problem was capable of solution only by the united efforts of all parties and by the mobilisation of the resources of all-India. Mr. Jinnah contented himself with the observation that the famine in Bengal constituted the greatest blot on British administration.

#### BAN ON MEMBERSHIP OF ORGANISATION

Mr. Jinnah thanked the Council for the expression of their sympathy and joy over his escape. He did not want to say anything more on the subject. He appealed earnestly to every Muslim to come under the banner of the Muslim League, because therein lay their salvation. The constitution of the Muslim League was the most democratic that could be framed. There was no Muslim to whom the doors of the League were not open. If they were dissatisfied with the leader, surely, the remedy lay in their own hands. The leaders were the creatures of the will of the people and existed on their approval. They could remove him in 24 hours if they so wished, by exercising their right under the constitution of the party, but if they tried to settle things by knife and force, that would mean nothing but bloodshed, chaos and misery.

Mr. Jinnah said that he was responding to the call of the nation by cheerfully accepting his re-election, because it gave opportunities to serve the people.

Besides the four Premiers of Bengal, the Punjab, N. W. F. P. and Sind there were present at the League Council meeting, Mr. M. H. Qasdar, Mian Abdul Hafeez, Mr. Abdul Matin Choudhury and Khan Bahadur Khuhro.

#### PUNJAB ASSEMBLY LEAGUE PARTY'S POSITION

Mr. Karamat Ali withdrew his resolution demanding a clear and definite statement from the Muslim League Party in the Punjab Assembly regarding its attitude towards the Provincial and Central Muslim League Parliamentary Boards, and whether it maintained that the present Punjab Ministry had been formed by the leader of the Punjab League Party, as the parliamentary agent of the Muslim League. He was doing so, he said, in view of the decision of the League Working Committee to appoint a sub-committee to examine the constitution that had been framed for the Muslim League Party in the Punjab Assembly.

#### OBJECTION TAKEN TO PORTIONS OF SWAMI DAYANAND'S BOOK

The Council unanimously passed a resolution moved by *Moulana Khwaja Abdul Ghani* and seconded by *Moulana Zafar Ali Khan, M. L. A. (Central)*, emphatically demanding from the Government of India that those chapters of Swami Dayanand's book *Satyarth Prakash* which "contain objectionable and insulting remarks against founders of religions, particularly against the Holy Prophet of Islam, be proscribed immediately."

#### LEAGUE MEMBERS AND KHAKSAR ORGANISATION

A resolution which imposes a ban on the Muslim Leaguers from having any connection with the *Khaksar* organisation was moved by *Chowdhury Khaliq-uz-zaman*, who said, that the *Khaksars* had jumped into politics in a most dangerous manner and to their policy of dictation none could submit. Had Mr. Jinnah submitted to the persuasions of the *Khaksars* to see Mr. Gandhi, where would the Muslim League be?

Mr. Chundrigar, President of the Bombay Provincial League, supporting, asked: "If the *Khaksars* consider that they are strong enough, why do they want to have

their wishes carried out by the Muslim League and not do it on their own?" He invited the Khaksars to leave their organisation and join the Muslim League and try to change the policy of the League according to their desire from inside and not by outside coercion.

Mr. *Gazdar* said that till lately they considered the Khaksars as a useful body, and prevailed upon the Punjab Government not to treat them harshly. The Khaksars to-day were following a policy hostile to the League and in the recent Sikarpur by-election, there was considerable interference by them.

Mr. *Hamid Nizami*, who rose to oppose the resolution, was constantly interrupted and heckled. He considered the resolution redundant in view of the already existing provisions that Leaguers could not join any other organisation. He thought that the resolution, which they were passing, would result in division among the Muslims. Mr. *Awar Khan* also opposed the resolution.

Mr. *M. Ashraf* conceded that the writings and actions of certain individuals in the Khaksar organisation could be condemned, but emphasised that they should not condemn the whole organisation. He was a sympathiser with the Khaksars, but if the Council passed the resolution, he declared, he would sever his connection with the Khaksar organisations.

Mr. *Jinnah* observed that there seemed to be some confusion in the mind of the opposition. The Khaksars in the past had confined their activities to religious and social matters. "It was for that very reason that I did my utmost to save that organisation from British repression. Since 1939, I have done everything with my whole heart and soul to see that it was not crushed". "The moment they came into politics they were a separate body. "Are you or are you not satisfied that the Khaksars by their recent writings and actions have adopted a political policy and that this policy is hostile to the Muslim League? You cannot owe allegiance to two organisations at one time". Mr. *Jinnah*, however, made slight alteration in the text of the resolution, which as amended read: "The Council after careful and earnest consideration has come to the conclusion that the Khaksar organisation which was originally a purely social and religious organisation, is, as now shown by its writings and actions, pursuing a general policy which is hostile and antagonistic to the policy of the All-India Muslim League. In these circumstances, the Council resolves that no member of the Muslim League should hereafter join or continue to remain as member of the Khaksar organisation".

The resolution was passed with two dissentient votes.

#### 'SYSTEM OF MANDATES SHOULD END'

The Council adopted three more resolutions. One resolution related to Palestine. This was adopted by the Working Committee of the League last night.

The other two resolutions related to Muslim countries in North Africa and Middle East. One of them urged upon His Majesty's Government in particular and other Allied powers that the territories recently released from the control of Italy namely Cireneica, Libya and Tripoli should not only be not handed back to the Italian Government but they be constituted as independent sovereign States, that the "vicious system of mandates should be abolished once for all and the countries of which the mandates were held by Great Britain and France namely, Palestine, Syria and Lebanon be restored to the people of those countries to set up their own sovereign Governments of those territories. Having regard to the oft-repeated declarations by the United Nations that they seek to liberate the subject nationalities, this Council demands that the United Powers should urge France to liberate Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia."

This resolution was moved by *Syed Zakir Ali* and seconded by Mr. *Hossain Imam*, both of whom pointed out that the Allied Powers had shown their keen desire to liberate the people now under the enemy yoke but were lukewarm to apply those principles of freedom and justice to people under their own domination.

The resolution was passed.

#### LEBANON DEVELOPMENTS

The second resolution referred to Lebanon and viewed with "profound alarm the grave situation that has arisen in Lebanon as a result of the action of the French authorities in forcibly suppressing the demand of full autonomy by the Lebanese and vied with satisfaction the clear declaration made by the British Government with regard to the recent developments that have taken place in Lebanon, reaffirming the solemn pledge guaranteeing the independence of that country. The Council further urges the British Government to take immediate steps to restore

normal conditions and to secure full independence for the country and thus prevent the situation from getting worse.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan, moving the resolution stated that the statesmen of the Allied Nations should realise that the people of the East were as eager to secure their independence and freedom as those of the Western countries.

Maulana Jamal Mian stated that it was because of the hostility towards the French that the Lebanese had welcomed British forces during the present war in their country. The resolution was adopted.

#### PALESTINE QUESTION

Chaudhury Khaliq-uz-zaman moving the Palestine resolution traced the history of Arab-Jewish relations in that country. He referred to the protest of the Arab League against certain statements of Mr. Wendell Wilkie and Mr. Louis Fischer of U. S. A. and said that they did not know what those statements were but they knew that U. S. A. ranked in the forefront in all anti-Arab movements. He claimed that the Balfour Declaration originated from America. The Muslims of India to-day demanded that the policy embodied in the British White Paper should be adhered to. He reminded the Council that the Palestine issue would assume great importance immediately after the war and they should remain alert with regard to this question.

Mr. Latif-ul-Rahman seconded the resolution, which was adopted and the Council adjourned.

### Resolution—Second Day—New Delhi—15th November 1943

#### FOOD SITUATION IN INDIA

The Council concluded its session this morning after passing a resolution on the food situation in India.

Mr. Jinnah disclosed that he had invited the Muslim Premiers of Bengal, Assam, Punjab, Sind and N. W. F. Province to meet him and his Working Committee at Delhi. Four of the Premiers had responded to his invitation while the Premier of Assam had deputed Mr. Abdul Matin Chaudhry to represent him. They were at present engaged in formulating a common and unified policy for the five Muslim Provinces and it was their intention to have that policy accepted by other Provinces and by the Government of India. He was meeting the Premiers again this afternoon.

The resolution on food situation adopted this morning was as follows: "The Council of the All-India Muslim League having taken into consideration the present food situation in the country, particularly in Bengal, views with grave concern and alarm the tragic consequences resulting from it in Bengal and some other parts of the country: emphatically urges the Government of India and the British Government to adopt immediately more vigorous and effective measures to cope with the food problem in the country and to remove distress prevailing in Bengal and other parts of the country and further urges the Government to take effective precautionary measures against recurrence of similar conditions either in Bengal or in any other part of the country. The Council calls upon the people of Bengal to give their whole-hearted support and co-operation to the present Ministry in Bengal which is doing its very best for alleviating distress prevailing in that Province in the future. The Council appeals to Mussalmans all over India to continue their help to the people of Bengal either in cash or in kind.

Sir K. Nazimuddin, speaking on the resolution, traced the history of the Bengal food crisis. He said that his Ministry took office on April 24. The situation then was that rice was selling in Calcutta at Rs. 22 and Rs. 25 per maund while famine prices were ruling in other areas. About that time the Government of India announced their basic plan under which Bengal was to get 7,93,000 tons of foodgrains. Soon after it became evident that the basic plan had failed and the Government of India were not in a position to implement their promise. They actually received 73,494 tons of foodgrains. After a series of conferences and protracted discussions, the following alternative proposals were put to the Bengal Government for consideration: (a) a modified form of free trade within the Eastern Zone based on wagon movements from each province or (b) full free trade within the Eastern Zone and the abrogation of the basic plan with a promise as emergency measure of relief until conditions under the free trade settled down to 45,000 tons of foodgrains within a month. The Government of Bengal chose the second alternative. Early in July, the Government of India called another Food Conference when free trade was buried once for all and substituted by a revised basic plan

based on surpluses admitted by provinces. He added that the Government of India could not supply 45,000 tons of foodgrains in one month as promised under the free trade scheme. As a result of the July Conference, the Government of India informed the Bengal Government that they would receive 4,41,000 tons of foodgrains. The Bengal Government lodged a formal protest which did not produce any result. Sir Nazimuddin claimed that from the time his Ministry took office, they had been continuously impressing on the Government of India not only the serious shortage of foodgrains in Bengal but the alternative need of supplies from outside.

Answering critics who had been demanding as to what happened to the large quantities of foodgrains sent from outside to Bengal, the Chief Minister said that from March 1, to August 31, the total quantity of foodgrains received in Calcutta on Government account including purchases by Government agents from outside Bengal and purchased within the province on Government account amounted to 65,30 lakhs of maunds. Out of this total it was found possible, after meeting the minimum requirements of industrial labour employed in war work, the essential services public utility concerns and the amounts needed for distribution through cheap grain shops in Calcutta and the industrial areas to despatch quantities aggregating to 16,51 lakhs of maunds to mofussil districts mainly for the relief of the areas in greatest distress.

Replying to charges that the Provincial Government had failed to deal with the situation, the Chief Minister said that the charge was without any justification and baseless. As for the assertion that the famine in Bengal proved that it was not possible to have two or more independent Government in India, Sir Nazimuddin said : "The statement of facts narrated by me proves conclusively that a Central Government with autonomous provinces cannot deal with a situation the like of which we have had to face in Bengal. The Central Government has failed and will always fail to induce autonomous provinces to part with surplus food stuff at the expense of their own people. The Ministry and their supporters, both in Orissa and Assam, gave an ultimatum to the Government of India and even the provinces ruled under Section 93, in spite of being directly under the Central Government, practically refused to co-operate with the policy of the Central Government. The question may well be asked what would Bengal have done without food grains from outside and how could Bengal get them if she were an independent zone. Assuming the conditions to be identical, viz., famine and war, an independent Bengal would not have looked for outside assistance or be dictated by the Central Government. She would have relied on herself and formulated either a short-term or a long term policy to meet the situation instead of relying on promises which could not be fulfilled. Moreover, an independent Bengal would have had more effective control over transport particularly, railways and inland river service. Even allowing for the quota fixed for the military, if the railway and river service had been under the control of the Bengal Government, they would have been able to distribute food-stuffs better than they have found it possible to do under the present conditions. In this connection, I may mention that in June and July, allegations were made that foodstuffs sent to Bengal by railway wagons could not be unloaded in time owing to lack of proper arrangements by the Bengal Government. During the visit of the hon. Sir J. P. Srivastava it was made clear to him, on the authority of the Regional Food Commissioner, that there was no basis for this complaint. An independent Bengal would have had vastly better financial resources."

"The financial scheme for the provinces under the Government of India Act and the Otto Niemeyer Award," Sir K. Nazimuddin continued, "never contemplated the possibility of the province having to incur expenditure on the scale necessary to meet a situation like the one obtaining in Bengal. The Provincial Government had to apply for financial assistance for giving relief to the starving and dying people of Bengal. Before assistance was given, conditions were laid down by the Government of India and after we agreed to comply with those conditions, a limited sum was given to us as interest-bearing loan. We have risked the future of our province and not hesitated to spend money freely for the relief of the distressed, incurring liabilities practically beyond the resources of the province. But, so far, the Central Government have not come forward with any offer of subvention and all that we have been told is : Raise the money yourself and in case you fail, we will find you the money. Independent Bengal would have had its own financial resources to meet a situation like this. I think, one of the reasons why the Muslims are demanding independent Governments for areas where

they are in a majority, is that because of its entire reliance on the Centre for finance. However, autonomous a province may be, its activities can be restricted and almost crushed by financial manipulations. It will thus be seen that the famine in Bengal has shown that situations like the present cannot be tackled by a Central Government and in future no Central or Federal scheme for India can ever hope to meet more successfully a situation like this. It is true that foodgrains are now pouring into Bengal, but it is due to the call of humanitarian sentiments which no people or province can resist in view of the appalling conditions in Bengal. As long as humanitarian sentiments count in the world, such aid will be sent from one province to another, and one independent zone to another independent zone. Even countries far apart on the map of the world and having little common bond between one another, help one another, in distress. The help which Bengal has received from other provinces is no argument against her political separation from certain other parts of India. Those who argue thus lay themselves open to the charge that were Bengal a State in Pakistan, their humanitarian sentiments would have evaporated and they would have refused to help Bengal merely because she was a Muslim State. I myself have a higher opinion of our future neighbours in Hindustan. I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the people outside Bengal for the most generous contributions that we have received in kind and cash from all sections of the people—rich and poor alike."

"I would also like to take this opportunity," the Chief Minister said, "of thanking the Viceroy and the military authorities for the steps they have taken for giving immediate relief. Thanks to general Wakely's organisation, we are moving over 2,000 tons from Calcutta into the districts and we may do even better. I also like to acknowledge in public the valuable assistance and the sympathetic co-operation we have received from the Regional Food Commissioner, the hon'ble Mr. Justice Braund. He realised the critical situation in which we were placed and did his utmost to help us to obtain foodgrains from outside."

#### DISCUSSION ON THE RESOLUTION

Mr. *Abdul Salam* moved the resolution on the food situation. He severely criticised the Central Government for its inaction, which, he claimed, was responsible for the present state of affairs in Bengal and elsewhere. He said that the Government spokesmen had claimed that there had been a bumper crop. He wanted to know what had happened to that crop.

Mr. *Hanif Nizami* (Punjab) moved a rider, which urged the necessity of price control and rationing all over India. He said that the British Parliament had been making political capital out of famine conditions in Bengal and the Opposition parties in Bengal were doing everything in their power to discredit the present Ministry, instead of feeding the starving millions. He asserted that the real culprits were the nawabs, big landlords, zamindars and big traders. These had hidden the foodgrains and were making money out of the misery of poor starving people. The profit-motive had united landholders, Unionists, Leaguers, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. Mr. Nizami said that the Muslims of India looked to Mr. Jinnah for guidance and he hoped that the League would adopt such policy as would secure food for everyone.

Sir *Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah* (Sind Premier) supported the plea for price control and rationing. The fact, he said, was that the demand exceeded the supply of foodgrains in India at present and the only remedy open to them was to introduce rationing and have price control. They, in Sind, notwithstanding the instructions of the Central Government, had maintained price control, with the result that there was ample food for everyone. Under price control, provided the controlled prices were not varied every now and then, the cultivator was bound to unboard his stocks.

*Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan*, Parliamentary Secretary, Punjab, opposed both price control and rationing. He said that the Punjab Muslim League, by a resolution passed on November 11, had opposed both price control and rationing.

Mr. *Nizami* : It was not the Punjab Muslim League but its Working Committee and the decision was not unanimous.

Mr. *Jinnah* : I do not know of that decision. You should have communicated it to me.

*Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan* proceeding, blamed the Central Government for the present situation in the country. He quoted figures to show that large quantities of foodgrains had remained on station platforms waiting for transport. He claimed

that the Government of India was wholly incompetent and inefficient and there could be no improvement in the situation as long as the "highly incompetent persons who manned the Government of India remained in office." These persons, he said, did not enjoy anyone's confidence or respect. The remedy lay in the immediate establishment of a National Government which task the British Government should entrust to Mr. Jinnah.

*Nawab Ismail Khan* moved an amendment to the main resolution, which was rejected by the Council.

Mr. Jinnah renewed his appeal for funds and said that after-care of the famished persons would require large amounts of money.

Mr. *Hassan Ispahani* explained the relief activities of the Bengal Muslim Chamber of Commerce. He said that early in the year, the Chamber started a relief fund which was subsequently augmented by contributions received as a result of the appeal issued by Mr. Jinnah. On November 11, the total amount received in the fund amounted to Rs. 3½ lakhs in cash and Rs. 82,000 in kind. This had enabled them to feed 45,000 persons every day in the province and they hoped to increase this figure to 60,000 persons every day. They had 15 milk canteens for children at which 325 were fed every day. In addition to this, large quantities of standard cloth and blankets had been distributed to deserving persons. They intended to close the fund on December 31.

### Working Committee—New Delhi—13th. November 1943

The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League met at New Delhi on the 13th. November 1943 at the residence of *Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan*. Mr. M. A. Jinnah presided. The Committee, by a resolution, offered its whole-hearted and sincere congratulations to its President, Mr. Jinnah, on his providential escape and thanked God for sparing his life to guide and lead the Mussalmans of India.

The Working Committee, having considered the recent correspondence that passed between the late Viceroy, Marquis of Linlithgow, and the President of the League, Mr. Jinnah, regarding the situation in Kashmir and having heard a deputation of the leaders of the Kashmir Muslim Conference, headed by *Chaudhury Ghulam Abbas*, resolved to authorize its President to take such action as he considers necessary in this connection.

### MUSLIM PREMIERS TAKE PART IN DISCUSSION

The Premiers of Bengal, Punjab, Sind and N. W. F. Province and the Presidents of the Provincial Leagues of Bengal, Bombay, United Provinces, Punjab, N. W. F. Province, Delhi, Baluchistan and Central Provinces participated in the discussions of the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League in its afternoon session to-day. Mr. M. A. Jinnah presided. The meeting *inter alia* considered the food situation in the country, and adopted a resolution on Palestine. The Committee adjourned till Monday afternoon.

The meeting appointed a committee consisting of Sir *Nazimuddin*, *Nawab Ismail Khan* and *Chaudhury Khaliqzaman* to examine the constitution that has been framed for the Muslim League Party in the Punjab Legislative Assembly.

### PALESTINE QUESTION

The following is the text of the Palestine Resolution adopted by the Working Committee:

"The Working Committee has learnt with alarm and misgivings that Jewish agencies have again started anti-Arab propaganda and are pulling strings in America and England for further immigration of Jews into Palestine to the detriment of the just and legitimate interests of that country. The Working Committee consider it necessary to remind the British Government that the reopening of the immigration question will be directly in conflict with even the policy outlined in the White Paper and contrary to the solemn pledges given by the ex-Viceroy Lord Linlithgow in his letter, dated June 23, 1940, to Mr. Jinnah, President of the All-India Muslim League, in the following terms: 'Finally, I would invite your attention to the measures so far taken to implement the policy laid down in the White Paper of May 1939, namely, registration of Jewish immigration since April 1939 in accordance with the provisions of the White Paper and the enactment of legislation last February with which you will be familiar from the references in the public Press and which was embodied in the Command Paper 6180 controlling the transfer of land in the interests of Arab agriculturists. You may rest assured that

every consideration has been and will continue to be given by his Majesty's Government to legitimate Arab claims.

"The Working Committee emphatically warns the British Government that any further injustice done to Palestine Arabs under Jewish or Foreign influence or by a departure from the solemn pledges to the Arabs from time to time which might result in the frustration of their national aspiration for independence will be greatly resented by the Muslims of India."

The Working Committee concluded its session on the 15th. November 1943 after disposing of several questions relating to internal administration of the League. It also fixed the dates of the next annual session of the League, to be held at Karachi.

## The Open Session of the League

### 31st. Session—Karachi—24th. December 1943

Haroonabad (Karachi) was a place of activity to-day when Mr. M. A. Jinnah arrived there to preside over the 31st. Session of the All India Muslim League.

The main event of the day was a unique and spectacular procession nearly two miles long, in which Mr. Jinnah was taken to the pandal to unfurl the League Flag at 7-30 p. m. to the accompaniment of the firing of 31 rockets. Smart formations of Muslim National Guards, dressed in grey uniforms, totalling 2,000 volunteers, Akharas of Muslim physical culturists, Muslim students and Boy Scouts, fifty camels and an equal number of caparisoned horses, all ridden by Hazis in Arab costumes preceded Mr. Jinnah's carriage which was decorated to resemble a boat and was drawn by 31 camels—this figure symbolising the 31st session of the All-India Muslim League.

Speaking from a rostrum to a vast crowd, Mr. Jinnah thanked them for the "royal reception" the people of Karachi had accorded him. He felt the honour all the more because Karachi was his birthplace. It was a fitting tribute the city could pay to the representative of the Muslim nation.

Speaking of the goal of Pakistan, Mr. Jinnah said: "If we continue to consolidate ourselves, we are bound to achieve our goal. In our efforts to achieve our goal, Sind has a major part to play. Karachi will be the gateway of Pakistan. Pakistan will include Sind, the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan." Mr. Jinnah declared: "Our flag symbolises our national aspirations and we must keep it aloft."

The unfurling ceremony was preceded by recitations from the 'Qur'an'.

At some points on the route of the procession, people from the balconies of houses showered silver coins on Mr. Jinnah; a Muslim Association presented a purse *en route*.

#### Welcome Address

Welcoming the delegates to the open session of the League and introducing the term Sindhu as a new synonym for Pakistan—which he defined as the land of the Indus and its tributaries, comprising only Kashmir, N. W. F. Province, the Punjab, Baluchistan and Sind—Mr. G. M. Syed, Chairman of the Reception Committee, in his address, said: "Sindhu wants not only to unite India but the whole world. Only that object cannot be achieved by the methods of those who have closed their eyes to history and hard facts."

Drawing a distinction between Sindhu and Hind, Mr. Syed said that Sindhu had been the meeting place, through the centuries, of many races, civilisations and religions. "In no part of the world," he added, "had the fusion of philosophies and religions taken place in such profusion as in this land. Here have blended the teachings of the Vedanta, the lesson of Buddha and the preaching of *Guru Nanak* and the great Sufis. They have endeavoured towards religious unity. Untouchability is nowhere less evident than here. In comparison with the influence of Egypt, Iran, Greece, Arabia on this land, the influence of Southern India is almost negligible. Thus the traditions of the people of Sindhu are unique. They have a special message in the drive towards universal brotherhood and for the fulfilment of that mission they are better fitted than most. But some inhabitants of Hind, with a view to bringing about temporary combinations, have been misleading the people of Sindhu". At the same time he accused the non-Muslim inhabitants of Sindhu of showing a lack of national sense as was evidenced by their opposition to the "buy from Muslims" movement. "The non-Muslims of Sindhu are joining hands with the non-Muslims of Hind, and want to make the inhabitants of Sindhu slaves simply because the majority of Sindhu's inhabitants are Muslims.

Under the circumstances, it is the duty of every Muslim of Hind to help us to make our native land free and independent."

Mr. Syed thanked the Muslims of Hind for their efforts so far in furtherance of the Pakistan movement and said: "Now the Sindhu nation has reached the stage when steps for action are necessary". Appealing to well-to-do Muslims of Hind to send capital and sincere workers to make Sindhu independent and economically self-supporting, Mr. Syed said: "In the past you have sent such people as Sayed Brelvi and Jamail Shahred for the above purposes. Have you no Ahmed and Ismail among you now? Our future is interwoven with your future. Whatever high stations in Hind you may occupy, they will not be permanent without the stability of Sindhu. Your integrity in India will mainly depend upon the stability of our national state."

Mr. Syed concluded by saying that great significance was attached to the present session as it marked the beginning of a new phase in the political history of *Millat*.

#### Mr. Jinnah's Presidential Address

Speaking in a clear voice in pin-drop silence Mr. Jinnah declared: "As I have repeatedly said any call that comes from you, any opportunity for service, I shall serve with my heart and soul, I shall not falter nor hesitate but obey. Since we undertook the revival and the revitalising of the Muslim League it is now seven years. These have been strenuous years. During these seven years, we have made remarkable progress and it is admitted by our friends, and even by our opponents to-day. We have shown it not merely to India but to the world and we have fully established that we are a nation."

Raising his voice, Mr. Jinnah said: "We shall never rest content until we seize the territories that belong to us and rule over them."

Mr. Jinnah continuing said: "Let me tell you that the struggle is a hard and long one and it requires special patience, it requires every one of you—and now I specially address the youth—patience, hard work and steady progress in building the great nation to which we belong. Every step has to be considered from various points of view before we take one step and the next one. You will admit that so far we have met every manoeuvre, every machination, every moment, every scheme and every design to break us, with success every time."

"We have survived the opposition which first came from the Government and bureaucracy, when we undertook reorganisation of the Muslim League. For reasons of their own, that opposition was slackened. Then came a terrific onslaught from the Congress—mass contact and challenges and when the Congress Ministries were formed the Muslim League was told and ordered to liquidate itself. Elections and bye-elections—Congress, Jaminites, Ulemas, Ahl-e-Ahad, Azad Conference, Mominis—every effort made to destroy the Muslim League, to cause disruption among the Muslims, rebounded upon them as a boomerang. The Muslim League now is a true force. Even to-day we are not left in peace."

Referring to the strength developed by the League during the last seven years Mr. Jinnah said:—

"I most respectfully advise our opponents, the Congress or Hindu leadership or the British Government: You cannot break us. Don't meddle with our affairs. If you want to come to terms with us we are always ready and willing to come to terms with the British Government or the Hindus on honourable terms and not any other terms. Today there is not the slightest doubt that the Muslim League is the only authoritative and representative organisation of Muslim India. We have got our flag, our platform and what is more, our definite goal of Pakistan. We have created a complete unity of ideal and thought. Now we must undertake further an organisational machinery—directive, efficient and effective for action."

Mr. Jinnah then dwelt on the scope for a constructive programme and said:—"Muslim India has to-day acquired full consciousness and is taking keenest interest in all that happens around her. Various suggestions such as the setting up of a machinery to chalk out a programme of national industries for Muslim India, national education and the starting of heavy industries in Pakistan have been made."

The task before the League is daily growing and the stage has come when it is absolutely essential that a Committee of Action consisting of not less than five members and not more than seven should be set up to undertake the task of organising, consolidating and unifying the activities of the League.

#### FOOD PROBLEM

Dealing with the food problem, Mr. Jinnah referred to the conference of Muslim Premiers which he had convened in Delhi in November last. He asserted

that there was entire agreement among the Premiers and it was absolutely untrue to suggest that Lord Wavell took the wind out of the League sail by summoning the League Premiers. The interview with the Viceroy came about only after the Premiers and himself had fully discussed the food problem and desired to meet the Viceroy. He (Mr. Jinnah) had no machinations whatsoever which Lord Wavell had upset. He had made it plain already that so far as the food policy was concerned, the League was willing to do its best in wiping out the scourge of famine and prevent its recurrence anywhere in India. However, Mr. Jinnah asked whether in dealing with the food question, the agriculturists, the producers of food grains, should be bled white to fatten the industrialists, and whether there was going to be one rule of justice for one class and another rule of justice for another class. He was for total control of prices of not only food grains but also of essential articles necessary for the existence of the agriculturists.

#### ATTITUDE OF HINDUS

Mr. Jinnah asserted that the Hindus were responsible for holding up the progress of the country.

He asked: "Can we Mussalmans of India accept Akhand Hindustan, Hindu Raj over the entire sub-continent? (Cries of "No"). Is it possible to expect Muslim India to agree to Akhand Hindustan and Hindu Raj on the continent? (Cries of "No, No"). This is their proposal. They have not given up their dream. On the other hand, they talk of independence. Whose independence? I have repeatedly warned you that when they talk of independence, they mean the independence of India and slavery of Muslim India ('shame'). Can you achieve Pakistan without independence of India? When we say Pakistan, we mean not our independence only but independence of Hindus also. (Cheers). If the Hindus, owing to their obsession or dream or cussedness put obstruction in the way of the freedom of both and insist upon the freedom of one and the slavery of the other, I ask you who are responsible for holding up the progress of the country except the Hindus?"

#### VICEROY'S APPEAL FOR CO-OPERATION

Mr. Jinnah said that in the political situation the only new thing that had happened was Lord Wavell's appeal for co-operation at Calcutta. Mr. Amery too had made it clear that the principles of the Atlantic Charter were made applicable to India eighteen months before the Atlantic Ocean produced the Atlantic Charter (laughter). "Lord Wavell like a Soldier-Viceroy has spoken in plain language. In that respect, he has made a great contribution to the political problems of India. He is no more embarrassed by his mental bag which he found it necessary to jettison in the Mediterranean before he crossed the Suez Canal. (Laughter). Having put the political issue into cold storage indefinitely, Lord Wavell had said that he was concentrating on winning the war. It is really astonishing that he, representing the Crown and speaking with responsibility and seriousness, thinks that he can win this war while he is totally indifferent to the political situation. What happened when the Lebanon question came? What happened when the Syrian question came? Were all those political adjustments made merely from the humanitarian point of view or the political point of view? What happened when differences took place at Algiers with the French? It is astonishing, it is sheer blindness to say, 'My job is to win the war only'. With all humility I say to the British Government you have got to get the whole-hearted enthusiastic support of some party in this country if not all."

As regards the Viceroy's reference to the economic home front and preparation for peace, Mr. Jinnah said: "How are you going to get all the resources of India's energy and determination if every party is kept at arms length, discontented and dissatisfied." "The Viceroy had said that he would welcome co-operation from anyone or anybody." Mr. Jinnah said this is a flagrant abuse of the English word "co-operation." "What is co-operation? Does it not in plain language mean that without giving any part or any real share in the authority of Government we are asked to do the work of camp followers, menials and subservients? Can you expect any self-respecting organisation to accept that position? And even if we were so foolish to fall in with this fantastic suggestion, can any intelligent man believe that we can ever succeed in putting real enthusiasm and secure the whole-hearted and genuine support and co-operation of the people? The complacency with which such pronouncement are made is amazing. The British Government are pursuing a definite policy and they do not want the co-operation of any party—does not matter which party it is."

The Congress decided to launch a civil disobedience movement if their demands

were not conceded. The Congress had been out-lawed. "What has the rest of India done that the Government should talk to them in this language? We have offered our hand of co-operation for the job of work that Lord Wavell wants us to do, provided our hand is accepted as that of a confident friend with a real share in the authority of Government and with a definite promise that we shall win our share in the fruit of victory when we win it. That has been rejected. They have outlawed the Congress and I suppose they would like to outlaw the Muslim League also. We are quite ready for it (cheer). But why do you bracket those organisations together? It is not honest. I am of the opinion that this policy that is pursued by the British Government is going to prove disastrous."

#### VOLUNTARY LIQUIDATION OF EMPIRE

Referring to Mr. Churchill's statement that he would not preside over the liquidation of the British Empire, Mr. Jinnah said: "I can tell him this. Voluntary liquidation is more honourable than a compulsory one. It will redound to the honour of the British nation and it will be recognised by us as an act of friendship which got its value and assets in the future. But compulsory liquidation will have none of these advantages, and the British Empire will have to be liquidated one day—whether you like it or not."

Continuing, Mr. Jinnah referred to the speech made by John Bright in the House of Commons on the India Bill in 1858 and said: "We are now impressing upon the successors of that great British statesman that the only honest way for Great Britain is to divide and quit. Unity can only be on the basis of division of property and possession to the respective two nations, the Hindus and the Muslims. The other minorities will be the acid test. It will be the sacred solemn duty of Pakistan and Hindustan to safeguard and protect and give a fair and just deal to the minorities under these two zones."

#### CRITICISM OF CONGRESS POLICY

Referring to the Congress, Mr. Jinnah said that after their threats of mass contact etc. had failed their methods have changed. Their methods now are subtle, insidious and intended to play underground and undermine.

"I see no change except a parrot-like cry," he said. "The cleverest party that is carrying on propaganda are the Communists. They have so many flags—the Red flag, the Soviet flag, the Congress flag and now they have been good enough to introduce the League flag also. They shout that they want Congress-League settlement. Who says no? But the question is on what basis?"

Mr. Jinnah went over the history of the August Resolution of the Congress and said that from Mr. Gandhi's letter of January 19, 1943 to Lord Linlithgow, it was clear that he stuck to his guns, namely, the August Resolution. It was a definite deliberate attempt to by-pass the Muslim League and force the hands of the British Government to surrender to the Hindus.

"Has there been any change since January 1943," asked Mr. Jinnah. "Millions of Congress men are outside the jails. Now, they are contemplating a form of government based on the culture and on the system prevailing in the historic period of Vikramaditya. How then could any fair-minded person expect the Muslims to accept that position?"

Mr. Jinnah then referred to "a few isolated Hindu leaders who were showing some sort of sympathy for our point of view," and said: "They however fight shy of using the word Pakistan and prefer the phraseology of 'self-determination.' When they do so they talk with their tongue in their cheeks."

"We are told that we are non-co-operating with the Congress," Mr. Jinnah said. "It was the Congress that non-co-operated with the League. The Congress took up the attitude to dominate and to assume by hook or by crook the reins of Government as Hindu Raj and Hindu Government. We are defending ourselves against that monstrosity and those machinations."

Mr. Jinnah added: "We are not told what impossible demand we are making. But we are told that the Hindus will begin to prefer to make the best of things as they stand at present rather than agree to what they honestly deem to be our unreasonable demands. So rather than agree to our unreasonable demands, the Hindus will and are ready to accept the British Raj."

"Then we are told that our indifference to the goal of independence would lead the Muslim youths to rebel against the League. Is not this untruthful? Is it not slighting the Muslim youth that their elder politicians are indifferent to the goal of independence? Let me tell you that this is vicious, sinister and wicked propaganda to incite the Muslim youth against the League."

"There is no truth whatsoever in the suggestion that we are reconciled to the British Raj. On the contrary, we are told by Mr. *Rajagopalachari* in his pamphlets "The Way Out" that signs are, indeed, not wanting that the Hindus are willing to accept the British Raj rather than come to a settlement with us."

Two things were essential and no time should be lost in bringing them into being, said Mr. Jinnah, unfolding the constructive programme which he intended to place before the League. The two things were a Committee of Action with its own secretariat to establish a Bureau of National Industries in Pakistan and a Parliamentary Board with final powers in respect of elections.

In regard to the first suggestion, Mr. Jinnah said heavy industries must be established especially in Pakistan. A national system of Muslim education must also be planned. The Committee of Action which would achieve these purposes must consist of not less than five and not more than seven persons. The Committee would organise and co-ordinate an All-India policy in this respect and examine all proposals and suggestions received by them. This Committee must have a regular secretariat. As regards the All-India Parliamentary Board, it was necessary because at present there was no detached body to whom election disputes could be confidently referred by claimants for League tickets. The Parliamentary Board would be a sort of final court of appeal in such cases. The stage had come, Mr. Jinnah concluded, to put more vigour into the All India Muslim League.

Referring to the food situation, Mr. Jinnah gave a resume of the events in November when he had called a meeting of the five Muslim League Premiers at Delhi. It was untrue, he said, as a certain section of the Press had suggested, that Lord Wavell took the wind out of our sails by calling these Premiers to a conference at the Viceroy's House. It was we who suggested after full discussion between ourselves that the Viceroy should meet the Premiers and discuss the question with them. It was false to say that Lord Wavell upset "my machinations" because there were no machinations. We were willing and ready to do everything in our power to avert the scourge of famine and prevent its recurrence anywhere in India. It was false to say that the Premiers were actuated by any vested interests. It was not that we did not recognise the efficacy of rationing, price control, procurement and a uniform policy. The real issue was why should the agriculturists labour to fatten the industrialists?

Dealing with the work of consolidation already achieved by the League in the Provinces, Mr. Jinnah said the League was now shock-proof and stunt-proof. They had made a beginning, however small, by having five League Ministries in the five Provinces in which Muslims were in a majority. These Ministries were functioning not because they wanted to provide jobs for their Ministers, but because the League was behind them. Whatever power the ministers possessed had been seized by the League. It was only power that would contribute to the organisation of the people. With such power as they possessed, these League Ministers could, if they chose, galvanise and unify the Muslim League into a living force in their provinces. They could take at least ameliorative and constructive measures in the educational, rural and economic fields. Mr. Jinnah likened the League Ministers to laboratories and said, "Let us see what emerges from these laboratories."

## Second Day—Karachi—25th. December 1943

### RESOLUTION ON PAKISTAN

The second day of the open session of the All-India Muslim League commenced at 10 o'clock to-night. The hon. Sir K. Nazimuddin, Premier of Bengal, who arrived in Karachi this evening, was seen seated on the dais.

*Chaudhuri Khaliquzzaman* moved the following resolution :

"Whereas the All-India Muslim League in its annual session held at Delhi in April 1943 had, in view of the vague, indefinite and unsettled policy of British Government towards the Muslim demands of Pakistan on the one hand and the unpatriotic, short sighted and antagonistic attitude of the Hindus on the other, resolved to rely on the untiring efforts, grim determination and willing sacrifices of the Muslims of India generally and the Muslims of Pakistan zones in particular for the attainment of their cherished goal, this session of the All India Muslim League hereby resolves to appoint a Committee of Action of not less than five and not more than seven members to be nominated by the President to prepare and organise the Muslims all over India to meet all contingencies, resist the imposition of an All-India Federation or any other constitution for one United India, and prepare them for the coming struggle for the achievement of Pakistan."

The mover expressed the determination of the Muslims of India to attain their

objective of Pakistan at all costs. He pointed out the instance of the Lebanon, a small country with a small population which had been allowed to enjoy freedom. The proposed State of Pakistan with its huge territory and large population could hold its own. He deplored the attitude of the Hindus in their opposition to the just demand of the Muslims. Their attitude kept both the nations under British tutelage.

The proposed Committee of Action, Mr. *Khaliquzzaman* said, would undertake the task for achieving Pakistan and he assured them that it would not be a committee of words. In conclusion, he said the minorities in Pakistan would get a fair deal and their legitimate interests protected.

The hon. *Sardar Aurangzeb Khan*, Premier, North-West Frontier Province, seconded the resolution, said that Pakistan was their very life and without it, Muslims would be slaves. He denied that the Muslims were retarding the progress of the freedom of India, but the freedom for which Hindus were fighting was aimed at ultimate domination over Muslims.

*Sardar Aurangzeb* continued : "I am prepared to fight for the freedom of India if the Hindus promise me self-determination in the six provinces in which we are in power." "We are prepared to fight side by side with them only when they guarantee our freedom," he added.

The Frontier Premier then referred to the war and said that if the British Government were sincere in their profession that they were fighting for democracy they must do justice to Muslim India. If they were not able to unify their own Europe, all the powers of which owed allegiance to the same religion, *Sardar Aurangzeb* asked, how did they expect two different nations—Hindus considering the Muslims as untouchable—to come together? "Sweden and Norway stand together on the map of Europe, but we are two separate countries. Taking these views into account, the Muslims in the areas in which they are in a majority have a right as a free and independent nation."

*Sardar Aurangzeb Khan*, proceeding, said that there was a limit to patience. Many promises by the British Government remained unfulfilled, but now conditions were different. If possession was nine points of law the Muslim League, he said, had already captured and was ruling over the provinces which came into the scheme of Pakistan. The Frontier Premier added that the Muslims were not only fair and just to the minorities but they had been generous to them. In Pakistan the conditions of the minorities would be such as to attract even the Hindus from Hindu India to come and live in Pakistan.

Concluding he said : "The day of reckoning is coming and when the call comes from Mr. Jinnah to us to get out and fight for Pakistan, we shall not falter. If we want Pakistan, we should not rely upon the British Government or the Hindus, but we should rely upon our inherent strength and obey the orders of Quaid-Azam."

*Khan Bahadur Sheikh Karamat Ali*, M. L. A. (Punjab), supporting the resolution, declared that the issue of Pakistan had been before the public for a long time now and the Hindu community should realise that Pakistan mean their freedom also. He urged the Muslims to be prepared to make any sacrifice for the attainment of Pakistan.

Mr. *Abdur Rah Nashtar* ( N. W. F. P. ) said the Committee of Action would build and increase the inherent strength of the Muslims.

He added that the days of negotiations and petitioning had gone and the Muslims should be prepared to make any sacrifice that might be required for achieving their goal. He warned the Hindus "not to fall into the trap of an all-India Federation" which, he asserted, would only mean the continued subjection of both the communities.

The House passed the resolution unanimously.

#### COMMITTEE TO PREPARE FIVE-YEAR PROGRAMME

Mr. Z. A. Lari ( U. P. ) moved the following resolution :

"Whereas, as the first step towards consolidating the strength of the Muslims of Pakistan areas and preparing them for the heavy and onerous responsibilities inherent in the status of an independent sovereign State, the All-India Muslim League has, with the support and co-operation of the Muslims succeeded in establishing its governments in all the Pakistan Provinces, which has naturally opened up vast opportunities to the Assemblies and Cabinets for service to their people in the provincial sphere of activities like education, agriculture, irrigation, providing with facilities for labour, economic holdings and fair rent for tenants, etc., and whereas

it is acutely realised that neither the people nor the Provincial States, which have for long been denied opportunities for a fair and natural development due to historical, political and, in some instances, communal considerations, will be able to ameliorate their lot to any appreciable degree or effectively function as a State without a gigantic and co-ordinated drive in the field of economic reconstruction and State industrialisation, this session of the All-India Muslim League hereby authorises the President to appoint a committee with power to prepare a comprehensive scheme for five years' programme for the economic and social uplift. State industrialisation in Pakistan zones, for the introduction of free primary basic education, reform of land system, stabilisation of rent, security of tenure, improvement in the condition of labour and agriculture and control of money-lending. The committee shall submit its report as early as possible and an interim report not later than June 1944 to the Working Committee for necessary action thereon."

Mr. Lari hoped that the Committee to be appointed would go through the various questions relating to the uplift of the Muslims and make suitable recommendations.

The hon. Mr. *Tamizuddin*, Education Minister, Bengal, seconding the resolution, said that nowhere in the world was the standard of living so low as in India and none could bring about a millennium by merely preparing a comprehensive plan. The remedy was obvious and unless and until the people were able to remove the political subjugation, there could be no economic progress. There was no short cut to the desired millennium and their first duty therefore was to win independence and Pakistan simultaneously.

Continuing, Mr. *Tamizuddin* said that if the Hindus really wanted to have independence for India, they should join hands with the Muslim League. If they were not prepared to do so, one could conclude that it was the Hindus who were standing in the way of the independence of the country.

The Bengal Minister then referred to the new world conditions that might emerge after the war was won and the need for a comprehensive economic and social plan. It was therefore quite opportune that a committee should at once undertake the task of planning ahead and draw up schemes for the future. Secondly, the promotion of literacy was of prime importance in any scheme of improvement. The Minister said: "The essential necessity is the removal of illiteracy. We shall not be able to do much without funds.

The essential industries should be run by the State and there should be complete industrialisation of the country. We shall not be able to create conditions under which the State can own all the essential industries unless we are able to get our independence. Money can come from the same source from which it came in Soviet Russia."

He hoped that the committee that would be appointed would be able to draw up plans which could be given effect to at least certainly in a free India.

Mr. *Hamid Nizamani* supported the resolution. He said that the resolution sought to make the Muslims self-sufficient and they would not have to rely for anything on Hindu India.

Mr. *Jinnah* himself next commended the resolution. He said that the responsibility of selecting the personnel of the committee was his. His experience of such committees in the past, said Mr. *Jinnah*, had been that people came forward merely for the sake of publicity. After their appointment they hardly did any work. He would not undertake a committee under such conditions. He asked the members of the League to come forward who were prepared to carry out strenuous tasks—men confident, capable and fully devoted to the task entrusted to them. The report, added Mr. *Jinnah*, should be submitted to the Working Committee within six months and members should be prepared to devote their whole time to their work. He would chose the personnel of the Committee from the names received by him.

The resolution was passed unanimously.

#### "SATYARTH PRAKASH"

Prof. *Malik Inayatullah Khan* of Lahore moved next the following resolution: "This session of the All-India Muslim League invites the attention of the Central Government as well as of the Provincial Government to those chapters of late Swami Dayanand's book "Satyarth Prakash", which contain objectionable, insulting and provocative remarks against the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be on Him) and other founders of the religion and emphatically demand that the said Governments proscribe these chapters and also prosecute the publishers of these chapters under the relevant section of the I. P. C. with a view to securing effective prevention for the publication of such literature."

In moving the above resolution, Prof. Malik Inayatullah said that, since the beginning of Islam, Muslims had never made offensive remarks against any religion. It was a pity that at a time when everyone wanted to respect other people's religious susceptibilities, those chapters in "Satyarth Prakash" were allowed to remain untouched, Muslims had no objection to those chapters in "Satyarth Prakash" which defined the religious precepts of the Arya Samaj. But they could not tolerate any further the continuance in the book of chapters 12, 13 and 14, which were condemned by Muslims all over India.

At this stage, the speaker wished to quote certain passages from the chapters in question, whereupon Mr. Jinnah got up and said : "These passages are so objectionable that I do not want any publicity to be given to them."

*Haji Ali Akbar Shah* of Hyderabad ( Sind ), seconding the resolution, said he was glad that the agitation against the "Satyarth Prakash" first began in Hyderabad (Sind). He insisted that all copies of the book should be seized by the Government of India.

*Moulana Abdul Hamid* said that even *Mahatma Gandhi* had written in *Young India* that, so long as "Satyarth Prakash" was extant, there could be no communal unity in India. Muslims, he said, were prepared to make any sacrifice to see that the objectionable chapters were proscribed.

The resolution was passed unanimously. The House then adjourned to meet again on the next morning.

### Third Day—Karachi—26th. December 1943

#### EFFECTIVE PRICE CONTROL

The session of the Muslim League terminated this afternoon after all the six resolutions adopted by the Subjects Committee were passed unanimously without a single amendment being moved. The conference dispersed amidst shouts of "Jinnah Zindabad", "Pakistan Zindabad" and "Muslim League Zindabad."

The hon. Mr. *Hussain Imam* moved a resolution demanding immediate, comprehensive and effective price control on necessaries of life and to ration essential commodities. Mr. *Hussain Imam* criticised the Government of India for not taking effective steps to prevent profiteering, hoarding and to arrange for the proper distribution of foodgrains. Inflation was largely responsible for the present distress and he urged the authorities to take effective steps to rescue poor people who had been affected adversely. By passing this resolution, he said, the League would be standing by, and fulfilling its duties to the masses.

A spirited defence of the Sind Ministry's food policy was put forward by *Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah*, Premier of Sind, who seconded the resolution. He particularly resented the charge that the Sind Government were out to win their favour at the expense of the vast majority of producers and consumers. He said that exactly the opposite was the case. Our critics seemed to forget that the Sind Government had the courage to turn down the Government of India's open invitation to drop price control which was tantamount to giving a free hand to exploit and make money at the expense of the consumer. If the Sind Government had done so, then truly they could have been accused of Zamindari domination, but actually they had made sacrifices, such sacrifices that they deserved well of the country.

"I am proud of my Ministry", said *Sir Ghulam Hussain*, and added that when *Lord Wavell* came to Karachi, he told the Viceroy that if Mr. *Amery* found fault with the Provincial Governments then he, *Sir Ghulam Hussain*, would have to reply to Mr. *Amery*.

Explaining how the measures proposed by the Sind Government were intended to benefit the cultivators and consumers and not the 400 or so zamindars, *Sir Ghulam Hussain* pointed out that in Sind the landless cultivator got 50 per cent of the produce to himself. Therefore, he stood to benefit from any rise in the price of grain but the condition precedent was that crop should not pass out of his hands. That was the crux of the situation. The cultivator could not hold on to his crop for long. "I am telling the cultivators," said *Sir Ghulam Hussain*, "do not sell before I return from Dethi." *Sir Ghulam Hussain* said that the cultivators in previous years had suffered greatly due to low prices of produce and now when they were asking for a little more an outcry was being raised. It was but fair that the cultivators should get relief.

#### BENGAL'S FLIGHT

*Sir Nazimuddin*, who supported the resolution, sincerely thanked the military and the whole country for the great help and practical sympathy they had shown

to Bengal in her hour of trial. He said the Muslim League Ministries had always worked for the masses and not for the rich. While the Ministries wanted to control the price of agricultural produce, the control of the necessities of life must go hand in hand. The Ministries had been falsely accused of ignoring the interests of the masses or of procrastination. Actually speaking, it was the Government of India that had so far been the supporters and protectors of vested interests.

Dealing with the *aman* crop in Bengal, Sir Nazimuddin said it was essential to get hold of the *aman* crop in order to meet the situation better. But the Central Government was advocating a policy which might frustrate the object of getting hold of the *aman* crop in Bengal this year. The Bengal Government might have gone on with their scheme in this connection but objections were raised by a member of the Government of India only a few days ago. If those objections were not quickly withdrawn, there might be great difficulty in the procurement of the *aman* crop, Sir Nazimuddin warned.

The Bengal Premier then painted a grave picture of the conditions in rural Bengal. Although famine was being overcome the situation from the point of view of clothing and health was giving cause for anxiety. In many villages as much as 60 per cent of the population had been stricken down by malaria which was of a most virulent type. The lack of quinine and paucity of doctors added to the complexity of the problem. The Bengal Premier appealed to doctors in all parts of the country to come forward to serve the people of Bengal. No less than 350 more doctors were needed. His province would give good salaries and conditions of service. Dealing with the financial side of relief Sir Nazimuddin said that the situation with which Bengal was faced was an extraordinary one. Her distress was undoubtedly due to war conditions. The financial burden of relief should, therefore, be borne by the British Government and the Government of India and it would be unfair to saddle the Provincial Government with it. There was a tremendous task ahead and a colossal amount would be needed for the rehabilitation of the stricken districts. The urgent need now was not food but medicines, clothing and blankets. Sir Nazimuddin took the opportunity to issue an emphatical denial of the statement issued by Mr. Savarkar that conversions of starving Hindus had taken place. There was not an iota of truth in Mr. Savarkar's statement, said Sir Nazimuddin, and added that neither Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee nor any Hindu Sabha leader had mentioned such a thing to him either directly or indirectly. It was extraordinary, Sir Nazimuddin concluded, that a responsible leader of a section of the Hindus should give currency to such a baseless charge.

After Mr. Abdul Matin Chowdhury also supported the resolution it was passed unanimously.

#### DEMAND FOR FRESH ELECTIONS TO LEGISLATURES

The need for holding fresh elections to the Provincial and Central Legislatures was stressed by Qazi Mohammad Isa who moved a resolution on the subject. Mr. Isa said that the only reason for the postponement of the elections in India was to continue Section 93 rule. War conditions, he said, had not stood in the way of holding elections in Canada, South Africa, Australia and in other parts of the Dominions. In any general or by-elections that might be held in this country, Mr. Isa said, the Muslim League was bound to have an overwhelming success.

Mr. Yahya Bakhtayar, Raja Ghaznafar Ali Khan and Mr. Shaik Abdul Salam who supported the resolution, asked why other parties in the country should be penalised for the mistakes of the Congress. They asserted that only a fresh election could correctly reflect the opinion of Muslim India which stood solidly for Pakistan.

The House also passed a resolution urging on the Allied Powers that the territories recently released from the control of Italy—Cyrenacia, Libya and Tripoli—would not be handed back to Italy but would be constituted into independent sovereign States.

On the motion of the hon. Sardar Aurangzeb Khan, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan and the Raja of Mahmudabad were unanimously elected Honorary General Secretary and Treasurer of the All-India Muslim League for the ensuing year.

In putting the proposition to vote, Mr. M. A. Jinnah described Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan as "my right hand." The Nawabzada had "worked and slaved" day and night and none could possibly have an idea of the great burden he shouldered. The Nawabzada, Mr. Jinnah continued, commanded the universal respect and confidence of the Muslims. Though a Nawabzada, he was a thorough proletarian and he hoped other Nawabs in the country would follow his example. Mr. Jinnah paid a tribute to the General Secretary for the services he had rendered

to the League during the last seven years and wished him a long life of service to the community.

**MR. JINNAH'S CONCLUDING SPEECH**

Winding up the proceedings of the session, Mr. Jinnah expressed his satisfaction at the magnificent success of the meeting. He paid a tribute to Mr. *Yusuf Haroon*, the General Secretary, and Mr. *G. M. Syed*, Chairman of the Reception Committee respectively, and to the other members and workers of the Committee for their untiring efforts which had made the session a great success.

Mr. Jinnah cordially thanked the delegates for the great success of the session. Both in the presidential procession and inside the pandal, he saw Muslims of every section, Khojas, Memons, Bhoras, Pathans, in fact, of every class and it showed clearly that Muslims were united. What was it that kept the Muslims united as one man and what was the bedrock and sheet-anchor of the community? asked Mr. Jinnah.

"It is Islam he said and added : "It is the great book Quran that is the sheet-anchor of Muslim India. I am sure that as we go on and on, there will be more and more of oneness—one God, one book, one prophet, and one nation."

Mr. *Yusuf Haroon*, on behalf of the Reception Committee, thanked the various workers and organisations that helped the holding of the session successfully in Karachi.

**Fourth Day—Karachi—27th. December 1943**

**COMMITTEE OF ACTION APPOINTED**

A Committee of Action of six members was appointed by the President of the All-India Muslim League, Mr. *M. A. Jinnah*, at Karachi on the 27th. December 1943 in terms of the main resolution passed at the session just concluded.

The personnel of the Committee was as follows : *Nawab Ismail Khan* (Chairman) : Mr. *G. M. Syed*, *Haji Sattar Essack Sait*, *Nawab Iftakar Hussain Khan of Mandot*, *Kazi Mohamud Isa*, and *Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan* (Convener).

Mr. Jinnah's announcement to the Working Committee regarding appointment of the Committee of Action reads :

"In pursuance of Resolution No. 1 passed by the All India Muslim League Session held at Karachi on December 25, 1943, I appoint a Committee till the next Annual Sessions to undertake immediately the work of organising, co-ordinating and unifying the Provincial League and the entire Muslim League organisation in consonance with the constitution, rules and programme of the All-India Muslim League."

Mr. Jinnah announced that the following powers have been delegated to the Committee as authorised by the League Constitution : To appoint or institute Sub-Committees for carrying out such duties and functions as may be entrusted to them ; to control, direct and regulate all the activities of the various Provincial Leagues, strictly in consonance with the aims, objects and rules of the All-India Muslim League ; to take disciplinary action against any member of the League who violates the decisions of the League or acts in contravention of its aims and objects to a right of appeal to the Council of the All-India Muslim League ; to suspend, dissolve or disaffiliate any Provincial League which fails in its duties, infringes or ignores the decisions or directions of the higher bodies and to take disciplinary action against any office-bearer of a Provincial League who fails in his duties or ignores the decisions or directions of the Working Committee or hinders the progress of the League in any manner whatsoever, subject to right of appeal."

**PARLIAMENTARY BOARD**

The Working Committee of the Muslim League which met this morning at the residence of Mr. *Yusuf Haroon* appointed a Parliamentary Board of three members in pursuance of the suggestion made by Mr. Jinnah in his presidential address. The members of the Committee were : *Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan* ; *Chaudhuri Khaliquzzaman* ; and the hon. Mr. *Hossain Imam*.

After Mr. Jinnah, who presided over the meeting, had announced the appointment of the Committee of Action, the Working Committee resolved that, in view of the appointment of that Committee, it was not necessary to constitute a separate All-India Civil Defence Committee as its functions will also be exercised by the Committee of Action.

# The All India Ahrar Conference

Special Session—Lahore—4th. & 5th. December 1943

## Proceedings & Resolutions

The special session of the All-India Majlis-i-Ahrar Conference opened at Lahore on the 4th December 1943.

The conference was held in a big 'Shamianna' in the lawns outside Delhi Gate. Thousands of Mussalmans were present and among those who participated were a large number of delegates from different parts of the country. *Hafiz Ali Bahadur Khan*, M. L. A. (Bombay) inaugurated the conference.

While inaugurating the Conference he said that the form of Government ordained by Quran, which he described as *Hakumat-Elahia* (the Kingdom of God) was the most suitable form of Government. That Government would be the most democratic form of Government under which justice would be done, both to the Muslims as well as to the non-Muslims.

The chairman of the Reception Committee, *Maulana Mohd. Ali*, referred to certain grievances of the Mussalmans of Kalabag and the alleged maltreatment being accorded to them.

*Syed Attaullah Shah Bukhari* presided over the Conference and spoke for about 2 hours. He concluded his speech at 3 A. M.

"What is there of Islam in you? Do you have faith in the holy Quran?" These were some of the questions addressed by *Hzrat Maulana Attaullah Shah Bukhari* to Mr. *Mohammad Ali Jinnah* who claimed to be the "Imam Azam" of the Mussalmans, in the course of his last speech at the special session of the All-India Majlis-i-Ahrar Conference which concluded here early in the morning of 6th. December. The final session commenced at about 9-30 p. m. and concluded at 4 a. m. when the President of the Conference, *Syed Attaullah Shah Bukhari* finished his speech before a gathering which he kept spell-bound.

*Syed Attaullah Shah* as also *Maulana Mazhar Ali Azhar*, M. L. A. in the course of their lengthy speeches pleaded that the form of Government ordained by the holy Quran was the most suitable form of Government. That form was described by the two speakers as "*Hukumat Illahia*."

The cry of Pakistan was described by both the speakers as a big hoax and both of them expressed their opposition to it because they maintained that the present leader of that movement did not know his own mind. Without telling the geography of the land which one wanted to possess no one could be owner of any land. Pakistan was described by the speakers as a vote-catching device.

*Maulana Mazhar Ali* said: "The Pakistan demand, which has as its background the theory of treating a section of the people as hostages can never be acceptable." "Did not Mr. Jinnah say," asked *Maulana Mazhar Ali*, "that if Muslims in the Hindu majority province were maltreated, the Hindus living in the Pakistan area would be maltreated similarly?" "This is the type of justice Mr. Jinnah offers to others and then asks them to agree to his proposal of Pakistan."

Proceeding *Maulana Mazhar Ali* said: "Under *Hukumat Illahia*, the form of government ordained by the Quran—no injustice will be done to anyone and all including the Non-Muslims will be treated fairly and justly."

*Maulana Mazhar Ali* in the course of his speech referring to the activities of the Communists said that the slogan of Congress-League settlement was "a farce started by the Communists Party to deceive the people and remain in the public eye." *Maulana Mazhar Ali* had no hesitation in saying that the demand for the release of *Mahatma Gandhi* made by the Communists was neither sincere nor genuine. It was "a cloak to cover their sins." There could possibly be no settlement between the Congress and the League. If Communists were really anxious for a Congress-League settlement they should instead of wasting breath in raising empty slogans do some constructive work by having a settlement between the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and others who were all free and then take that formula for settlement to *Mahatma Gandhi* for acceptance. He felt sure that *Mahatma Gandhi* would accept it.

*Maulana Attaullah Shah Bukhari* asserted that the holy Quran had enjoined absolute non-interference in other religions and had called upon Muslims to respect the Prophets and founders of all religions.

Appeal was made for the Bengal Relief Fund by Maulana Attaullah Shah Bukhari and Maulana Mazhar Ali as also by Mr. *Jehangir Kabir* who thanked the Punjab and other provinces for the help rendered to the distressed people of Bengal.

A resolution was passed strongly protesting against the alleged ill-treatment of the Mussalmans of Kalabag by the Nawab of Kalabag.

### The All India Muslim Majlis Manifesto

"It is to foster the cause of essential unity of India that the Muslim Majlis has come into being on mature deliberation of the Mussalmans, who have in their heart of hearts the interest of the Muslim community. They have joined their hands under the banner of the Muslim Majlis to declare unequivocally that they will ultimately succeed in the cause they have espoused both for the national and communal good. It is a mission of community service, it is a cause of national regeneration."

Thus stated a manifesto issued by the Muslim Majlis at Calcutta on the 30th. July 1943, explaining the basic and fundamental principle on which it had been established, with *Khan Bahadur Sheikh Mohammad Jan*, M. L. C., Bengal, as President. The manifesto adds :

"The present all round frustration of our national and economic life points out clearly the interdependence of the Hindu-Muslim problems, which have been made vexatious and almost insurmountable by the political opportunists in India. The attempt to create geographical barrier has been a gigantic political blunder on the part of its propounders. While the whole world is improving upon the most advanced ideas of political solidarity, enslaved India is being compelled to commit suicide in the name of Pakistan."

"It is no use suppressing the fact that the majority of the Muslims in India have been living a deplorable life of stagnation since the fall of their Empire. Their mental degradation is mainly responsible for their backwardness in politics. The Muslim leaders have always thought more of themselves and the common Muslims have all along been exploited. The self-styled leaders made them constantly feel that they had been deprived of their legitimate rights and privileges by the Hindus. But they were never induced to aspire for the freedom of their country."

"After the Great World War, when the mighty problems relating to the desecration of the Holy Islamic places and the 'Khilafat' question stepped into the politics of the Muslim India, the selfish and reactionary leaders lost control of the Muslim masses for a period. But this period of mass awakening was not allowed to live long. The reactionary leaders slowly and stealthily again caught hold of a larger number of Muslims in their grip."

"Mr. Jinnah's leadership of the Muslim League is one of the numerous links of the reactionary chain of the selfish and self-styled leaders. He is, indeed, one of those leaders who have blocked the way to the goal of freedom and national unity. As long as such leaders are allowed to reign supreme there is no chance of any compromise among the two great communities in India, and there is no chance of attaining freedom of the country. This reactionary leadership is a powerful weapon in the hands of the British Government to resist the aspiration of 400 million people in their struggle for freedom. We must make an end of reactionary leadership to save our community from its baneful effects."

"Mr. Jinnah is now and then haughtily insisting that all his demands must be accepted verbatim by the Hindus, but he does not like to explain and clarify the issue underlying this absurd and ridiculous demand. Hence the first and most important duty of every well-wisher of the Muslims is to disentangle the Muslim community from the clutches of reactionary leadership, and to lead them on the straight path of freedom. The community should be trained and disciplined in such a way that it may get all its political, economic, social and religious rights on the one hand, and on the other it may work jointly with other communities for the attainment of the country's freedom."

"This is the basic and fundamental principle on which has been established the 'Muslim Majlis'. The Muslims are invited to join this organisation in a body for the welfare of their community, for the good of their country and for working up a glorious future that awaits them. We must not forget that we are destined to play an important part in India's struggle for independence."

# The Sikh Conferences

## The Anti-Azad Punjab Conference

### Azad Punjab Scheme Condemned

That the Sikhs of this ilaqa are prepared to sacrifice every thing to put an end to this nefarious scheme of partition of the Punjab was evident from the demonstrations held on the occasion of the Anti-Azad Punjab Conference held at Panja Sahib on the 16th. August 1943 under the chairmanship of Baba Kharak Singh, veteran Sikh leader. Besides the president-elect *Sardars Sant Singh, M. L. A. (Central), Amar Singh, Harbans Singh Sestani, Labh Singh Narang, Maher Singh Chakwal, Durlabh Singh*, Secretary, Progressive Akali Party and several other prominent Sikhs of the ilaqa attended the conference. *Bakshi Rachpal Singh*, Advocate, Rawalpindi, Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcomed the leaders and Sikh public to the historic conference.

In the course of his presidential address *Baba Kharak Singh* unequivocally condemned the Azad Punjab scheme and made a passionate plea for united India and equal and honourable partnership for all communities in the administration of the motherland. He added that Mr. Jinnah and Master Tara Singh were sailing in the same boat as agents of British Imperialism. He advocated stronger ties between Hindus and Sikhs.

A resolution characterising the Azad Punjab scheme as suicidal to the country, the Sikh Panth and detrimental to the interests of the entire province was unanimously adopted. The resolution further added that in view of this scheme no powerful Central Government would be possible. The conference, therefore, totally rejected the Pakistan and Azad Punjab schemes and added that Sikhs would make every possible sacrifice to achieve the object of Indian unity.

This resolution was proposed by *Sardar Amar Singh* of Sher-i-Panjab, who in the course of his speech proved by facts and figures that the scheme would lead the country to ruin.

The resolution was adopted unanimously.

### The Attock Akali Conference

The Attock District Akali Conference was held at Bardari Gurdwara hall on the 16th. August 1943, under the chairmanship of *Sardar Haram Singh*, Advocate, Lahore. *Master Tara Singh, Gyant Sher Singh, Gyant Kartar Singh, M. L. A., Principal Ganga Singh* and others attended the conference. The President of the Conference was taken out in a procession. *Bakshi Gurcharan Singh*, Advocate Rawalpindi and the Chairman of the Reception Committee, delivered his welcome address which dwelt on the Sikh history and the part played by the Gurus.

*Sardar Haram Singh*, Advocate in the course of his presidential address dwelt at considerable length on the Sikander-Baldev Singh Pact, Azad Punjab Scheme and Hindu Sikh relations.

Principal *Ganga Singh* who moved the only resolution in favour of Azad Punjab scheme in the course of his speech hardly alluded to the merits of the scheme, but delivered a tirade against the Hindus in general and the Aryy Samajists in particular and the Hindu press. He attacked the opponents of the scheme vehemently and remained beating about the bush. The resolution ran as follows, "Resolved that the Azad Punjab scheme sponsored by the Sharomani Akali Dal is in the best interests of the community and further calculated to advance the cause in this part of the Punjab. The conference requests the Central Sikh League and the Sharomani Akali Dal to take special measures completely to safeguard the interests of this ilaqa."

The resolution being put to the vote was carried by a majority. Certain section of the audience raised their hands against the motion.

Another resolution expressing deep concern on the food situation in the country leading to restlessness and demanding the establishment of National Government in the country moved by *Sardar Ajit Singh Sahni*, Quetta extermee, was also carried.

### The Dhundial Sikh Conference

Master *Tara Singh* presided over a Sikh Conference held at Dhundial on the 3rd and 4th. October 1943. In his presidential address he emphasised the need of Hindu-Sikh unity. He said :—

"The politics of our country appear to have become completely muddled. The only Congress Committee which functions is the N. W. F. Provincial Congress Committee. The leaders of this Congress Committee are reported in the press to have openly advocated Pakistan during their recent election campaign. *Rai Bahadur Meher Chand Khanna*, while retaining his title has become Secretary of the Congress Party by securing direct commission, though he has never before been a four anna member even. The Hindu press never said a word against *Rai Bahadur Meher Chand* for betraying the Hindu Maha Sabha, or against the Congress Committee for betraying the Congress principle. The *Rai Bahadur* has become a super-nationalist though he is still a *Rai Bahadur*. The Frontier Congress leaders remained torch-bearers of nationalism though they do not believe in one nation (for they want Pakistan). My little brain is incapable of comprehending this resourcefulness.

Look at the false calumnious and mischievous propaganda carried on by the Hindu press regarding Sikh attitude towards the use of beef. It is true that a Sikh's letter was published in a paper in which it was said that all sorts of meat is the same, but the writer was of opinion that all sorts of meat was prohibited in the Sikh religion. Still in my opinion the writing was objectionable. I had gone to my village to take rest for a while. So I did not come to know of such a publication for some days. But as soon as I had opportunity to read the paper, I forcefully condemned the paper in which it was published. But the controversy continues and these mischievous papers impute to me the opinion I repeatedly condemned.

In the Punjab the Sikhs are the only people who actively protect the cow. There have been riots and murders. The Sikhs alone fought for protection of cow and the Siromani Akali Dal was the only organisation which rendered help in the resulting cases. The Hindus never rendered active assistance.

I am just coming from Muktsar near which a cow was slaughtered by Muslims in their village. The news reached Muktsar and the Akalis there at once raided the village. The culprits had fled away; so there was no riot. But the proof of cow killing was taken possession of, and made over to the police, then and there by the Akalis. Predominant population of Muktsar is Hindu, but the Hindus never joined the raid though they had every sympathy with the Sikhs. Look at this honesty of these Hindu papers; while publishing the news they suppressed the part played by the Akalis. For it was giving direct lie to their false propaganda.

It is true that S. Baldevsingh's ministership cannot protect us from all the zulum of the Muslim members, influential persons and officials whose heads have been turned by this intoxicating power. Repeal of Communal Award and establishment of a Government in which no single community may dominate is the only remedy for all the present evils. If S. Baldev Singh's ministership alone could protect us, we would not be justified to ask for any other protection. The experience of S. Baldev Singh's ministership has all the more convinced us that there can be no effective protection for us as long as the present constitution operates. S Baldev Singh's ministership combined with the war situation has given us the best protection which was possible under the present form of Government. But this best protection is no substantial protection. Hence I demand Azad Punjab. I do not understand the gentlemen who are crying hoarse against the present constitution and plead their helplessness in serving their community under the present circumstances and yet oppose the only proposal which can protect us from the domination of a single community.

Let me state clearly that if Pakistan is established the Sikh community is lost for ever. The Hindus also may lose, but they have some seven provinces in which they can rule. If Punjab is gone everything is gone. No consideration can make us agree to Pakistan. The English may be strong enough to force Pakistan upon us, but we can in no case be willing to submit to Pakistan.

# The Akhand Hindustan Conference

Chakwal—15th. September 1943

## Presidential Address

"Freedom without solidarity of united India in Akhand Hindustan has no significance or value. No unit can be powerful enough to maintain her freedom in case vivisection of India is agreed upon. I am yearning for the day when United India attains Self-government with Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and other communities as equal and responsible partner and when no community will be allowed to dominate over the other. When diverse clans inhabiting America, England and Russia, belonging to various religions and having different cultures can constitute one nation, there was no earthly reason to deprive India of her right to function as one single entity. I have throughout been a champion of complete independence for India and have placed this goal before me throughout my life. I am now, even in my old age, prepared to sacrifice everything for the achievement of my life's mission." Thus observed *Baba Kharak Singh*, the veteran Sikh Leader in the course of his presidential address delivered at the Akhand Hindustan Conference which commenced its sitting at Chakwal on the 15th. September 1943 in a specially decorated pandal in the presence of a huge gathering of Sikhs and Hindus drawn from the remotest corners of the North-Western Punjab.

Referring to the Azad Punjab Scheme, the Baba pointed out that it could not successfully solve the communal tangle in the country, and was of the opinion that it would further widen the gulf between the various communities to a pitch that it would never be bridged. He characterised the scheme as anti national and impracticable, likely to disintegrate the united forces of the parties. Condemning the scheme unequivocally, the speaker termed it as another name for Pakistan and advocated its whole-sale rejection.

Continuing his address, the President pressed for a national Government at the Centre and in the provinces and demanded the release of all political prisoners. He personally appealed to the Sikhs never to disassociate themselves from any movement started for the emancipation of the motherland on national lines and to offer whole-hearted co-operation to progressive and nationalist forces in the country. Concluding the Baba referred to the alleged mismanagement of Gurdwara funds by the party in power and exhorted all those present to concentrate their entire energies on freeing the Gurdwaras from the clutches of the present Akali caucus. He appealed for liberal donations towards the Bengal Relief fund.

## Reception Committee Chairman's Address

In the course of his welcome address, *Sardar Harbans Singh*, Chairman of the Reception Committee, surveyed at considerable length the present political situation in the country with special reference to Sikh politics in the Punjab. The Sikh community, the speaker said, had always stood for the unity of India and could never allow vivisection of their motherland. He detailed various arguments against the adoption of the Azad Punjab Scheme, which in his opinion, would reduce the Sikhs in this ilaga to a position of serfs and would prove a brake for the attainment of complete independence of the country.

Proceeding, the Chairman vehemently criticised the present Akali leadership, which, he opined, had degenerated to a sorrowful pitch. Criticising the *Stander-Baldev Singh Pact*, the Sardar added that it was a dead letter as far as the Unionist Party was concerned. He also bitterly condemned the action of the Akali Party in co-operating with the Muslim League Government in the Frontier Province. He also vehemently condemned the attitude of the Akali Party regarding the use of beef, which he said, they had brought on a level with Jhatka.

Prominent amongst those who attended the conference were *S. B. Ujjal Singh*, *M. L. A.*, *S. Uttam Singh Duggal*, *M. L. A.*, *S. Amar Singh Jhabal*, *S. Amar Singh* of 'Sher-i-Punjab', *S. Labh Singh Narang*, *Baba Madan Singh Ghaga*, *S. Ranjodh Singh*, *Bakhshi Rachpal Singh*, *Lala Shiv Ram Sewak* and *Bhagat Nand Kishore*, Municipal Commissioner.

## Azad Punjab Scheme Condemned

Half a dozen resolutions were unanimously adopted at the second open sitting of the Akhand Hindustan Conference held on the next day at Dera *Baba Kahan Singh*

under the chairmanship of *Baba Kharak Singh* when a huge gathering was present. *Sardar Amar Singh* of the "Sher-i-Punjab" moved the main resolution of the conference, which ran thus: "The vivisection of India in the opinion of this conference is most detrimental and undesirable from all points of view and will plunge various States under a new scheme of permanent warfare among themselves, making the states absolutely incapable of maintaining their independence after the partition."

"This conference reiterates its complete faith in the unity of India Akhand Hindustan and adds that the Azad Punjab scheme, which is similar to the Pakistan scheme, is detrimental to the best interests of the country, community, the nation and the Panth alike. The conference demands its whole sale rejection."

Moving the resolution, *Sardar Amar Singh* quoted facts and figures regarding the population and revenues in the various districts of the Punjab, to support his contention that the Azad Punjab scheme was injurious to the entire Sikh community in the Punjab.

*Sardar Amar Singh Jhabal*, a prominent Congressite Sikh leader, seconded the resolution and, in a forceful speech, exposed the tactics of the present Akali leadership.

*Sardar Uttam Singh Duggal*, M.L.A., while supporting the resolution, severely condemned the *Sikander-Baldev Singh* pact and revealed that *Sardar Baldev Singh* had told a deputation which waited upon him under his (the speaker's) leadership at Rawalpindi regarding the then impending appointment of the Director of Agriculture that he was helpless in the matter as the Governor of the Punjab wanted to appoint a junior Muslim to the post.

The speaker added that the Sikh Minister was incapable of safeguarding the Sikh interests and was a mere figure-head.

Replying to the question as to what he (the speaker) had done for his constituency in the Assembly and what he proposed to do to better the condition of his electorates, *Sardar Uttam Singh* admitted that, placed as they were they could do nothing for their voters, as the plight of non-agriculturist representatives in the Assembly was simply deplorable. The best brains in India, including *Mahatma Gandhi* and *Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru*, would not fare better if they had been placed in similar circumstances.

He further questioned Akali leaders as to what right they had to thrust a scheme which threatened the very existence of the people in this ilaga—and without their consent or consultation. The resolution was adopted unanimously.

*Sardar Labh Singh "Fakhar"* proposed and *S. Labh Singh Narang* seconded the other resolution, demanding of *Sardar Baldev Singh* to quit the Cabinet as he had failed to safeguard Sikh interests and the terms of the pact had not been fulfilled.

The other resolutions demanded the immediate release of all political prisoners without further delay and pressed for the establishment of National Government at the Centre and in the provinces and appealed to the Sikhs all over the province to help Bengal sufferers to their utmost capacity. The last resolution opposed the amendments proposed in the Gurdwara Act and warned the Government and Sikh members in the Assembly not to support the bill. *Lala Shiv Ram "Sewak"*, in the course of a forceful speech, brought home to the vast audience the effects of the Azad Punjab scheme on the people of this locality (Jhelum district) for whom it was a question of life and death.

## The A. I. Akhand Hindusthan Conference

"To-day when the Congress is shut behind the prison-bars and its leaders subjected to the ordeal of intense sufferings it amounts to an act of cowardice of the worst type to indulge in a campaign of vilification against them and it is only such people as have no sense of moral decency about them who can do this kind of thing," observed *Sardar Kharak Singh* in the course of his presidential address at the All-India Akhand Hindusthan Conference held at Adamke in his home district of Sialkot under the auspices of Central *Akali Dal* on the 27th. November 1943.

Referring to the Peshawar speech of Master *Tara Singh* and the communal policy attributed to the Congress High Command, he said that he himself had had occasions to criticise and differ strongly from the Congress and, if in the future the Congress ignored the legitimate claims of the Sikhs, he would not hesitate to fight it tooth and nail but at a time like the present, when no such thing was under consideration and the Congress was passing through a great ordeal for the common

object of obtaining independence for India, one should not stab it in the back but sympathise with it and support it.

Sardar Kharak Singh began by characterising the present time at the most critical period in the history of the world and said that the situation was becoming more complicated everyday. He found it difficult to say anything with certainty about the future of the world, but he wished that out of the ruins of the present war some such world order might be born, in which all nations, big and small, would enjoy independence and had equal opportunities of progress. He thought that it could be possible only under some democratic system and for that reason he wished victory for democratic principles but he warned the British Government that, if they thought they could deny India her birthright of freedom and still have peace, they were grossly mistaken, because, even if they won the war, there could be no peace till India had been granted a free status in the comity of nations.

Sardar Kharak Singh referred to the famine condition in Bengal and the dismal failure of the Government machinery in preventing such a man-made calamity.

Referring to Pakistan and Azad Punjab schemes, the speaker regretted that, while other nations of the world had taken a lesson from the present war and favoured federation of nations, the short-sighted self-centred leadership in India was carrying on a half-splitting campaign for the vivisection of India, which for the last so many centuries was considered as one united whole, both culturally and politically.

## The Punjab & Frontier Akhand Hindusthan Conference

Apropos the news item published in a *Sikh daily* that the *Sharomani Akali Dal* can be bound only by a decision of the Sikhs alone regarding the Azad Punjab Scheme and that the proposed Akhand Hindusthan Conference being held at Rawalpindi will be attended by *Sanatanists* and Arya Samajists, the General Secretary of the Reception Committee, the Punjab and Frontier Akhand Hindusthan Conference, sent telegraphic intimation to the *Sharomani Akali Dal* that only Sikhs will be allowed to vote on this resolution on the Azad Punjab scheme and asking the Akali leaders to attend the Conference and decide this issue once for all.

In this connection, *Sardar Kartar Singh Duggal*, President, *Singh Sabha*, Rawalpindi issued the following statement to the press, reviewing the details in a chronological order of the position taken up by leaders of the *Akali Party* regarding the Azad Punjab Scheme. "In November, 1942, on the occasion of the birthday anniversary of *Guru Nanak Dev*, *Sardar Mela Singh*, Akali leader of Rawalpindi, condemned the Scheme and the Akali leaders both. At a representative meeting of Sikhs of *Pindi*, *Jhelum*, *Attock* district and the Frontier Province, held at *Guru Singh Sabha*, Rawalpindi demand was made from Akali leaders to visit Rawalpindi and address *Diwan* and satisfy the Sikhs of this *ilaqa*. On January 23, 1943, another meeting of Akali leaders was held at *Gujar Khan*. *Bakhshi Gurcharan Singh*, Advocate of Rawalpindi, *Sardar Kishen Singh Atag*, President, *Singh Sabha*, *Gujar Khan*, and others condemned the Akali leaders and the Azad Punjab Scheme. In view of the strong opposition to the Scheme from the Sikhs of this *ilaqa*, Akali leaders could not come to Rawalpindi till August 14 when a conference was held at *Punja Sahib*.

"In accordance with the decision arrived at between both parties at *Punja Sahib*, the Young Men's *Khalsa* Association, Rawalpindi Cantonment requested both wings to come to Rawalpindi and organise a joint conference and decide this issue. *Sardar Amar Singh* agreed to come but Akali leaders never agreed to a joint conference. Similar things happened at *Chakwal* and *Daultala*, when invitations were issued to Akali leaders to attend the conferences. Principal *Ganga Singh* was detained at *Sukho* while *Master Tara Singh* and *Gyani Kartar Singh* could not go beyond *Gujar Khan*."

### PRESIDENT-ELECT ARRIVES

*Baba Kharak Singh*, President-elect of the Punjab and the Frontier Akhand Hindusthan Conference who arrived at Rawalpindi on the 4th. December 1943, was accompanied by *Sardar Kirpal Singh Majithia*, *Sardar Amar Singh* of the "Sher-i-Punjab", *Sardar Madan Singh Guga*, Prof. *Ram Singh*, *Sardar Labh Singh* and several other Sikh leaders of Malwa, was accorded an enthusiastic reception at the railway station on their arrival.

That the Azad Punjab Scheme, sponsored by the *Sharomani Akali Dal*, and the present attitude of the Akali leaders towards the nationalist forces was

responsible for bringing together all the heterogenous elements in the political life of the country was evident from the big gathering that assembled in the evening in the special pandal of Gurdwara Akagarh, where the Conference opened its session.

A rousing reception was accorded to *Baba Kharak Singh*, President-elect of the Conference on his entering the Pandal along with prominent leaders. The Frontier leader, *Rai Bahadur Mehar Chand Khanna*, *Khan Ali Gul Khan*, President F. P. O. C., *Arbab Abdur Rehman*, M. L. A., *Sardar Isher Singh*, M. L. A., Barrister of Mardau, and *Sarlar Milap Singh Azad*, were the recipients of a tremendous ovation on their arrival at the Pandal. Prominent among these who attended the Conference were: *Sardar Sant Singh* M. L. A. (Central), *S. Kirpal Singh Majithia*, *S. Amar Singh*, of the "Sher-i-Punjab," *Tikka Sant Singh Bedi*, *S. Labh Singh Fakhar*, *S. Labh Singh Narany*, Resident Secretary of the Central Akali Dal, *Sardar Uttam Singh Duggal*, M. L. A. Prof. *Ram Singh*, *Gyani Baccittar Singh*, President, *Khalsa Malwa Darbar Ludhiana*, *S. Sewa Singh Ghungerana*, *Lala Kundan Lal Lamba* of Lyallpur, *Sardar Bahadur Beant Singh*, Principal *Ram Ditta Mal*, *Sardar Mehar Singh Chakwali*, *Bhagat Nand Kishore*, Municipal Commissioner, *Chakwal*, besides a large number of prominent leaders of this Haqa.

#### Mr. Duggal's Address

"We have gathered here at a very critical time in human history when the destiny of mankind is at the cross-roads and a gigantic world war is being waged in all its ruthlessness, while in India our political future is at stake. One thing however, is writ large in the face of events and it is that no power can withhold our independence. It is now up to us to make up our minds what sort of independence do we desire, whether it is the independence for the entire geographical unit which we call India, or, for the country broken into pieces like Pakistan or Azad Punjab. I am sure you stand for the independence of a United India and refuse to be taken in by cheap sentimental slogans invented by interested parties to cut at the very root of our power, our greatness and our oneness. We have heavily suffered to achieve this unity and no price would be great to preserve it in future." With these words *Sardar Uttam Singh Duggal*, M. L. A., Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcomed the delegates.

Addressing the Sikh members of the audience, *Sardar Uttam Singh Duggal* said that the Sikhs had always been in the vanguard of India's fight for freedom and unity, adding that some misguided self-seekers for their own desire to follow the Pakistanists had invented the formula "Azad Punjab." Analysing the position of Sikhs in the so-called "Azad Punjab," the Chairman quoted facts and figures to prove that the Sikhs would be the losers if the Scheme was translated into action, and they would be guilty of setting a precedent of breaking up their mother country into various communal zones always at war with one another. It was un-Sikh-like to throw the area, the speaker added, where Sikh Culture had made tremendous strides and which had given them most men of learning and wisdom at the mercy of a mediaeval religious State. He apprehended that the division of Jats and non-Jats would be perpetrated and then Jats would be broken into various pieces and complained that men who were staunch nationalists the other day had fallen in line with Jinnahites and men who had made common cause with the Hindus some time ago had turned their bitterest enemies.

#### President's Address

"India is one whole. The same blood runs in the veins of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, all inhabitants of our motherland. They may profess different faiths, but they have been for times immemorial characterised as one nation. If people of diverse religions, different cultures and various nationalities inhabiting Great Britain, America and Russia can be styled as one nation, what is there on earth to debar Indians from becoming an Indian Nation. Whenever the question of India's freedom is brought to the fore-front and it appears that bonds of slavery are going to be unloosened some forces are brought into being by our rulers to serve as a brake on our progress and place handicaps in the way of the country's salvation. We are determined to achieve independence and no power, howsoever strong, can withhold that from us now. I fought my whole life for this ideal and will die in harness after seeing a united and independent India." Thus observed *Baba Kharak Singh*, President of the Conference in the course of his stirring presidential address, which was read by *Sardar Labh Singh Fakhar*.

Proceeding, he challenged British statesmen to name any other country where separate electorates were in force and where political rights were distributed on

the basis of religious beliefs. This the veteran leader characterised as the sole cause of the country's ills and added that as long as the foreign power was dominating their country, unity could not be achieved. The venerable Baba pointed that Pakistan had its birth in England.

Unequivocally condemning the Azad Punjab scheme, the President styled it as anti-national and most detrimental to the interests of the Panth and the country. The present anti-Congress attitude of the Akali Party, the Sardar observed, was most unfair on the part of those who had been part and parcel of the Congress machinery and that it was a stab in the back when the Congress leaders were behind the bars, adding that the Congress was the fountain-head from which the present Akali leaders had drawn inspiration and strength.

He appealed to Sikhs to work in collaboration with the Congress, adding that he would fight the community's rights when the time came.

Criticising the proposed Gurdwara Amendment Bill, the President sounded a note of warning to the Unionist Ministry, asking them not to meddle in the religious affairs of the Sikhs by enacting this measure and exhorted the Sikhs to rise to the occasion, deposing those self-seekers who in the garb of their leaders, were stabbing them in the back at a critical juncture in the history of the world.

\* *Khan Ali Gul Khan*, President, F. P. C. C., in course of an elevating address, brought home to the vast audience that the Congress was the only national organisation in the country working on the right lines, fighting for the emancipation of their motherland, adding that it was still a living force in the Frontier Province which fact had been truly demonstrated in their recent tour of the province despite the assertions of Sardar Aurangzeb Khan, the Frontier Premier. The Speaker condemned Master Tara Singh for attacking Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who was not free to reply to baseless allegations.

The Khan further added that their only struggle was against Churchill, Amery and Wavell and not against Mr. *Tara Singh* and Mr. *Jinnah*. In the Frontier, the Khan continued, unlike the Punjab, they had only one leader and as true soldiers, they were following the line chalked out by Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

Ridiculing the position of Master Tara Singh and the Akali leaders, the Frontier Congress President stated that on the one hand they stood in opposition to Pakistan and on the other hand, they had joined the present Frontier Ministry, which was constituted with the avowed object of establishing Pakistan.

*Sardar Kirpal Singh Majithia*, in the course of his speech, laid great stress on the educational needs of the community and eulogized the services rendered to the community by the Chief Khalsa Diwan and the late Sir Sunder Singh Majithia in the domain of education, adding that independence could not be achieved without education.

### Resolutions

The spacious pandal at the Akalgarh Gurdwara was packed to capacity when the second open sitting of the Conference commenced on the 5th December 1943 under the presidentship of Baba Kharak Singh. Several delegates from the Frontier, including prominent Congress leaders, namely, Khan Ali Gul Khan, Arbab Abdul Rehman, Rai Bahadur Mehr Chand Khanna, Sardar Isher Singh, S. Milap Singh Azad and Mr. Shiv Kumar attended the session. Prominent Hindu leaders of the town, representing various organisations, were also present. The conference continued with a break of hardly an hour at 4 p. m.

*Sardar Amar Singh*, of the "Sher-i-Punjab," in the course of a forceful speech, supported by facts and figures, moved the first resolution of the conference, which ran thus,

"This historic session of the Akhand Hindustan Conference unequivocally condemns the Azad Punjab scheme and reiterates that the people of the Rawalpindi Division in particular have their implicit faith in the solidarity of India as one organised whole. The Sikh Panth would never be a party to any scheme that aims at the vivisection of India and attempts to do away with the unity and solidarity of the country as a whole, and would be prepared to undergo all sacrifices to achieve this object. The conference, therefore, rejects this nefarious scheme altogether."

The resolution was seconded by *Sardar Mul Singh Domeli* and was supported by *Lala Shiv Ram Sewak*, who, in the course of a three hour speech, subjected the scheme to a trenchant criticism and challenged the Akali leaders to contest the first elections of the S. G. P. C. on this very issue and abide by the vote and decision of the newly constituted Prabandhak Committee's view and thus put an

end to this controversy once for all. He answered several questions put to him by the public.

"I am prepared to do my utmost and offer any sacrifice necessary for the establishment of Pakistan and the Azad Punjab in Northern India provided Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Tara Singh secure a declaration from Mr. Churchill, Mr. Amery and Lord Wavell that freedom would be granted to India immediately," said Rai Bahadur Mehr Chand Khanna, M. L. A., while supporting the resolution against the Azad Punjab scheme.

"If I am assured that India could attain her freedom by the establishment of Pakistan or the Azad Punjab, I will not stand in its way. If a declaration is made that the British will quit India if the Congress agrees to Pakistan or the Azad Punjab scheme, I can assure Muslim leaders that this will be done forthwith."

R. B. Mehr Chand Khanna, added: "I reiterate that the British will not leave India and will never grant independence to our motherland. This is only a stunt created by British diplomats to hoodwink America and other nations in the world. Rai Bahadur Mehr Chand Khanna stated that this visit to America was an eye-opener for him and it was there that he learnt the real significance of the Pakistan movement from the British point of view.

The Frontier leader further detailed the circumstances leading to the establishment of the Muslim League Ministry in his province and once again challenged the Government to allow the Congress members of the Frontier Assembly to attend the session even in handcuffs and fetters under police escort for a single sitting and see the result.

Alluding to the subject of the Sikh by-election in the Frontier Province, R. B. Mehr Chand Khanna retorted that it was a white lie on the part of Master Tara Singh and other Akali leaders who stated that the Hindus wanted the Ministry in the province and added that all the nine Hindu members of the Frontier Assembly were with the Congress Party.

Proceeding further, Mr. Khanna added: "Any Hindu who contemplates the establishment of the Hindu Raj in the country and any Muslim who wishes the creation of the Muslim Raj or Pakistan in India and any Sikh who dreams of the Sikh Raj are all enemies of their motherland. India is sure to have one rule—and that of Indians jointly. There will be one slogan throughout the length and breadth of the country: the slogans will be "Independent India and Free India."

An old friend of the British, who had been relying on their promises during the last two decades, Rai Bahadur Mehr Chand advised them to remain in India as friends and leave India as friends and make no attempt to strengthen the bond of slavery. He brought it home to them that India was bound to attain freedom, be it to-morrow or day after. No power in the Universe, he said, could withhold what was India's due. Concluding his address, the frontier leader exhorted all those present to discard all controversies and join their hands in bringing freedom to the country as early as possible.

Sardar Sant Singh, M.L.A. (Central), moved the second resolution, urging the establishment of National Government at the Centre and the release of all political prisoners. The resolution ran thus: "This conference records its considered opinion that the establishment of National Government at the Centre is an immediate and vital necessity both for the people of India and the British Government. With a view to establish National Government, expressing the will of the people, it is essential that all political prisoners should be immediately released and leaders of all political parties should be invited to establish the same."

In the course of an elaborate speech, characteristic of the parliamentarian and his experience, Sardar Sant Singh made out a fitting case for the establishment of National Government and advanced cogent reasons to assert that the establishment of National Government at the Centre was primarily in the best interests of the British Government itself. Quoting extracts from the proceedings of Parliament and the Central Assembly, the Sardar proved that only the Indian National Congress could deliver the goods as it represented the will of the people. Sardar Sant Singh pointed out that there would be no necessity of Pakistan or the Azad Punjab once the National Government was established in the country. Concluding, the speaker asked the vast audience present to give a wide berth to self-seekers who were out to put a brake in the advancement of the country's march towards the goal of India's emancipation and warned communal die-hards of the consequences of the campaigns started to grind their own axe.

The resolution was seconded by Mr. Satyarthi and carried unanimously, while only one man in the vast audience voted against it.

The last resolution exhorted the Sikhs to do their utmost in affording relief to Bengal sufferers. The resolution was moved, in a touching speech, by Prof. Balbir Singh from Lahore. *Sant Tehl Singh* of Allah, District Gujrat, a prominent Sikh theologian, in seconding the resolution, enjoined on the Sikhs, according to the scriptures, to pool their entire resources and help the needy and distressed.

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## The National Liberal Federation of India

24th. Session—Bombay—29th. December 1943

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir's Welcome Address

The Twenty-fourth Session of the National Liberal Federation of India was held at Bombay on the 29th. December 1943 under the Presidentship of *Sir Maharaj Singh*.

*Sir Cowasjee Jehangir*, Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcoming the delegates, pleaded that an unequivocal assurance be given to the British public that "all classes, creeds and shades of political thought in India were behind this war" as a means of ending the deadlock. He observed: "The fact remains that India has been assured that the Cripps proposals still hold the field—which can only mean that Dominion Status is promised to India on the conclusion of the War. After all, it is not any particular British statesman, or a group of statesmen, who will decide India's future. It is the British man and woman in the street who has vote, that will have the final say. Will he be influenced by an obstructive attitude to India's war effort, or will he be influenced by unanimous and whole-hearted support to the War? Undoubtedly the latter. The men who will obtain self-Government for India will not be those who are constantly speaking and writing in these troubled and difficult times, of India's rights and India's wrongs; but it will be those men who are fighting India's cause on battle fields all over the world. It will be those men and women who are unstintingly helping the war effort of India. It is the work of these that will influence the man and woman who really has the greatest power in England. It is the man and woman in the street who has the power to displace a powerful Cabinet Minister within the space of a couple of days. This has been known to have happened on more than one occasion in the past. If we are to be far-sighted in the interests of our mother country, we have to see that both in England and amongst the Allied nations, our case is not jeopardised by the unwise actions of some who do not realise the harm they are doing to their own country. It is far better to speak out and face unpopularity than to bandage our eyes, plug our ears and drug our conscience. Let the dead past bury its dead. In my humble opinion, it is not a question of withdrawing any particular resolution that may have been passed by any political party. It is much more important to give unequivocal assurances to the British public and to the peoples of the Allied powers that all classes, all creeds, and all shades of political thought in India are behind this war; that, not only will they not impede the war effort in any way in the future, but on the other hand, they are prepared unconditionally to help, by word and deed, every effort that India can contribute towards a final and victorious conclusion of this terrible War. If such assurances could be forthcoming, I personally believe that not only India will gain self-Government after the War, we may be enabled to play a most material and important part in the administration of our own country.

No Indian can possibly desire to see any of his countrymen behind prison bars for their political convictions, specially such as have passed their lives in the service of their country. But let us face facts. Congressmen cannot deny that from the beginning of August of last year disorders and mob rule prevailed in most parts of India, and that attempts at sabotage still continue in some areas. It is said that the Congress and its leaders had not encouraged or engineered these acts of violence. Assuming this to be so the Congress leaders cannot be absolved from responsibility for what occurred because as sensible men they should have realised, from past experience, that a mass civil disobedience movement would inevitably result in mass violence. The Allied nations are surely not going to run the slightest risk of such a state of affairs prevailing again. Such risks can

be, to a great extent, removed by such assurances as I have explained. Mr. *Gandhi*, if he chose, could give such an undertaking on behalf of the Congress, for he has been appointed the leader of the movement in these words: "Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of *Gandhiji* and the Committee request him to take the lead and guide the nation in the steps to be taken." These powers, given to Mr. *Gandhi* by a resolution of the All-India Congress Committee, surely include doing what he considers best in the interests of the country.

It may not be possible immediately for the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League to come to an understanding on the future Constitution of India, or even on the Cripps proposals, but these two political parties can certainly come on the same platform to urge the people of our country to support the war efforts of India by word and deed. This may be a starting point for agreement on political issues such as may become advisable for the duration of the War. Such a change of policy is bound to have a most beneficial effect on all the peoples of the Allied Powers and would certainly entitle the representatives of India to a place on the Peace Conference which must follow a victorious conclusion to the War. India, if its leaders have fully helped towards winning the war, would have an effective voice at the Peace Conferences; but not if they have acted in a manner which has weakened and thwarted, however unintentionally, the war effort.

There is a persistent and consistent demand from all shades of political thought that this so called deadlock should be solved, and I am sure that all Liberals are as anxious as Congressmen, at present out of prison, and all other political parties who have voiced the same opinion. If we are anxious to help, first and foremost we must face realities. We must remember that the British public and the peoples of the Allied Powers cannot forget what has happened in India since August of last year. Those who have suggestions to make for the solution of this problem must keep this aspect of the case before them. Any tendency to ignore these realities will only make the task fruitless. Therefore the suggestions must be such as are likely to have immediate results. Looking at it from every point of view, I cannot but come to the conclusion that the suggestions I have been bold enough to make are the only ones that will clear the air and will enable our public men to consider and discuss, in a calmer and clearer atmosphere, the next steps they would be prepared to take to solve India's constitutional problems.

#### The Presidential Address

Sir *Maharaj Singh*, in his Presidential Address, referred to the Congress policy since 1939, and said that some of our present day evils are due to the defection of the Congress Ministries in 1939. He also referred to "the mistake made by the Congress in refusing to form coalition ministries" and characterised the Congress resolution of August 1942 as "a great blunder." He added: But if the Congress are to be blamed for sins of omission and commission the Government of India and the British Government are also open to legitimate criticism. Instead of declaring a complete change of policy at the commencement of the war by filling the Governor-General's Executive Council with representative Indians, they were content with suggesting advisory committees forgetting that no self-respecting Indian looked or can look upon these as substitutes for the possession of executive power. Further, no representative Conference of Indian leaders was summoned by the then Viceroy either in 1939 or at any time subsequently to discuss not only the political situation but the institution of measures for the protection of India and for ascertaining the best method of helping the Allied cause. Most thinking people realised on the outbreak of war that it would be long and bitter and not a few anticipated the entry of the Japanese sooner or later on the side of Germany. If Sir *Stafford Cripps* had come to India with his proposals in 1939 or early in 1940 instead of 1942, I venture to state that there would have been an excellent prospect of their general acceptance and that India would have been a happier country to-day. There had been then no cry of Pakistan as we know it in its present form and no threat of mass civil disobedience. Under present conditions, however, we are face to face with a divided India, with thousands of our fellow countrymen, including many prominent and popular leaders in prison, the retention by European officials of the key departments of Finance, Defence and Home in the Government of India, a complete absence of popular government in large portions of India, swollen prices, general distress and, last but not least, famine in large and densely populated areas. The suggestions of well-known Indian leaders and of Non-Party Conferences composed of moderate men sincerely anxious to bring about

peace between the Government and the people have been brushed aside without assigning any reasons. Attempts to approach Mahatma Gandhi in order to ascertain his views and those of the Congress Working Committee in regard to the present political situation have been consistently refused on the plea that it was essential for Congress leaders first to denounce openly what they had previously commended. It is of little use, however, to dwell at length on past mistakes on this side or the other. A more profitable though a much more difficult task is to decide what practical steps can be taken for a solution of the present deplorable situation.

#### THE COMMUNAL ISSUE

The chief problem that faces India at the present time—and it is most complicated—is the communal issue, that is to say, the tension between Hindus and Muslims or, to put it into more concrete language, between the Congress on the one side and the Muslim League on the other. Government in India have failed to solve it. In fact, their past actions and attitude have aggravated separatist tendencies. By us also opportunities alas! have been lost more than once. If only in years gone by, when a scheme for a federated India was on the anvil and later approved by the British Parliament in the Government of India Act, 1935, the majority community had agreed to the grant of large residuary powers to the provinces, or if the Cripps proposals in spite of certain defects had been accepted, it is probable that the present communal impasse would not have arisen or would at least have been less tense. Now the question before us is whether the India of the future shall be undivided or partitioned. As a Liberal and an Indian Christian—and in either capacity a representative of minority interests—I have never concealed my personal view in favour of a unitary Government in this sub-continent and I believe that outside the Muslim League this opinion is shared by all minorities such as the Scheduled Castes, Indian Christians, Sikhs and Parsis. We would greatly prefer that a self-governing India should at least start under one Central Government—even though with provinces autonomous save for a few subjects such as Defence and Foreign Affairs—and be divided only if the experience of 15 or 20 years shows that partition is essential. I believe that I am right in stating that in a Soviet Russia, while the right of the various composing nations to freedom or self-determination is recognised, including the right to secede and form independent States, no nation in spite of religious and linguistic differences has so far parted from the Central Government. The existence of two separate Indias with their own armies, tariffs and foreign relations may well be conducive more to mutual strife than harmony especially when as has often happened in Europe, the minority in one area is likely to appeal from time to time to the majority in the contiguous zone. Strangely enough, the Muslim League, while regarding statutory guarantees at the Centre as nugatory for the purpose of protecting Muslim minorities, stresses its desire to give the same guarantees to minorities in Pakistan. Then, too, it must not be forgotten that, whereas Muslims in the proposed Hindu India will be a small minority, in Pakistan the Hindus of Bengal and the Hindus and Sikhs of the Punjab will form large and, may be difficult minorities. It is one thing, however, for us to proclaim the opinion of the majority and quite another to win the acceptance of those who are opposed to it especially when the opposition consists of large and influential Muslim minority claiming millions of adherents. And if it is not possible to secure voluntary acceptance what is to be done? If as some say physical force is the only remedy, it is indeed a truly terrifying prospect.

The solution of the problem of minorities in India is more complicated than in other countries because of the large number of Muslims both relative and absolute. To deny the influence of the Muslim League may sound well on a public platform but it is not realistic. There is no easy solution. That is why I deliberately refrain from suggesting in any scheme. There are many in the field, some of them admirable on paper, but none has so far been acceptable to both the Congress and the Muslim League. There are those who tell us that the departure of the British from India will lead to an early removal of communal difficulties. It passes my comprehension however, why the same persons do not tell us now what the solution will be. I repeat that the problem of minorities is extremely difficult and cannot be decided by easy generalisations. I have no doubt in my mind that it was the main cause of the Great War of 1914 and the World War of 1939, and shall content myself with citing only the instances of Alsace-Lorraine, Czecho-Slovakia, the Balkan States, Poland and Danzig. The Treaty of Versailles and the Minorities Guarantee Treaties signed

by many powers twenty years ago and more did not remove it. And this complex problem is not confined to Europe. It exists within the British Commonwealth, for example, in South Africa and Ireland and as recent experience shows in Burma and Ceylon. It is a world problem and will be one of the crucial difficulties calling for solution at the next Peace Conference.

#### PAKISTAN QUESTION MUST BE POSTPONED

In these circumstances my own view is that no final decision can or should reasonably be expected in the midst of a world catastrophe on the question of Pakistan. No one can predict with any confidence what will be the precise nature of the reconstructed world. For instance, will nations in future stand alone or in federated groups? If the latter, what will be rights and powers of such groups and nationalities? These are vital questions which will have to be dealt with and decided by a World Conference on which we must insist that India should be represented. It may well be that a solution of the problem in Europe may be of help to us in India. I would appeal, therefore, as I did last March and in previous recent years, to Hindus, Muslims and others to postpone any final judgment on the one side or the other till peace has been restored. One thing at any rate is certain. It is that talks of fighting for or against Pakistan or of civil war are highly injurious. Do such speakers realise the implications of what they say? How, for instance, and where, will the fight commence and with what weapons? The only fighting that one can visualize is communal rioting on a large scale with a resulting intensification of ill-feeling. If the recent experience of internal turmoil in Spain has any lesson for the world it is that bloodshed and destruction in a civil war do not lead to a permanent solution of a country's difficulties.

#### BRITAIN'S ATTITUDE

As regards what should be done in the immediate future it seems to me that either we must acquiesce in the continuance of the present situation at any rate till the war is over or make an effective attempt to reach at last a temporary solution. The first alternative is no doubt that which commends itself to the Cabinet in England and the Government of India as a whole. It has the merit of shelving the difficulty and of imposing an outward calm. I am of opinion however, that it cannot commend itself to right-thinking persons. It is a case of crying peace where there is no peace. No Indian, whatever his party or creed, is satisfied with the existing form of Government either at the Centre or in many provinces. Its continuance will only lead to increased underground discontent and further deplorable tension between the British and Indian races at the end of the war. Large sections of opinion in the U. S. A. as well as in Great Britain sympathise with us on this point. The present policy of the British Government of insistence on an agreed solution by Indians, theoretically justifiable though it may appear, is as ungracious as it is undignified. No ruling power can legitimately fold its hands and stand aloof in questions of vital importance whether in India or elsewhere. Great Britain did not adopt this attitude in dealing with the problem of self-Government in Canada, South Africa or Ireland. They and we must try again and yet again until a solution is reached.

#### CONTACT WITH LEADERS MUST BE PERMITTED

As regards the second alternative it seems to me that the first thing is for the Viceroy and the Government of India to allow an approach to be made to *Mahatma Gandhi* as soon as possible. We Liberals do not share all the political and economic views of the Mahatma and we have often deplored some of his actions, but there is no doubt that he is the leading personality in the largest political party in India and enjoys very great influence and prestige among the Indian masses, while his name is known to millions in Europe, America and Africa. No really satisfactory solution, therefore, even temporary, can be secured without his acquiescence, if not support. The late Viceroy and his Government made, I venture to think, a great mistake in not allowing a responsible Indian leader, such as Mr. *Rajagopalachariar* or the American statesman, Mr. *Phillips*, to approach Mahatma Gandhi. India would not have been reduced to chaos if these and other responsible persons had questioned Mr. Gandhi on his views on the existing political impasse and on the means for ending it. If he had asked and still asks, as is probable that the opinion of members of the Congress Working Committee should be ascertained, I would impose no conditions on their meeting and deliberations. Knowing Mr. Gandhi's consistently strong views on non-violence, we cannot expect him or them to admit responsibility for the deplorable and wicked acts of sabotage

which took place in August and subsequent months last year or even to cancel their resolution of August, 1942. Self-respecting and patriotic men, who have sacrificed much cannot reasonably be expected to denounce their past. All that is necessary is for the Congress to treat that resolution as a dead letter. I believe that this will be done. For this purpose I am of opinion that the Congress leaders should be released unconditionally. Many of the rank and file, including scores of members of legislatures, are now out of jail and the number of releases is increasing and will, I hope, increase. It is unjustifiable to detain men and women in jail without trial and without their being supplied even with the reasons for their detention. Further, I do not believe for a moment that the Congress leaders would advocate peace with Imperialistic Japan or renounce their anti-Fascist attitude.

#### CONFERENCE OF ALL PARTIES

The next step would be a conference between them and the leaders of the Muslim League and representatives of other important minorities and interest with the immediate object of forming composite National Government at the Centre and in the Provinces. In 1941 I did what I could through personal interviews to persuade Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah to meet each other but failed. Others have similarly failed. In this connection I wish to say that no party has been more pressing in its desire to see a settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League than the Indian Communists. In spite of our holding views different from theirs in certain important matters all honour is due to them for they have tried to do. For several years I have openly and privately pleaded that the Viceroy should hold a conference of leading representatives of different parties and let India know the result of their deliberation. It is only at such a conference, for instance, that the full implications of a scheme such as Pakistan can be adequately discussed. At present we are in the dark as to details. These, no doubt, are governed by principles but the latter not infrequently have to be modified after a discussion of details. Anyhow, it is at least possible that a temporary solution would be reached at such a conference and National Governments be formed throughout India composed of representative persons. If, however, the conference is not successful the peaceful and other effective method of arbitration should be tried. If even that failed, India and the world outside would at least know where the blame lay. For my own part, as I said in December, 1940, and March, 1943, at All-Indian Christian Conferences and also at the Lucknow Provincial Non-Party Conference in December, 1941, "I would not mind if all the members of the Governor General's Council were Hindus or Muslims. I would not object if they were all members of the Congress or the Muslim League because I feel that in nine out of ten questions no friction or difference on communal grounds can possibly arise."

#### INDIAN STATES

Liberals have consistently urged reforms and political progress in the Indian States as well as in British India. It is obviously impossible for contiguous territories not to be affected by each other's conditions. In such cases there is always mutual interaction. If self-government, for instance, has been declared to be the goal in the near future of Indians in British India, it is inconceivable that their brethren in Indian States, with whom they are connected by ties of language, culture, customs and religion should not have similar aspirations. States in India are at present admittedly in different stages of political and educational evolution, but in all it should be the declared policy of their Rulers to prepare their people as rapidly as possible for full responsible government.

### Proceedings and Resolutions

#### Second Day—Bombay—30th. December 1943

##### Need for Ending Deadlock

At the session of the National Liberal Federation to-day, the President, Sir Maharaj Singh himself moved a resolution condoling the deaths of Messrs. N. C. Ray, one of the General Secretaries of the Federation, Sorab Vadia and C. L. Narayana Sastri during the past year. The resolution was adopted.

Mr. E. Vinayaka Rao of Madras moved the following resolution recording deep satisfaction at the success of the Allied arms on all fronts.

"The National Liberal Federation of India records its deep satisfaction at the success of the Allied arms on all fronts. In particular it views with pride the

splendid part played by Indian soldiers in Africa, Italy and other theatres of war.

"The Federation appeals to the people of India to associate themselves with the war effort till victory is attained. At the same time it desires to impress on the Central and Provincial Governments the absolute necessity for creating the political and psychological conditions essential to enable Indians to consider the war as their own and to exert their maximum effort with a view to ensure the speedy victory of the Allies."

Mr. *Vinayaka Rao* declared India had a legitimate cause to feel proud of it by virtue of her contribution to that success. The speaker regretted that Mr. *Churchill* in his statement on the North Africa victory had failed to mention India, while referring to the contribution of the Dominions to the victory. Even Mr. *Amery*, the custodian of Indian affairs in Parliament, could not find time to mention her part in the victory, and it had been left to the Commander-in-Chief of India to acknowledge this part in the North African victory.

Mr. *Vinayaka Rao* declared this war was India's as Allied victory in this war would mean consummation of India's political aspirations. It was the duty of the Government at the Centre as well as the Provincial Governments to make the people of India feel that this war was their own. It was regrettable that the ratio of Indian officers in the Indian Army was so small as compared with British officers. It was essential that Indians fighting at the front should feel that they were fighting their own war.

Looking ahead to the peace at the end of the war, the speaker hoped that, as the Allies dictated terms to Germany and Japan, they would not also dictate terms to India's representatives but would listen to them.

Mr. *V. K. Shastri* of Bombay seconded the resolution and Mr. *Shapurji Gadar* supported it and the resolution was passed unanimously.

#### The Political Situation

The Rt. Hon. *V. S. Srinivasa Sastri* next moved the resolution on the political situation in the country. The following is the text of the resolution :—

"The National Liberal Federation considers that the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee of August, 1942, sanctioning mass civil disobedience was wrong and ill-conceived, and it deplores and condemns the sabotage and violence which took place last year. At the same time, it disapproves the policy of the Government of India in continuing to detain in prison without trial well known and popular Indian leaders and in refusing to allow any approach to be made to Mr. *Gandhi* and other Congress leaders since their incarceration. In view of the present political and war situation and the fact that the Congress is the largest political party in India, and, last but not least in the hope and belief that the Congress leaders will accept the wishes of millions in this country and agree to treat the resolution of August 1942 as a dead letter, the Federation requests the Government of India to release these persons unconditionally.

"It appeals to these leaders when released, as well as to the leaders of the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha and other important political parties and interests, to convene a conference and to co-operate in forming National Composite Governments at the centre and in the provinces, that at the centre to be treated by the British Government on the same footing as the Governments of the Dominions. Such co operation should be given without prejudice to the different viewpoints of the various political parties regarding the future constitution of India and with the earnest desire to leave any important controversial matters for decision after the war. The Federation is convinced that composite National Governments will be of great help in clearing misunderstandings between the various parties and between them and the Government, in increasing mutual confidence and in bringing about conditions which will facilitate the inauguration of a satisfactory and workable constitution for India when peace has been restored. In this connection, this Federation strongly stresses the continuing obligation of the British Government and the Government of India to take early steps to further the aspirations of the people and to establish National Governments at the centre and in the provinces notwithstanding the existence of domestic difficulties."

Mr. *Sastri* declared that, in the first place, the Liberal Federation desired that the Congress leaders should be released without any condition and then they should agree to treat the August Resolution of last year as a dead letter. He felt that this was not a very extreme

this opportunity to let the resolution rest. In this request of the Liberal Federation, millions of the people of India would join with them. He expressed the view that the opinion of the country as a whole was not in favour of the August Resolution or what followed it by way of disturbances in the country. In fact, great bodies of Indians stood aloof from the resolution and all that it implied. Further so far as the effect of the resolution was concerned, the war effort had not suffered; the Government only suffered a slight embarrassment, if anything. This clearly showed that the masses of India did not agree with the resolution and many of them would not be sorry if it were withdrawn.

When the leaders were released, Mr. Sastri said the next step to take would be, that they, in conjunction with the Muslim League, the Mahasabha and other parties, would convene a Conference. The representatives should sit together and pool their wisdom and evolve plans for the immediate future. These deliberations should bring about what they could call a National and Composite Government both at the Centre and in the Provinces.

Explaining what he meant by composite Government, Mr. Sastri said that, when the Provincial Governments were constituted in the immediate future, they should not be wholly composed of representatives of the majority party in power. If, for instance, the Congress party was in the majority in any province, the Cabinet there would, of course, contain a majority of Congressmen but what he suggested was that it should also contain representatives of important minorities. In other words, he recommended a coalition government in the province. Of course when the provinces had such Governments in working, it would follow that such governments could not function unless there was a similar government at the Centre. Mr. Sastri said that this was a consummation which was to be devoutly wished for and government should cordially welcome such an understanding. For, it was the paramount interest of the government that in this country conditions should be established which would ensure the final victory in this war on the side of the Allies. Referring to the present political impasse, Mr. Sastri said that the greatest complaint to-day was that the deadlock politically and otherwise seemed not to be resolvable, for the government put the responsibility for taking the initiative on the people. Government spokesmen had continually repeated that the deadlock was the result of discord and disagreements among the warring parties in the country, and therefore the government should do nothing but watch and wait until the leaders composed their quarrels and became friends and co-operated in establishing conditions favourable to the establishment of a common government. Continuing, Mr. Sastri said: "I do not know how a government ruling over 400 million people armed to the teeth, with all arms of force and violence that could be imagined, how a government which had taken to itself all the powers possible and conceivable and rule with absolute sway, with no check whatever to its authority, how a Government established in that supreme and unassailable position, can tell the world and hope to be believed that it is not their function at all to interfere and that their duty is to watch benevolently, perhaps complacently, perhaps gleefully while the leaders are unable to come to a mutual understanding. A government of that kind repeating this absurd proposition day after day, seems to be condemning itself out of its own lips and I should be pitying the world if the world believes it. I am sure that the sensible part of the world, whether this country or outside, does not believe it."

He declared that it was the business of the government to bring the people together, to put themselves in the confidence of all and so arrange that a united constitution was possible not only for the period of the war, but for the period succeeding the war. "We do not believe the government when they say that unity of the country is not possible, because there are disturbances and discords in the country. These disturbances and discords must be effaced and government must take its due share in this pacification to bring the parties together and go ahead, as they have done previously so many times before, in the shaping of the future Constitution of India."

Mr. Sastri insisted that the Central Government, when formed, should be placed on a footing of absolute equality with other Dominions and Britain herself, in the matter of operations in this country. The Central Government should be in the same position as the South African Government, the New Zealand and the Australian Governments. "I am sure that the sensible part of the world would put us in an in-

## CONSTITUTION FOR INDIA

Mr. Sastri conceded that any permanent constitution for India would have to be deferred till the end of the war when the parties could meet and discuss their problems and evolve a common acceptable constitution in a more harmonious atmosphere. He also said that such questions of the order of importance as Pakistan should be deferred till the end of the war. In this connection, he recalled the resolution which the Liberal Federation had adopted at the last session at Madras, expressing themselves categorically against the division of the country into Pakistan and Hindustan. The Liberals still stood by that resolution and they still maintained that position. But that question and other questions of like magnitude could be safely postponed till the end of the war when the major and minor parties could meet in a peaceful atmosphere and settle their problems. Mr. Sastri, concluding, said that their resolution was a very moderate demand which no one could possibly take exception to and he commended the resolution for their acceptance.

The hon. Sir B. P. Singh Roy, seconding the resolution, declared that the National Liberal Federation had all along dissociated itself from direct action as launched by the Congress. He hoped that the time was not far distant when even the Congress would give up the programme of direct action and revert back to the policy of liberalism, namely, working the constitution to the best advantage of the people and further advancing the political rights of the people by conventions. He was sure that Mahatma Gandhi would not hesitate to advise the Congress to treat the August resolution as a dead letter.

Proceeding, Sir Bejoy Prasad urged the necessity for the release of the Congress leaders and asserted that the Government of India was equally responsible for the deadlock and hence they should also act quickly to bring about unity. He also stressed the need for setting up composite Governments in the various provinces.

Prof. Aha Jani, supporting the resolution, deplored that there was at the present time a virtual dissociation of the people from the administration of the country. This was the time and immediately after the war, that long range policies for the welfare of not only this country but almost all countries were to be formulated and it was a tragedy that there was a political deadlock in India. He suggested the withdrawal of the August resolution by Mahatma Gandhi, and the release of Congress leaders and that the majority party in the country should undertake the formation of composite cabinets in all the provinces. Politics, he said, was after all a game and if one move failed, Congress leaders should not hesitate to change their course. It might not be possible for smaller parties and leaders to retrace their steps, but in the case of Mahatma Gandhi, there could be no difficulty in his withdrawing the resolution.

The motion was passed unanimously.

## India's Representation on Peace Conference

Mr. T. R. Venkatarma Sastri moved the following resolution :—

"The National Liberal Federation considers that India should be represented at the peace Conference by duly accredited Indians on the same basis as other Dominions and be assigned a place worthy of her culture and her championship of the great cause of universal peace. At such a conference, prominence should be given by the representatives of India to the abolition of the colour bar and the establishment of full political and economic equality between the peoples of the East and the West."

Mr. Sastri said that, on previous occasions, India had been represented by persons appointed by the Government of India for assisting the Secretary of State. In practice, it was the Secretary of State, who was India's spokesman. What the Federation now urged was that India should have the peoples' representatives appointed by a national government.

Sardar Sodhbans, supporting the resolution, said that, if the Atlantic Charter was applicable to India, as it was claimed, then surely Britain had no right to appoint the representatives for India. Dr. P. N. Daruwala supported the motion which was passed.

## The Bengal Famine

The hon. Pandit Hirdayanath Kunzru next moved the following resolution :

"The National Liberal Federation of India shares the universal feeling of horror at the tragedy that has overwhelmed Bengal and has resulted in general misery and starvation in that important province and deaths on a scale hitherto unprecedented in the recent history of famines in India. It sympathises deeply with the people of Bengal and Orissa in their sufferings. The Federation is strongly

of opinion that both the Central and Provincial Governments as well as His Majesty's Government are largely responsible for the serious maladministration which has led to the calamity by lack of provision and effective planning and the shortage of food which should have been foreseen and prevented. The Federation is also deeply distressed at the fact that disease has followed famine and is exacting an even heavier toll of life than starvation. It draws attention to the significant fact that in India alone of all countries at present within the British Commonwealth has such a tragedy taken place.

"The Federation considers that in order to ascertain the causes of the famine, to apportion responsibility and to prevent the recurrence of a similar calamity, a commission of inquiry should be appointed by the Government comprising independent responsible persons. It is further of the opinion that immediate measures should be taken to rehabilitate the stricken population and to prevent the spread of disease."

In the course of his speech Pandit Kunzru charged the Provincial, Central and His Majesty's Governments with the responsibility for the famine. He was of the opinion that, if proper remedial steps had been taken long before, the magnitude of the tragedy would have been far less than what it had proved. Recalling his tour of the distressed areas in Bengal, Pandit Kunzru gave a graphic account of the plight of the poor people in Bengal.

"A government which has completely failed to discharge its elementary duties" added Pandit Kunzru, "still claims to be the guardian of the masses and keeps all powers in its hands." He attacked the Provincial and Central Governments on their failure to keep the public for a long time informed of the reality of the Bengal situation. The result was that the public did not know of the coming calamity till October of this year. Millions of people were living so close to or living on the verge of starvation. It was a major disaster, and there was a great social task confronting them. The general standard of living of the people had to be raised and he was sure only a national Government could go ahead with plans to achieve appreciable results, within this generation. He was glad that H. E. the Viceroy was alive to the seriousness of the present situation but he ventured to suggest that only a national government could really tackle the problem. Concluding, Pandit Kunzru said that a subject India and a hungry India in conjunction with other nations in similar position, would always be a threat to world peace.

The resolution was supported by Mr. B. N. Gokhale and Dr. R. B. Khambatta and was carried.

#### Food Situation in India

Prof. M. D. Altekar moved the following resolution:

"The National Liberal Federation of India regrets that the Government of India failed to realise in time the gravity of the food situation throughout the country or to check the unprecedented rise to the prices of the necessaries of life resulting in hardship and suffering among all classes of the population. It is strongly of opinion that His Majesty's Government should arrange for the import of foodstuffs into India as recommended by the Foodgrains Policy Committee until the shortage has been removed and prices have sufficiently fallen.

"The Federation considers that the present food situation in India, as well as the rapid growth in population, necessitates the early introduction of improved methods of agriculture, the bringing of cultivable land into cultivation and the raising of the low standards of living among the masses. The Federation regrets that when belated steps were taken by the Government of India to introduce rationing and to encourage a proper distribution of food, these attempts were hampered by the attitude adopted by some Provincial Governments. It urges the Government of India to enforce a policy of rationing in large towns with special attention to the provision of milk and milk products for mothers and children and to insist on an equitable distribution of food in the best interests of the masses. In this connection, the Federation views with concern the inadequate supply throughout the country not only of milk but also of other protective food such as eggs, fish and vegetables. In the opinion of the Federation, the food problem in India must be tackled at least in urban areas in its entirety as in England and elsewhere."

Criticising the food policy of the Government, Prof. M. D. Altekar said that the Government's policy was doing them greater harm than all the agitations of the Congress. There was deep dissatisfaction and Government must take firm and adequate measures to feed the population and keep them content.

Mr. G. C. Bhate and Mr. Gope Gurubux supported the resolution which was carried unanimously.

**Mr. Casey's Appointment**

*Sir Raghunath Paranjpye* moved the following resolution :

"The National Liberal Federation of India in opposed on principle to the appointment to posts in India of persons, however eminent they may be who are nationals of Dominions which do not place Indians and Europeans on a equal civic footing and for this reason disapproves the appointment of the Rt. Hon. Richard Casey as Governor of Bengal."

Speaking on the resolution, *Sir Raghunath Paranjpye* said that "this appointment is an insult to the self-respect of Indians. Every patriotic Indian should emphatically protest against it." He characterised it as an "injudicious appointment" and pointed out, "in none of the Dominions, Indians can occupy positions in government. And this comes at a time when the Indian Legislature has just passed a piece of legislation taking counter-measures against those Dominions that discriminate against Indian nationals". *Sir Raghunath* said in the Dominions before an incumbent was selected for a Governorship, the government of the province was consulted. The British Government should have seen to it that Indian opinion was not flouted in this matter.

*Sir Vittal Chandavarkar*, seconding the resolution asked : "Would Australia have accepted an Indian, however eminent and capable, say, the Rt. Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri—as the Governor-General of Australia?" "No", continued *Sir Vittal*, "the Australians would have opposed it not on merits, but on racial grounds". *Sir Vittal* referred to Mr. Casey's interview published in the press and characterised it as "the thin end of the wedge" as Mr. Casey seemed to be looking forward to more such appointments of Australians.

**"AN INSULT AND HUMILIATION TO INDIA"**

*Sir Vittal* continued, "It is true that Australia has sent food to India, but then India has sent cloth to Australia. It is entirely a business transaction". *Sir V. N. Chandavarkar* observed that two recent appointments made by the British Government were a departure from established practice. One was the appointment of a serving General to the Viceroyalty of India, whereas in the past it was the practice to appoint only outstanding men in Britain's public life to that high post. The second was the appointment of an Australian to the Governorship of Bengal. "This appointment is an insult and humiliation to India at a time when she is supposed to be on the threshold of Dominion Status".

The resolution was passed unanimously. The House then adjourned.

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India and certain Provincial Governments for the purpose, emphasised that the main functions of such Committees would be to lay the foundations of a well-planned economy which would increase the cultivation of productive crops, improve agricultural methods, expand rural reconstruction and liquidate illiteracy. Among other essential requirements, the resolution continued, are the improvement and extension of communications and works of irrigation, the creation of an Indian mercantile marine, increased medical aid, the establishment of better health conditions, the provision of social services such as insurance against sickness and unemployment, and a general improvement in the standard of living.

The resolution further urged the Government to have a settled policy to assist in the establishment of new industries and in the development of the natural resources of the country; and pointed out the necessity, after the war, of the protection of nascent industries against foreign competition.

The Federation gave its general support to the scheme adumbrated by the Educational Adviser to the Government of India for a national system, and to the Committee appointed to frame proposals for the improvement of health conditions in India, but trusted that a reasonable time limit will be prescribed for the execution of their recommendations and that the very large sums of money would be forthcoming.

*Sir Vittal Chandvarkar*, moving the resolution, pointed out that India had no real control over her fiscal policy. If the Government wanted satisfactory work to be done in the direction, they should appoint a whole-time member with a separate independent department for post-war reconstruction.

*Sir Vittal* said that since the resignation of *Mr. Aney*, *Mr. N. R. Sirkar* and *Sir Homi Mody* from the Viceroy's Executive Council, all sense of joint responsibility had disappeared from that body, and its members at present were nothing more than heads of departments.

*Rao Bahadur Sahasrabudhe*, seconding the resolution, stressed the requirements of the rural areas and the villages. The resolution was passed.

#### Responsible Govt. in Indian States

Resolutions were also passed calling on the rulers of Indian States to declare as their policy the preparation of their people for full responsible Government, deploring the abolition of paid A. R. P. personnel and urging the appointment of an Indian Defence Member and the Indianisation of all grades of the Army, Navy and the Air Force.

The resolution on the States urged that, in view of the close ties existing between the people of Indian States and the people of British India and the

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Dr. G. S. Mahajani, speaking from experience as a member of the Interview Board for Recruitment to the Defence Forces, said that only about twenty-five per cent of the candidates who appeared before the Board were selected. He was convinced that this large amount of rejection was due not to any inferiority of our young men but to the fact that a right type of material was not forthcoming for recruitment. This hesitation on the part of the right type of young men to join the army was due partially to the uncertainty about their future after the war and partly to the creed of non-violence as preached by some. He asked the Government to give proper assurances to the young men of the country that they would be absorbed in other fields of employment and also by the creation of a standing army after the war.

All the three resolutions were passed unanimously.

After the election of new office-bearers for the coming year, the Federation accepted the invitation of *Sardar Sodhbans* to hold the next session of the Federation in Lahore.

## The A. I. News-Paper Editors' Conference

Standing Committee—Bombay—14th. & 15th. July 1943

### Growing Rigours of Censorship

Addressing the members of the Standing Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference, held on Bombay on the 14th. July 1943, Sir *Sultan Ahmed*, Information Member, stated that he wished to see this country maintain a free Press even in war time. He added that while he would be a watchful advocate of its privileges, he expected the Editors to be equally watchful in discharging their duties.

Mr. K. Srinivasan, President of the Conference, replying, said that he could not endorse the claim advanced by Sir *Sultan Ahmed* that the Press in India was as free from restrictions as the Press of any country could be in times of war. He criticised the censorship methods followed in India and said that the picture of the existence of a free Press in India had been a long-standing plank in the propaganda campaign of the officials and reached its climax when a party of Turkish journalists, after a conducted tour began to write articles telling the world of the paradise Indians lived in. The model which Indian Editors set before themselves was not, he said, the Turkish Press, but the British and American Press.

### Sir Sultan Ahmed's Address

Addressing the session, Sir *Sultan Ahmed* said :

Let me first say how gladly I accepted your invitation to attend this meeting of the All-India Newspapers Editors' Conference and how much I value this opportunity of meeting you all. When I met you, gentlemen of the Press, in Delhi early in May, just after I had taken over charge of the Department of Information and Broadcasting, I asked for your co-operation and goodwill. I take the fact that you have invited me here to-day as a sign on your part that your co-operation and goodwill is extended to me. I also said, at the same time, that you could rely on having from me every help that I could render you in the discharge of your legitimate functions. I am here to-day to show that on my part I am ready to be as good as my word.

### PROPOSAL FOR A PUBLICITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

You will first of all want to hear what I have been able to do so far to implement my undertaking to bring the Press in India into closer touch with the work of my Department. First, I am setting up a Publicity Advisory Committee, which will meet every six months to discuss generally matters affecting the work of the Department. Its nucleus is the members of the Standing Committee of the Central Legislature for the Department, and I am inviting other gentlemen to join us, so as to secure a body as representative as possible of both British India and the Indian States.

I am hoping also to get the help of prominent Editors and have issued invitations to your Chairman and some other editors and hope also to secure the services of two representatives of the Indian language press. I am also forming a

committee to be known as the Press Correspondents' Advisory Committee, which will, I hope, provide a forum in which matters, within the responsibility of my Department, which affect correspondents in their daily work, can be discussed. This Committee will meet once a month.

Most of my time since I took over charge of the Department has been spent in making myself acquainted with what is being done in it. My investigations have convinced me of one thing : whatever our shortcomings may be—and there are, no doubt, plenty of them.—there is nothing radically wrong either with the work of the Department as a whole or with the spirit which animates its officers. The thing which has struck me most is the extraordinary variety of the activities of the Department in its various branches. The more I study these activities the more I am surprised, not that mistakes have been made, but that they have not been far more frequent : not that I receive criticism, and I have received plenty, but that the criticisms have not been more numerous and more serious. During the past years, it has been the policy of the Department never to turn down a suggestion for a new activity and never to refuse to undertake a job which it has been asked to do. I do not think that the Department of Information and Broadcasting should follow any other policy, the result, in our case, has been that the volume and complexity of the work has expanded until a state has been reached when there are no longer a sufficient number of hours in the day for the superior staff of the Department to supervise, direct and co-ordinate the existing work and, at the same time, to think and plan for the future. I have found, therefore, that my first business was to set about changing this and in my proposals I have the wholehearted support of the officers in the Department. I need not trouble you with the details of what we propose, but the general result of the reorganisation which is now in progress will be to relieve my senior officers, whose main business should be planning and co-ordination, of most of the routine business of administration, finance, staff and the rest. As soon as these arrangements are completed or earlier, if possible, I propose to undertake a survey of the work and organisation of each branch of the Department and to satisfy myself whether any changes are necessary in order to enable the work to be carried out efficiently and speedily.

Further details of changes (improvements, I hope), will no doubt be in due course extracted from us by your enterprising correspondents. You would not, I know, wish me to anticipate their discoveries.

#### AIM OF GOVT. PROPAGANDA

Now I should like to say a few words about Propaganda. Propaganda is a subject on which there are any number of opinions, but few experts—and even those experts are not necessarily known to the general public. They are not born, they are made. They are made by experience and experiment, and experience and experiment determine whether they are fit for their jobs. Dr. Goebbels has many advantages in a country where opinion is as strictly controlled as tyranny can effect, and where the headman's axe awaits those who are detected in the crime of listening-in to the outside world. But Dr. Goebbels has no monopoly of brains. We can beat him in this country. In many respects we have already checked, countered and foiled him and his fellows. If we are as determined on truth and freedom as he is on untruths and domination, we have already the material for beating him utterly. But if we adopt his mental attitude we shall fail, and we shall deserve to fail.

If there are many opinions on propaganda, it follows that any Government body responsible for propaganda becomes the target for many sorts of criticism. I welcome it. A not inconsiderable part of our work is concerned with the assessment and analysis of public reactions, and criticism should be helpful and not merely the result of chagrin, if some individual's views fail to find expression in our propaganda. I should like to point out two cardinal errors into which critics often unthinkingly fall. The first and, perhaps, the commonest error lies in supposing that because the methods and operation of propaganda may not be generally discernible, propaganda is not being carried on. When I hear people say, as I sometimes do, that we are doing no propaganda, I take that as an eloquent tribute to the propaganda that we are doing, for it means that indirect methods are effective. Of all departments of Government, almost the only one that does not seek publicity for itself is the department which is concerned with publicity. Indeed, the elements of the Department of Information and Broadcasting had been working since the beginning of the war two years before the Department was formed—working through the most difficult years that propaganda has been called upon to

face, quietly and without fuss and almost entirely without money. The foundations that were laid then were good foundations, and they included the devising of methods of counter-propaganda, in which it would be proved that India gave the lead to other countries. Even quite recently reports on certain of our methods have been made to Washington to serve as models for the tackling of similar problems. But these are not things that we publish in the newspapers and proclaim from the housetops. If we fell into that temptation our reputation might be temporarily enhanced but our work would be permanently impaired.

The second error is concerned with misapprehensions as to the purpose of propaganda. To compare the propaganda being done in this country with that reaching India from abroad *via* the enemy radio is interesting, but may be misleading: It is like comparing the performance of a fighter aircraft with that of a bomber. In defending ourselves, we do not necessarily use the same methods as the attacker. And there is a clear distinction—one of the few really clear distinctions in this complicated field—between the aggressive propaganda which we address to the enemy himself wherever we can get at him, and the propaganda, mis-called defensive, with which we seek to maintain the morale of our own people through good times and bad. To make this distinction and also to take into account, as we have to, the many differences of interests and grades of receptiveness in this great country of ours does not mean that we intend to follow, or have ever followed the totalitarian theories of our enemies: it does not mean that we intend to imitate, or have ever imitated, their practice of pursuing mutually contradictory lines for different audiences, of saying anything—false, half-true, or even occasionally true—for the sake of the immediate effect. These methods are not only immoral. They are, in the long run, ineffective—as we see now when so many of the enemy's lies are recoiling on his own head, with some assistance from ourselves. Propaganda should never have recourse to distortions of the truth. That was one of the three primary principles of those British propagandists who, at Crewe House in the last war, began the work whose effectiveness the Germans themselves have admitted. It is one of our principles also. We can do no less having in mind the things for which we are fighting.

The technical problems of getting the truth home to 390 million people are very much greater than the technical problems of inventing and disseminating appropriate falsehoods. The domestic propaganda of the Germans and the Japanese has—in theory at any rate—closed fields of operation, vast areas in which no other word is permitted to be spoken. In India we are in open competition with the enemy to whose broadcasts the private citizen is free to listen—and must remain so. We are in with the rumour-monger, innocent or malicious. There is an independent cinema industry and a Press at any rate as free from restrictions as the Press of any country can be in time of war. My Department is concerned to protect these privileges even though, in the totalitarian view, they may sometimes be regarded as hampering the prosecution of the war. We are concerned to protect them just because we are interested in truth, because it is truth for which we are working and fighting.

#### "NO SLACKENING OF EFFORT"

In the present state of the war, when the tide is fast turning in our favour and the enemy no longer has victories of which to boast, it may be argued that truth is having an easier time. We cannot say how long this period will last, but what we can say is, that through all the dark days, and they have been many and terrible, our propaganda based itself upon the truth, however, unpalatable. The belief that this country can face the truth has been vindicated, and that belief will continue to condition our work. It stands to reason that military setbacks make that work more difficult and military successes make it easier. But even in times of success there lurks a danger of which we have to beware. The fear of defeat we have, in large measure, been able to overcome. But there is such a thing as the fear of victory—the slackening of effort on the crest of the hill because men suddenly wonder what lies over the horizon. Our theme, simply stated, are these: that this war must be won: that, given sustained and unflinching effort it will be won: and finally, and perhaps most important, that it is worth winning. That, gentlemen, is what I stand for, that victory over the Axis Powers must be won, that it will be won if we do not slacken and that it is worth winning for India. And it is here that I want your help, indeed, I claim a right to your help as good citizens. That this war is worth winning for India seems to me mere commonsense: for which of the blessings that we already have would survive an Axis victory, and which of the greater blessings which we confidently expect to have

would not be buried far beyond our reach by the defeat of the United Nations ? Consider President Roosevelt's Four Freedoms—freedom from want and from fear, freedom of religion and of speech. I grant these do not constitute any immediate political advance or a change in the present form of Government. But they are the bases of any form of stable government. Our endeavour should be to preserve the Four Freedoms in the strain and stress of total war. The only workable form of freedom is disinterested freedom which relates passion to necessity—the passion for freedom to the compelling necessity of the moment. If you and I achieve this, we shall have succeeded in harmonising the national urge with the swift-flowing current of the world outside. We are the link between the past and the future. Let us bequeath as richly as we have inherited. Let it not be said by posterity when they look back on these troublous times that we had to be drugged into unconsciousness in order that we might live to breathe the air of freedom.

#### ROLE OF THE PRESS

These are not platitudes, gentlemen, but hard facts, not always remembered even by the Fourth Estate. Your great concern is to preserve the Freedom of the Press. I believe you have it now : at least my own observation of what is written in the newspapers does not make me believe that whatever temporary handicaps the hard necessity of war may have imposed on your liberty, weigh very heavily on you. I am one with you in wishing to see this country maintain a free Press even in war-time. But if I am to help you, you must help me. Liberty for the Press, like liberty for anyone else, carries its duties as well as its privileges. I undertake to be a watchful advocate of your privileges. Do you be equally watchful in discharging your duties. ? If this is understood you and I will get on famously.

If I have reminded you of the duties of the Press, believe me I have done so in the friendliest spirit and it is mainly because I dread any slackening in the will to win. Here are hard times ahead of us before our country is finally freed from the threat of attack, before China is liberated, before the Japanese are driven back to their own island. In this task the soldiers of India will play a prominent part. We civilians can play our part also by strengthening the determination of the country, so that the spirit of the soldiers may remain indomitable and the courage of the people at home undiminished. Here is a great task awaiting you, when you could influence public opinion in a moment of grave crisis. Confidence and stead-fastness are with difficulty sustained on an empty stomach and there are many people in India to-day who cannot get enough of the necessities of life and have to pay a wicked price for what little they can get. I can assure you that my colleague in the Government of India fully realise the seriousness of the situation. We have not yet succeeded in solving the problem of maldistribution here, of real shortage there, of inflated prices everywhere. Mistakes have been made, as you, gentlemen, have not been slow to point out. It is your duty to criticise but have you no other duty ? I think you have. The most perfect arrangements by the most perfect of governments will not succeed in bringing sufficient food to everyone at a fair price as long as hoarding, profiteering and black markets are rampant. These practices are anti-social ; they amount to war by a section of the community on the community as a whole. In other countries they have been killed by public opinion, by co operation of the citizens and the Press with the Government. Here is your chance, as I have said, to show your patriotism and to demonstrate the influence of the Press. I believe that in a month you could, if every paper in India took up the crusade, make hoarders, profiteers and operators in the black market so detested by their fellows that they would cease their evil ways. My Department will do its best, but I believe that it is in the Press that the citizens of this country, who are in distress, can find their most effective champion. Will you cry out day by day against those practices until you have eradicated them ? Believe me, you will never have a better opportunity of earning the gratitude of your countrymen. I cannot think that you will refuse."

#### Mr. K. Srinivasan's Reply

Mr. K. Srinivasan, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the All-India News-paper Editors' Conference, replying to Sir Sultan Ahmed, said :—

"On behalf of the All-India News-paper Editors' Conference, let me extend a cordial welcome to you to this meeting of the Standing Committee of Editors and express our appreciation of your desire to speak to us on the work connected with the Department of Information and Broadcasting. This department, much to the regret of everybody, has been functioning, ever since the lamented death of Sir Akbar Hydari, without a head ; of course leaving out of account the few days Sir

*C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar* was in charge). I am recalling this fact just to remind ourselves that this portfolio, which is always looked upon as of vital importance in all well-ordered countries in times of war, came into being quite a long time after the war had begun, and further had the misfortune to be left to drift without the steering gear. The supervision and the working of the Department, as we all know, came to be placed under the all-pervading Home Department, the natural legatee of all residuary responsibility—with what result we are all familiar with.

#### STRINGENT CENSORSHIP OF A POLITICAL NATURE

"The function of the Department of Information and Broadcasting were rapidly converted into a propaganda machine for launching a campaign of misrepresentation of India's leaders in Allied countries and stringent censorship was imposed on all news of a political nature. The latest act in the series is the censorship imposed on the writings of *Mr. Louis Fischer*. May I ask *Sir Sultan Ahmed* what assurance he will give us so that we may pursue our work as editors undisturbed by such irritating orders and instructions? We hope *Sir Sultan* will not tell us that it is somebody else's responsibility and that he should not be expected to stand surety for another department. Different spheres of responsibility were created for efficiency: but it appears as though they are now intended to be put forward as excuses for a policy of do-nothing! A blatant instance, of recent occurrence, is the manner in which the Department of Information and Broadcasting dealt with the question of celebrating the Tunisian victory. Editors of newspapers were asked to issue a special supplement featuring the success of the Allies in Tunisia, and when we inquired of the Chief Press Adviser whether he would get the necessary permission from the allied department of Civil Supplies for the issue of necessary permits to use newsprint for that purpose, the request was turned down: but, what is more, we were asked to take a day off by declaring a holiday and thus utilise that day's paper supply for the supplement! You can not expect co-operation from us on these terms.

#### PROPOSAL FOR ADVISORY BOARD NOT ATTRACTIVE

"*Sir Sultan* has given us to-day a picture, in faint: one though it be, of what his plans are. I must be frank enough to say that the Publicity Advisory Board which is to be set up shortly does not appear to be attractive to us and I would request *Sir Sultan* to leave editors out of it altogether. The Standing Committee of the Editors meets at least four times a year, and I shall invite *Sir Sultan* to attend its sittings, and exchange views with us whenever he considers it necessary. As he knows, it is a responsible and representative body and I am sure he will find it of greater advantage to contact editors here, rather than the mixed gathering of all talents which is to meet once in six months.

"You have made a passing reference to what you have described as an independent cinema industry and a free Press in India. You have claimed that the Indian Press is as free from restrictions as the Press of any country can be in times of war. I am sure, you do not expect us here to endorse that view. This picture of the existence of a free press in India has been a long-standing plank in the propaganda campaign of the officials in India and reached its climax when a party of Turkish journalists, after a conducted tour in India, began to write a series of articles telling the world what a paradise we live in. It is necessary to remind these friends that the model we have set before us is not the Turkish Press, but the British and American Press who know of no restrictions except those imposed for security reasons.

"As regards the Cinema industry in India, from my knowledge of the conditions obtaining in the South, the film Industry is passing through a crisis owing to the unjustifiably drastic cut imposed on the length of the films, and it is to be hoped that the recent visit of *Mr. Thapar* to Madras will result in bringing relief to the film producers in South India.

#### GROWING RESTRICTIONS ON THE PRESS

"*Sir Sultan* has put in a strong plea for the dissemination of truth as the supreme aim for which Allies are fighting the war, and condemned with unmistakable emphasis the practice of pursuing contradictory lines for different audiences. I would suggest to him to study the records of his own department, particularly during the last twelve months and see for himself the protests which have been made by Special Correspondents in Delhi and the Editors' Standing Committee against the increasing rigours of censorship of both incoming and outgoing messages. With *Sir Sultan's* dictum that propaganda should never

have recourse to distortions of the truth, we, in the Standing Committee, have no hesitation in associating ourselves.

In conclusion let me say this—It has been recognised in all quarters that the Press in India has shown remarkable restraint during these difficult years of war and internal strife. So long as the department of which Sir Sultan has recently assumed charge will strive to put into practice the high principles to which he has given expression, he may be sure of our unstinted and helpful co-operation and support and thereby fulfil our responsibilities to the public."

## Resolutions—2nd. Day—Bombay—15th. July 1943

### Advertisements in the Press

The Standing Committee of the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference adjourned *sine die* at 6 p.m. to-day after concluding two-day session.

At the sitting after lunch, the Standing Committee discussed the reference to it from the Central Press Advisory Committee regarding the *Hindustan Times*, the revision of the Bombay Agreement, and the Publicity Advisory Board planned by the Member for Information and Broadcasting on all of which unanimous resolutions were adopted.

The Standing Committee also adopted the following resolutions :

"1. This Committee notes the growing feeling among sections of the public against the tendency in some newspapers to publish a class of advertisement which border on the obscene and offend against public decency and morals on subjects such as sex, birth-control, female disorders, etc., and is of the opinion that the majority of advertisements of this class appearing in both English and Indian language newspapers should be entirely eliminated and the language in the case of the others overhauled. The Committee, therefore, advises the Press of this country to eliminate all such advertisements or alter the language where necessary in the interests of the public good.

"The Standing Committee further appoints a Committee composed of the President, Mr. F. W. Bustin and Mr. Syed Mahamad from whom newspapers in doubt regarding particular advertisements may seek guidance.

"2. In view of the fact that the publication of cartoons is coming increasingly into vogue, the Committee is concerned to point out that it is in the interests of the Press to maintain high standards and to avoid cartoons and caricatures likely to lower the prestige of the Press.

"3. The Standing Committee congratulates Mr. Amritlal D. Sheth, editor of *Janmabhoomi* on his successful appeal to the High Court against the order of the Bombay Government forfeiting the security of the *Janmabhoomi* for publishing Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukerjee's letter of resignation.

In the two vacancies on the Standing Committee the following were elected : Messrs. Ram Gopal Maheswarra of *Navabharat* and Baldev Das of *Sansar*.

The Committee adjourned after passing a vote of thanks to the President and the Committee of the Indian Merchants' Chamber for their kind hospitality.

### Sir Sultan Ahmed's Assurance

Sir Sultan Ahmed, addressing the Standing Committee for a second time, after the President had replied to his address, said : "I assure you when I leave this room, I walk out a wiser man. It is always a privilege to be with editors—editors who have got experience, who have got knowledge of the country, who know the reactions of the people towards matters in which Government may be interested. I am, however, disappointed that Mr. Srinivasan has asked me to leave editors out of the Publicity Advisory Board. I regret I cannot comply with this request, I must insist on their co-operation. I am glad to say that the first editor, who responded to my invitation and accepted it is Mr. Srinivasan (cheers). I have said and I maintain that the restrictions on the Press here are not greater than, indeed in my opinion, much less, in some countries, at any rate during times of war. I can however give you this assurance that I will zealously guard your interests because your interests are mine.

Continuing, Sir Sultan Ahmed said that his idea was mainly to bring the Press closer to the Government of India. "If there are differences may be ours, may be yours, these differences should be resolved. While I admit you are reasonable, you will also give me credit for being reasonable. You have said that you are in agreement with restrictions imposed for security reasons. If you admit that, I assure you, you and I are in full agreement."

## Standing Committee—New Delhi—6th. November 1943

### PROTEST AGAINST ORDER ON "HITAVADA"

The Standing Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference, held in New Delhi on the 6th. November 1943, passed the following resolutions :

"The Standing Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference records its emphatic protest against the action of the Central Provinces Government in demanding from the Editor of the *Hitavada* the source of his information in regard to the publication of the Chief Secretary to the Bengal Government as an unwarranted interference with the well-established convention governing the relations between an editor and his correspondents.

"The Standing Committee notes with satisfaction that in their communique issued on October 22, 1943, the Government of India recognize the convention that the relations between an editor and his correspondents are confidential, but regret that they are prepared to concede it only to the extent that "in all ordinary circumstances this convention honoured by time and usage" should not be disturbed. The Standing Committee further objects to the use of the Defence of India Rules to compel an editor to disclose the source of his information and requests the Government to withdraw the order against the editor of the *Hitavada*.

"The Standing Committee congratulates Mr. A. D. Mani on the courage with which he has vindicated the highest tradition of the profession."

The above resolution was moved by *Sir Francis Low*, seconded by Mr. *Brelvi* and supported by Mr. *Ian Stephens*.

Moved by Mr. S. A. *Brelvi*, seconded by Mr. *Siddiqui* and supported by Mr. *Sahni*, the following resolution was passed :

"The Standing Committee takes exception to the action of the Bihar Government in demanding from certain Patna newspapers the source of information of report about the possibility of the transfer of the present Chief Secretary, Bihar Government, to the Board of Revenue."

### PROTEST AGAINST ORDER ON SIND PAPER

On the motion of Mr. *Devadas Gandhi*, supported by Mr. B. *Shiva Rao*, the following resolution was passed :

"The Standing Committee of the All-India Newspaper Editors' Conference feel that the order served under the Indian Press Emergency powers demanding security from the *Sind Observer* by ignoring the unanimous recommendation of the Provincial Advisory Committee violates the assurance given by the Government of India that reasonable and legitimate editorial comment could not be actionable and is of the opinion that the action of the Sind Government apart from being unjustified on merits, was opposed to the spirit of the agreement between the Government of India and the Editors' Conference. The Standing Committee of the A. I. N. E. C. therefore request the Government of India to draw the attention of the Sind Government to the understanding governing editorial comment and to request them to withdraw the order against the *Sind Observer*."

# The Chamber of Princes

Nineteenth Session New Delhi—14th. October 1943

### H. E. The Viceroy's Address

Over seventy Rulers of States and their heirs-apparent were present in their full traditional regalia when *H. E. the Viceroy* inaugurated the nineteenth session of the Chamber of Princes at New Delhi on the 14th. October 1943. The following is the text of the Viceroy's speech :—

"Your Highnesses,

"I am very glad to meet Your Highnesses again, and to have this opportunity before I lay down my present office of saying these words of farewell to you. I realise only too well how great the inconvenience is which many of Your Highnesses have suffered in visiting Delhi in the present difficulties of accommodation and transport, and I am the more grateful to you all for your presence, in numbers unprecedented since the inauguration of the Chamber, here to-day.

"This, the 19th meeting of the Chamber of Princes, since its inauguration in 1921, is the last of six such meetings over which I have had the honour of presiding and, owing to various difficulties which prevented our assembling as usual in March, has had to be postponed up to the very verge of my departure from India. But I am glad to think that since we last met, the face of the war has changed in a manner that even the most optimistic of us could hardly have hoped for. To-day we can look back on the great and splendid achievements of the fighting forces in every theatre of war through the months that have passed since we last came together. The great changes that have taken place, the outstanding victories of the Allied arms, have brought us very perceptibly nearer to the goal we are all so anxious to reach. And they have brought us perceptibly nearer, too, to the point at which the investigation and the solution of post-war problems is a matter of immediate and imperative necessity.

"Let me first pay tribute to the memory of those who are no longer with us. Since our last meeting six members of the Chamber have passed away—Their Highnesses of Bikaner, Jhalawar, Ajaigarh and Jhabua, the Raja of Khilchipur and the Raja of Kurundwad (Junior) who was a representative member. His Highness the Chancellor will be voicing our tribute to these departed Princes. I will only add to what I have already said this morning about His Highness of Bikaner, a special word of deep regret at the untimely demise of Highness of Jhalawar, a Prince of exceptional promise selflessly devoted to the discharge of his high responsibilities. Rarely, if ever, did he fail to attend the meetings of this Chamber, and his absence to-day leaves a gap which we all deplore and I have just heard with very great regret of the death of His Highness the Maharaja of Cochin whose State I had the pleasure of visiting less than two months ago and who had done so much in the short period of his Rule for the good of his people.

"To those who have succeeded to rulership and membership of this Chamber, I offer a most cordial welcome. To His Highness of Bikaner we confidently look to carry on the great services rendered to the Order of Princes by his illustrious father. It is a pleasure, too, to see here to-day for the first time the Maharaja Scindia of Gwalior and Their Highnesses of Dhrangadhara, Manipur and Jhabua, also the Rajas of Baghat and Kurundwad (Senior) and the Rao of Jigni who have been elected as representative members since our last meeting. Nor must I omit to mention the recent admission to membership of the Raja of Shahpura, the Nawab of Kurwai and the Rajas of Talcher, Kalsia and Phaltan, four of whom we are glad to welcome in person to-day.

"I have spoken already of the magnificent progress that has been made in every theatre of the war by the Allied arms, progress so profoundly encouraging to all of us who have been through the dark days through which we have lived since the beginning of the war. Much still lies before us. It will be a mistake to underestimate the strength and the determination of the forces that are opposed to us. We may yet have many anxious months before victory is achieved. But it is a happiness to me before I leave India to be able to feel that circumstances have so amply justified the guarded optimism which I permitted myself in my previous address to this Chamber. And it is a happiness to me, too, to be able with pride and gratitude for the last time to review the services which have been rendered by the Princes of India in this titanic struggle.

#### WAR EFFORT

"Naturally, my thoughts turn first to the sphere of active operations and I would at the outset warmly thank and congratulate those of Your Highnesses who have been able to hearten and encourage the troops by personal visits to the various fronts. I would wish, too, to pay a special tribute to the invaluable assistance in the war effort that has been given by His Highness the Chancellor. Not only has His Highness rendered service of real value as one of the representatives of India at the War Cabinet. He has taken advantage of his absence from India to perform sterling service as one of the spokesmen of this great country overseas. And he has spared no pains to acquaint himself in the fullest detail with the organisation of war effort in the United Kingdom. I hope that in the course of this session, we shall hear from his Highness himself some account of his experiences. But, for myself, I would like to add my testimony to the value of his contribution, the importance of the contacts he has made, the encouragement that his visit has given to the troops and to the munition workers that he has visited.

"The Indian States forces have taken full advantage of the opportunities that have come to them to win fresh distinction on the battlefield. Comparisons are rash. And such distinction is of course largely dependent upon opportunity. But

I would mention the gallant record of the Kashmir Mountain Battery, the First Patiala Infantry, the Jind Infantry, the Jodhpur Sarder Infantry, two Jaipur Battalions, the Tripura Rifles and the Tehri-Garhwal and Malerkotla Sappers and Miners. Nor should I fail to record my gratitude for the manner in which the States as a whole have adopted the scheme devised to raise the standard of efficiency among the higher ranks of their forces. I realise and appreciate the difficulties that may on occasion confront Your Highnesses in these and other connected matters. But I know too that you on your part will recognise that the first duty of the Military Adviser-in-Chief is to devise schemes to rectify such deficiencies as come to notice under the stress and strain of war. A new scheme for the exchange of officers, and another for providing advanced training for States units will, I understand, shortly be put forward. I am convinced that Your Highnesses will continue to view such proposals with sympathy and realism, and that I and my successor can look for your full co-operation over them.

"Nor has the active aid of the States in the actual war zones been confined to combatant units. Invaluable assistance, at a time of very real and pressing need, has been lent by the Indian States in providing labour units for the construction of roads and aerodromes. Our gratitude is due in very special measure to the great States of the south, whose contributions, in this sphere have been, and continue to be, outstanding. From Travancore and Cochin, over 700,000 men have travelled north to carve out roads to be traversed by the fighting soldiers, and in doing so to face the perils of disease. Those who have laid down their lives side by side with the fighting man in the fever infested belts in which so much has had to be done, have sacrificed themselves as truly as any fighting soldier for their motherland, and we salute their memory today.

"But it is not only to humble homes that the war has brought sad and untimely bereavements. I spoke last year of an heir-apparent who had met his death in the course of his duties as an officer of the Indian Air Force. Since then a similar blow has fallen upon two other members of this Chamber and I feel sure that Your Highnesses would wish me to tender deep sympathy and condolences to the Raja of Sangli and the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj.

"For the rest, contributions and offers of personal services, aircraft, buildings, labour, watercraft, machinery, training facilities and medical aid, donations and gifts of every sort and description have continued to pour in from Indian States in an ever-winding stream. I cannot speak too highly of the magnificent response consistently made by the Indian States to the urgent needs of this critical time: They have shown unimpaired generosity and co-operation: thanks to their help, great aerodromes, strategical projects of every kind, have sprung up in the territory of the Indian States. Facilities of every kind have been most readily granted not only to British and Indian forces, but to the forces of our Allies: and in particular, certain States, at the cost of wide stretches of famous forests most carefully guarded in the past, have helped immensely in the training of men in the new science of jungle warfare.

#### CO-OPERATION BETWEEN STATES AND BRITISH INDIA

"I referred in my last address to the steadily expanding scope of measures to achieve the maximum co-ordination of effort between the States and British India. Instances of such co-operation could be multiplied indefinitely and there is no time to catalogue them to-day. But I would make mention of one notable incident in which a group of hostile agents were arrested with most commendable promptitude almost immediately after they had landed from an enemy submarine on the shores of an Indian State. Further and most valuable demonstrations of this united front, as between the States and Provinces are to be found in the more prosaic but not less vital sphere of wartime legislation, where States have most willingly and comprehensively applied to their territories the British Indian Ordinances and other arrangements devised to meet the various emergencies which have been constantly arising.

"Let me add one further instance in which the States and their subjects are making an important contribution to our resources. The Indian Post and Telegraphs Department was, up to the outbreak of the war, functioning on commercial lines as a self-supporting organisation making no contribution to the general revenues of British India. Such an arrangement is of course only fair to the States who by entering, as the vast majority of them have done, into postal union with British India, undertook no liability to submit to indirect taxation in the form of surcharges on the normal economic rates for the transmission of letters and telegrams. The exigencies of war time finance have, however, compelled the

Government of India, following in this matter the lead of the Government of the United Kingdom, to raise the postal and telegraphic rates for the express purpose of making a substantial surplus available as a contribution towards war expenditure. It was, of course, impracticable to confine this process to British India, and it is with deep appreciation that I learn that the States are pressing no objection to the additional financial burden which it places on themselves and on their subjects. The financial value of that burden cannot immediately be precisely computed. But given the areas and the populations affected, it cannot but be substantial. And its acceptance is yet another and a most valuable voluntary contribution by the Indian States towards the prosecution of the war.

#### COMBATING FOOD CRISIS AND INFLATION

"The same uniform and wholehearted co-operation has been shown in regard to those grim problems of the war which have been so distressingly prominent during the current year—food, cloth, inflation. In our efforts to combat the food crisis we have had the benefit of full association at every stage with accredited representatives of the States. Those who have a surplus have freely placed it at our disposal. Those in deficiency have, of course, participated in the common resources. I could, but wish that those resources had proved more adequate to their needs. I have particularly in mind the States of Travancore and Cochin which, deprived of their normal supplies of Burma rice, have borne a particularly heavy burden. I would like to pay a tribute both to the efforts made by the States governments concerned, with which I was able to acquaint myself at first hand during my recent visit to South India, to cope with a situation so distressing, and to the patience and fortitude of the population so sorely tried. All over India, the States have lent full support to the 'grow more food' campaign. I would beg them to continue and if possible to increase that support. The need is great—we must leave nothing undone not merely to banish the threat of famine, but to accumulate those reserves of food that are so important a guarantee for the future.

"To those States of Rajputana where sudden floods have recently caused such grave loss of life and property, our sympathy and our admiration of the courage and energy with which all concerned have applied themselves to the work of remedy and repairs go out in full measure.

"In the steps that have had to be taken to remedy the shortage of cloth, there is the same record of friendly helpfulness. Many important centres of the textile industry are situated in Indian States, and I am deeply grateful to the States concerned for the manner in which they have placed the products of their looms at the disposal of the Central Government, often at no small sacrifice to themselves.

"Inflation is one of the gravest problems that faces us to day. It is a problem in the handling of which the States and British India are equally concerned, and in which they have a common interest. Action to combat inflation is essential, for it is a threat to every one of us, and to India as a whole. I realise that anti-inflationary measures present a complex problem in the case of the States, having regard to the varying conditions of their fiscal arrangements and their relative backwardness in industrial development. But I know that Your Highnesses share my view that the question is one that must be resolutely tackled. And I look for valuable results from the discussions that I myself have had with some of you on this topic, discussions which my Political Adviser is, on my behalf, continuing and developing during this week. I would like to take this opportunity to make it clear beyond any question that such checks and prohibitions as it has been necessary to apply are based solely upon the present overriding need to conserve and regulate the resources of the country as a whole, so that the output of essential supplies should not be curtailed or disturbed for the benefit of local or personal interests. There is not, and there cannot be, any question of there being designed to stifle the birth, or the progress of industrial development in the Indian States.

"Matters such as these, and others too numerous to mention, will of course come under review in connection with post-war development and reconstruction. The plans of the Central Government for dealing with that great problem are already well advanced. I am glad to be able to assure Your Highnesses that they contain full provision for associating your States with its numerous ramifications, and I am glad too to think that many of your ablest ministers are included in the various committees that are being set up. Public opinion must inevitably take the closest interest in these activities of reconstruction.

"I am the more grateful for the response of so many States to the advice which I offered to you at our last session in regard to the National War Front movement. That movement was established when the war outlook was dark and

threatening. As the intervening months have passed, it has developed into a public organisation concerned with every aspect of public morale. It is some measure of Your Highnesses' support of this vital work that in fifteen months 287 States have brought War Front organisations into being. That is a response of which the States have every right to be proud and, as the founder of the movement, I congratulate Your Highnesses on it. And, though the name of the War Front Movement must ultimately die, the spirit and work behind it should live. For it contains tremendous potentialities for establishing means by which the good in man and in life may be more widely known and the things that are evil challenged and destroyed.

#### HELP TO FOREIGN REFUGEES

"Before I leave the dominating topic of the war, I would add a few words of appreciation of the generosity shown by so many of Your Highnesses towards refugees from other countries whose sufferings have been immensely greater than ours. In particular, I have in mind your aid towards establishing a temporary refuge in India for a great number of Polish children. Here again, I must refer to the outstanding energy and personal interest, and to the most generous personal aid, which has been given by His Highness the Cancellor. What he has done for Polish children will long be remembered, not only by those children to whom his kindness has been so real, but by the great Polish nation. I should mention also the similar settlement in the Kolhapur State where facilities have been most readily and generously provided and where the personal sympathy of Her Highness the Maharani Regent has been of the utmost value.

"Time presses and I have much to say on matters of even greater importance, but I could not forgive myself if I failed to-day to thank Your Highnesses for your lavish support in two matters unconnected with the war but specially near to the hearts of Her Excellency and myself. I refer of course to my wife's anti-tuberculosis campaign and to the activities of the All-India Cattle Show Society. I cannot over-estimate my sense of the importance of the anti-tuberculosis campaign. It is, I am certain, of profound significance to the future of this country. And it is a very real happiness to my wife, who has spared no effort for it during her time here, and to myself, to think that we leave India with the campaign against this scourge so firmly established. The support of the All-India Cattle Show Society by more than sixty States has been continuous and invaluable. I am grateful in particular that it should have been greater even than before in this current year in spite of the other numerous demands on your resources. I feel certain that the work of the Society merits in the fullest degree the friendly co-operation of Your Highnesses and that it responds to instincts deeply rooted in every great agricultural country. The fight against tuberculosis, the struggle to improve India's cattle and so the condition of the peasant and the countryside, are very close to the hearts of both of us, and my wife and I, I can assure you, will in the days after we have left India, continue to take the liveliest and most vivid interest in both.

"I turn now to a different field, and I would ask Your Highnesses to bear with me while I indulge in some reflections on more basic and possibly more controversial matters, reflections prompted by 7½ years of such intimate association with the intricate and sometimes baffling problems presented by the Indian States and by the real and sincere interest which I have always taken in them and in their welfare. It has been suggested to me more than once that the immense aggregate importance of these States as an element in the Indian continent, and their vital concern in the solution of all Indian problems, have not always been fully appreciated.

"I cannot believe that that can be the case, or that any well-informed observer can fail to realise the vast area which the Indian States occupy, the size of their population, their great resources, the outstanding place which they hold in the history of India, and the extent to which the future of this great sub-continent must be, and is, of immediate and profound concern to them. But the very size and importance of the Indian States as a whole makes the problems that Your Highnesses, and the Crown Representative of the day, have to face the more significant.

#### THE STATES AND FEDERATION

"Your Highnesses have often heard me refer both in my previous addresses to this Chamber, and in other places, to my own view of the significance and value of the Federal Scheme which was the coping-stone of the Act of 1935. There was, no doubt, much that could be said in point of detail against that scheme. Equally as

I have said before, much could have been and can be urged against any scheme that can be devised for the constitutional future of India. But just as I have always believed that the Federal Scheme was the best answer that could at that time have been devised for the problems of British India, equally, it was and is, my sincere belief that such a scheme is the best answer from the point of view of the Indian States and form the point of view of India as a whole.

"Events beyond our control have necessitated changes in our plans, and to some extent have altered the circumstances with which we have to deal and in which we have to build. But speaking here to Your Highnesses to-day for the last time, I wish to reaffirm my faith and confidence in the Federal ideal, and in the contribution which the realisation with general support of that ideal, whatever adjustments might prove necessary in regard to particular aspects of it, would make to Indian unity and to the constitutional future of India.

And when I speak of unity, I need not emphasise to Your Highnesses the importance of all of us standing together in the conditions of the modern world. It is very difficult for units, however large, whatever their form of Government, whatever their resources, to exist save in relation to, and as part of, a larger whole. The bonds that link units one to another may be light as gossamer. But they exist : they are there and their strength and their significance cannot be denied. If that is true of a continent as large as Europe, it is true, I am certain, equally of this great sub-continent of India : and inside that sub-continent it holds good equally especially when common interests are so largely involved of the Indian States. That that unity is wholly consistent with the survival and the orderly development of the Indian States, with their distinguished history ; with their special relations with the crown so fully recognised, based as they are on treaties, sanads, can make a great and useful contribution to India's future. I never have doubted, and I do not doubt to-day. It must be our business to see in what way that contribution can best be made, and what best can be its character.

"I spoke just now of survival accompanied by development. The juxtaposition of these two words is of deep and vital significance, as I know that Your Highnesses fully realise. There have been great developments of recent years, profound changes, new forces, new ideas, a new attitude of mind in the international field. All these facts have to be taken into account. And in the face of them, you and I, who have to live in the world of to-day, must think and act realistically. It would be an injustice to Your Highnesses were I to assume that any reasonable man amongst you would deny that the Crown's obligations to protect carry with them equally binding responsibilities to ensure, if need be, that what is protected continues to be worthy of protection. On the contrary, I am glad to think that that most important proposition is widely accepted among you. I can claim during the period of my Viceroyalty to have spared no effort to assist Your Highnesses to give effect to the principles that underlie it. And I should indeed have regarded it not only as a dereliction of my duty but as a grave disservice to the Princely Order had I in the least degree relaxed my efforts to do so.

#### MERGER OF SMALL STATES

"When I last addressed this Chamber, I referred to three particular directions towards which those efforts were, in consultation and co-operation with Your Highnesses, being exerted. I spoke firstly of the decisive necessity in regard to the smaller States, of some form of co-operative measures to secure a standard of administrative efficiency which is beyond their individual resources. That progress has since continued with encouraging results—particularly in Eastern India, from which area I am glad to see so many rulers present to-day. I congratulate them on what they have been able to achieve and I look forward with confidence to its consolidation and extension. In other areas too progress has been made and new ideas are afoot but I have become increasingly conscious of the difficulties which arise, not so much from any lack of enthusiasm on the part of the rulers concerned as from the nature of the foundations on which they have to build. I devoutly wish that these difficulties could, before my departure from India, have been surmounted by the formulation and application of general principles acceptable to all concerned. But in matters so delicate, undue haste might well have defeated the object in view. I have had to content myself therefore with giving instructions that the progress hitherto achieved and the difficulties thereby revealed shall within the next few weeks be systematically reviewed and considered by my advisers, so soon as can conveniently be arranged, my successor may be able to initiate discussions either with the Standing Committee or with selected representatives of the category of States principally concerned, from which discussions a clear plan of

action may emerge. I appeal most earnestly to Your Highnesses to co-operate wholeheartedly in these processes. For I regard them, and I cannot emphasise this too strongly as being literally of vital importance for the vast majority of you.

"Your Highnesses will realise that measures such as these to which I now refer, involving as they do a certain measure of sacrifice on the part of those small units to which I have mentioned, do at the same time represent a most valuable contribution to the improvement of administration, and to the removal of criticism, consistently with the survival and development, by means of co-operation among themselves or under the aegis of larger States, of the smaller states affected. The sacrifices involved, as I have observed to Your Highnesses on previous occasions, are an inevitable accompaniment of the co-operative method. But I feel no shadow of doubt that they are justified in terms of the benefits involved, whether we test those benefits by the improvement of the standard of administrative services and amenities or by wider political considerations. A heavy obligation rests upon us all. And that obligation makes it difficult—and I am certain Your Highnesses agree with me to view with equanimity conditions in which, owing to the smallness of the area, or of the resources of individual States, it may be impossible to secure the application of modern standards of justice, or of administration, to the inhabitants of the area concerned.

"I would add that the line of argument which I have been following in regard to small States is no less applicable to the Jagirs and Thikanas which, though forming an integral part of certain States, still maintain some semblance of jurisdictional and administrative machinery. Let me make it clear beyond any question that the times are no longer propitious for Jagirdars and Thakurs, who seek to assert or perpetuate a semi-independence wholly incompatible with their limited resources, and so, inevitably harmful to the interests of the inhabitants of the areas concerned.

#### ADMINISTRATION PROBLEMS

"I spoke also at the last session of this Chamber of a scheme for safeguarding standards of administration, particularly after the period of a ruler's minority, by the application of formal constitutional methods for the transaction of State business. I referred too to the difficult and delicate problem of determining what proportion of a State's revenue can appropriately be earmarked for the use of the ruler and his family, and what precisely are the items which should legitimately come within the scope of civil lists and privy purses. Here, again, I am denied the satisfaction of seeing final decisions reached during the period of my Viceroyalty.

"I deeply regret that that should be the case. For the issue is one of prime importance. And it is one in which close and critical interest is taken not only in India, but far outside the borders of this country. I do, therefore, sincerely trust that in regard to it an early solution, and one that may command general commendation not only in this country, but outside, may be forthcoming. The recent discussions between representative Princes and my advisers have been of real value, and I confidently hope that they will shortly yield those solid and generally acceptable results to which I have just referred.

"I would like to take this occasion to say how much as Crown Representative I value the advice and the frank expression of views of representative Princes in matters such as this. For the decisions that have to be taken by the Crown Representative are often grave ones, and he will, I am sure, at all times be anxious to be assured, before he reaches a conclusion that he is fully cognisant of the views of the Princely Order on matters so directly concerning members of that Order and of the considerations that weigh with them.

"Your Highness will realise, as I do, that the problems that face you today are far from simple, and that there lies ahead a period in which problems more difficult still may have to be confronted. If the best interests of the States, the best interests of India, are to be safeguarded, we must be at pains to face the facts and be willing, even at the cost of sacrifice to make such adjustments as the turn of world events makes necessary. I know from my own extensive journeyings among the States to what an extent certain Indian States have become an example and an inspiration to other parts of India. It must be our object to ensure that that shall be the case in every area. And, indeed, it is essential in the interests of the State and in the interests of their survival that they should not fall below modern standards of administration in any way. I need not assure Your Highnesses as I talk of those difficult and delicate matters that to the extent that I, or my representatives on my instructions, have had to take a particular line in regard to co-operative measures and the like, I have been concerned solely and it is

the true and legitimate function in this sphere of the Crown Representative—to awaken the indifferent to consciousness of the dangers that threaten them, to point out deficiencies, to suggest remedies to co-ordinate individual initiatives for the benefit of all but you may be certain that at all times the underlying consideration that has governed any decisions that I have had to take, and that will, I am sure, govern such decisions as may fall to be taken by my successors, is that the Indian States shall fit themselves to play that great and positive part in the development of India as a whole which their importance and their history justifies : and that it is to the interest of the Princely order that such weaknesses as may to-day exist, whether in administration or organisation, shall be eliminated with the minimum of delay.

"I would not like to conclude my observations to-day without again thanking Your Highnesses and the Princely Order for the invaluable help that you have given to the war effort and without thanking you, too, for the help that I have had in the efforts I have made while I have been Viceroy to further the modernisation of administration in the States, and for the help you have given me on so very many critical issues directly affecting the well-being and the future of your States. These are testing times—all of us realise that. But Your Highnesses represent great and distinguished traditions and the Indian States do as a whole represent a great potentiality for good in the times that lie before us.

"On the eve therefore of my laying down the great office which I have had honour to hold, I appeal to Your Highnesses here to-day and through you to the Princely Order and to all who exercise authority and influence in the Indian States, to see to it, that the splendid opportunity lying before the rulers of those States is not missed, and to ensure that advantage is taken of it with such vigour and foresight, with such judicious blending of old and new, with such subordination of narrow personal and local interests, to true patriotism that the future of India—of the Indian States in close collaboration with British India—may be ensured, and that future generations may remember with gratitude the part played by the leaders of Princely India in securing the stability of that common and glorious inheritance.

"When next this chamber meets, it will be under the Chairmanship of the great soldier and distinguished administrator who is now about to succeed me as Viceroy. Lord Wavell's wide range of knowledge and experience, the interest that he has always taken in the Indian States, are well known to Your Highnesses : and in the difficulties and the problems that have to be faced by the Indian States, I know that in him the States will have a wise, sagacious and sympathetic friend. And now before I close my address let me thank you all once again, and that most warmly and sincerely, for all the help and the constant and generous support that you have given to me in the 7½ years during which I have had the honour to preside over the deliberations of Your Highnesses, and to represent the Crown in its dealings with the Indian States and the Princely Order."

#### CHAMBER'S TRIBUTE TO LATE MAHARAJA OF BIKANER

Before inaugurating the session, the Viceroy unveiled a marble bust of the late Maharaja of Bikaner, to whom tributes were paid both by His Excellency and by the Jamsaheb of Nawangar, Chancellor. The Viceroy expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to salute the memory of His late Highness "not only as a great and inspiring leader but as one whose personal friendship I am proud to have enjoyed through so many years." His Excellency added : "No one, I think, would grudge to the late Maharaja of Bikaner the application of familiar lines which though written centuries ago, seem to be incomparably appropriate on this sad occasion : 'He was a man. Take him for all, in all, we shall not look upon his like again.'"

The Chancellor described the late Ruler as a "unique link between the message of the past and the promise of the future," and said : "A king among princes, he strove throughout his life to justify Indian India to the rest of India and a united India to the rest of the world."

On the Chancellor's motion, the Chamber recorded heartfelt sorrow and deep sense of loss sustained by the entire Order of Princes at the death of His late Highness of Bikaner, one of the founders and the first Chancellor of this Chamber who held the exalted office of Chancellor for five consecutive years and was General Secretary to the Conference of Princes for five years preceding the inauguration of the Chamber and Pro-Chancellor at the time of his demise, and offered sincerest condolences to the bereaved family.

The Chamber passed a resolution moved by the Chancellor recording profound grief at the death of the Duke of Kent and conveying deepest sympathy to the King and Queen in their bereavement. The Chamber adopted a resolu-

tion condoling the death of the Rulers of Jhalawar, Ajaigarh, Khilchipur and Kurundwad (Junior).

The Chamber by another resolution offered its heartiest congratulations to the Rulers of Ajaigarh, Bikaner, Charkhari, Jhabua, Jhalawar, and Khilchipur on their accession to the gadi and to the rulers of Barwani, Chhatarpur, Dhrangadhra and to the Thakur Sahib of Wadhwan on their investiture with ruling power and wished them a long and prosperous life.

The Ruler of Bikaner made a brief reply on behalf of those who were felicitated by the resolution. The Chamber then adjourned.

## Resolutions—2nd. Day—New Delhi—15th. October 1943

### States and War Effort

The determination of the Ruling Princes and Chiefs of India to continue to help in the achievement of final Allied victory was pledged in a resolution passed by the Chamber of Princes to-day on the Chancellor's motion. The resolution reads as follows:

"The Chamber of Princes records its expression of heartfelt gratification at the recent important victories of the Imperial and Allied forces in Africa, Sicily, Italy, Russia and other theatres of war and is proud to learn that the Indian troops have played a magnificent part in these achievements. The Chamber requests His Excellency the Crown Representative to convey to His Imperial Majesty and his Government, including in particular the courageous and inspiring Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the sincerest congratulations of the Princes of India on these glorious victories, and reiterates the firm determination of the Ruling Princes and Chiefs of India to continue to render every possible assistance towards the achievement of final victory and for the defence of their motherland and the vindication of high principles of justice and sanctity of treaties."

The *Jam Sahib*, in moving the resolution, dwelt on the contribution made by the States and said that in addition to the direct money contribution of over eight and a half crores of rupees, there were at present over twelve Indian State forces units serving overseas and about forty-six in British India. About forty other units had been raised by the States and so far nearly three lakhs recruits for the fighting forces had been contributed directly or indirectly by the States, in addition to trained technicians and unskilled labourers sent by them.

The *Jam Sahib* proceeded, "Your Excellency, uncharitable persons have already started warning us that when the time comes England will let down her friends to embrace her enemies because of their nuisance value. Please tell England that we of the Indian States repudiate such insinuations as mischievous and that we have full faith in England's plighted word and in her respect for solemn obligations. Moreover, I am a soldier, sir, and I know that politicians may have short memories, but soldiers are not apt to forget their comrades-in-arms."

"The news of the bombing of Madras." His Highness asserted, "adds to our resolve to crush the Japanese menace for the honour of our Motherland. I personally take these attempts as the final flicker of the flame."

The resolution was seconded by the *Nawab of Bhopal* and supported by the *Maharaja of Bikaner*, the *Maharaja of Dewas* (Senior) and the *Raja of Bilaspur*.

The Chamber passed a resolution on the Chancellor's motion extending a cordial welcome to the Rulers recently admitted as members of the Chamber in their own right and confidently hoping that by continuing to take an active interest in the affairs of the Chamber and the ordered progress of their respective States, these members would prove a source of added strength to the Chamber. The *Raja of Bhur* supported and the *Maharaja of Patna* supported the resolution. The *Nawab of Kurwai* made a brief reply on behalf of new members.

Two more resolutions, one placing on record the valuable services rendered by the *Jam Sahib* as representative of the States on the Imperial War Cabinet and the other placing on record the services rendered by him as the Chancellor of the Chamber, were adopted. The first resolution was moved by the *Ruler of Patiala* and seconded by the *Ruler of Gwalior*. The second resolution was moved by the *Ruler of Bahawalpur* and supported by the Rulers of *Dungarpur*, *Mandi* and *Khairagarh*.

The House also heard from the Chancellor a detailed statement reviewing the work of the Chamber during last year.

### Chancellor's Address

The Chancellor, the *Jam Sahib of Nawanagar*, replying on behalf of the Princes to the Viceroy's opening address, referred to the additional "financial

burdens" recently imposed on the States in the form of surcharges on letters and telegrams. He said: "If these surcharges are enhanced or any other surcharges or fresh excises are levied, the share of the States in this additional revenue may be invested in war investments on behalf of the States so that funds may be available to the States for social services and post-war developments."

#### SUCCESSFUL FOOD CONTROL IN THE STATES

Referring to the food crisis, the *Jam Sahib* said he had already issued a circular appeal and many of the States had as a token of their genuine sympathy already responded through substantial contributions in cash or kind for the relief of the affected areas. It was a matter of satisfaction, he said, to them that in spite of the recent food and transport difficulties, the Governments of the States generally had been able to manage well the problem of food supplies to their people and had succeeded at great sacrifice to themselves, in controlling prices of food grains within their territories at much lower level than in the adjoining areas of British India. They had, in that connection, invited attention to certain facts with a view to enhancing the value of the co-operation of the States with the food policy of the Government of India.

Referring to inflation, the Chancellor assured the Viceroy that the States were fully alive to its dangers and were prepared to co-operate in anti-inflationary measures to the utmost extent permissible within their trial commitments. It must be, however, appreciated, that having regard to the varying conditions of the fiscal arrangements of the States and their relative backwardness in industrial development the measure and form of their co-operation in the matter must vary according to the circumstances and conditions of individual States. At the same time the States were entitled to claim that they must be consulted before the formulation and in the execution of such policies, affecting British India and the States in which their co-operation was desired and that there should be no discrimination against the States in the implementing of these policies.

#### LEASE-LEND AID FOR STATES

The *Jam Sahib* added that the problem of inflation should not be treated exclusively as one relating to currency and that measures for checking inflation could not succeed unless effective steps were taken to increase the volume of consumers' goods. For this purpose he urged that the States might be assisted in obtaining stores plant and machinery under Lease-Lend or otherwise. They might be supplied their requirements of iron and steel for agricultural implements and machinery to assist the grow-more food campaign and the Government of India might consider the desirability of obtaining necessary quantities of silver and copper under Lease-Lend arrangements to increase the issue of metallic currency, and the States which had their own metallic currency might similarly be assisted in this matter. This step was expected to a long way in preventing the hoarding of food-grains in the country.

Referring to post-war reconstruction and development, the Chancellor trusted that their representatives would be fully associated with the formulation and implementing of post-war plans as also with the execution of policies such as those relating to Lease-Lend, control of capital issue and trade and currency. He made a particular reference to air transport and said that the Indian States should desire to co-operate fully in the preparation of co-ordinated air transport plans, which might be designed in the best interests of India and with regard to the rights and interests of the Indian States.

#### ARBITRATION ON CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

Referring to the constitutional issue, the Chancellor urged that disputes arising between the Government of India or a Provincial Government and any Indian States or between two or more Indian States or where a State was dissatisfied with the ruling or advice of the Crown Representative or his local representative should be referable as of right to a Court of Arbitration or the Federal Court as may be settled in consultation with the representative of the States. He particularly referred to the Viceroy's statement that the Crown's obligations "to protect carry with them equally binding responsibilities to ensure that what is protected continues to be worthy of protection." He said that that statement had raised vital problems and new issues of far reaching and grave importance which would receive their earnest consideration. In this connection the Chancellor referred to grave apprehensions that rights and interests of the Indian Princes were not receiving the consideration to which they were entitled because of their lack of nuisance value. In view of these grave apprehensions, it is felt that Your Excellency's successor

would be rendering a real service to the Crown as also to the States, if at his early convenience, he were to invite the representatives of the States for a free and frank consultation on the few outstanding questions and the ways and means to remove those prevailing apprehensions."

The Chancellor assured the Viceroy full support of the Princely Order in efforts to improve the position of Indians overseas, which included large number from Indian States. He said: "South Africa is now regarded as a test case. And those elements in India who like ourselves believe sincerely in the continuance of the British connection, must feel embarrassed if, in spite of India's signal services to the Commonwealth in the present war in Africa and elsewhere, the membership of the Commonwealth does not carry with it equality of status throughout the Commonwealth of His Majesty the King Emperor."

Concluding, the Chancellor observed: "Your Viceroyalty has been associated with some of the landmarks in the history of India. Your solid work for the health and happiness of the cultivators who form the backbone of Indian society has earned you a place of honour in the annals of Indian history. Your tenure of office as Crown Representative has witnessed a succession of important and new policies such as co-operative grouping, internal reforms, post minority management, reorganisation of the Chamber, admission of the new members, and the communique of April 16, 1943. It was but natural that in the discussion of these important matters, there have been occasions when we honestly differed. Your Excellency welcomed such honest differences of opinion and thereby earned our admiration."

#### Viceroy's Reply

The Viceroy, in winding up the proceedings, said he was much obliged for the Chancellor's reply and added: "He may rest assured that the various substantial points which he raised in his speech will receive appropriate attention. For my part, I desire once again to thank Your Highnesses for the support which you have given to me in this Chair year after year. I desire to tell you how grateful I am for the great personal kindness which you have shown to me. I should like to make a public acknowledgment of my high appreciation and assistance which at all times His Highness the Chancellor has been ready to give me, whatever the business in hand (cheers). I agree with him that the relations and understanding which have existed between himself as Chancellor and myself as Crown Representative have a very great value from the public point of view. Once again the virtue of private friendship in its bearing upon public affairs has been amply exemplified."

"I should like to tell His Highness and the Chamber how truly grateful I am and how touched I am by the kind words he used about my wife's work in India and the evident agreement with those words shown by Your Highnesses."

"In bidding Your Highnesses farewell for the last time, may I wish you and your peoples all happiness, success and prosperity in times to come." (Cheers.)

The Chamber at this stage adjourned *sine die*.

## The Associated Chambers of Commerce

### Annual Meeting—Calcutta—20th. December 1943

The Annual General meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce was held on the 20th. December 1943 at the Royal Exchange, Calcutta. *H. E. the Viceroy* opened the proceedings with a 46-minutes speech. His Excellency the Governor of Bengal attended the meeting and others present included Sir Edward Benthall, War Transport Member, Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar, Supply Member and Sir J. P. Srivastava, Food Member, Government of India, the Bengal Premier, Sir Nazimuddin, with nine other Ministers, Lt. General Mayne, Officer Commanding, Eastern Army, Dr. C. J. Pao, Chinese Consul-General in Calcutta, Mr. A. C. Dec Williams, Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal, Sir David Ezra, Mr. Justice Braund, Regional Food Commissioner, Bengal.

#### Chairman's Speech

Mr. J. H. Burder, who presided, referred in the course of his speech, to the future of European and British

posed that all British interests should be liquidated without delay. He would tell large Indian concerns that there was more than enough scope in furthering industrialisation for all with all the accumulated wealth which was lying dormant without buying up established concerns. Such was not the way of progress. Until the day when India was united to govern herself, said Mr Burder, 'we must expect such opposition to our interests and Press campaigns and criticisms in undue proportion. We should be the most unusual race if we did not merit some of it. Nevertheless I feel we can look forward to the future with that confidence which flows from knowledge of past achievements, business ability and business integrity."

Of the food situation Mr. Burder said the reports from Bengal districts were already brighter and they hoped that the returning confidence had come to stay. Measures that would bring the necessary confidence would be the end of administration influenced by political expediency, the determination of the Government to enforce its will and control of crops as near as the source as possible. He paid a tribute to Viceroy who had made the food problem his first concern.

Referring to post-war reconstruction, Mr. Burder said that he looked to the post-war reconstruction committees set up by the Government of India for prompt and authoritative lead but recalled with some misgiving that only one of them had ever held a meeting. India could not divest herself with any sense of reality from world affairs and this would be appreciated with greater emphasis as the deliberations of the post-war reconstruction committees proceeded.

Mr. Burder pleaded that Government had to think more among the line of absorbing the increased purchasing power created by war activities. It could not be said that there had been any appreciable easing of the situation in the spite of the considerable sums which by these means had been drawn into Government coffers. They had to consider what could be done to encourage local production of more consumer goods and whether there was now a possibility of increasing imports of such goods. Employers must continue their efforts to induce a greater volume of saving but here they were up against the backwardness of the proper classes.

Of the Plenary Labour Conference and the Standing Labour Committee set up to assist the Government on India, Mr. Burder said he did not feel that they were achieving their object. He was not sure that all employers were sufficiently alive to the necessity for an early betterment of the labourer's lot. On the other hand, there was an impression on the part of employers that Government did not really want their advice and that they would rush through legislation without due regard to the views of the employer who had to bear not only the cost but also a large share of the burden of administration. That the Indian labourer's condition of service were far below the standard of some other countries was indisputable and it was their duty to give every encouragement to Government.

Mr. Burder also urged the necessity for closer co-ordination of Government's requisitioning policy against the wider background of war and post-war economics. He further pleaded for the promptest possible settlement by negotiation of the principles governing the assessment of compensation for requisitioned property of all types and where those principles had been laid down for prompt payment in accordance with them.

#### Viceroy's Address

His Excellency Lord Wavell said :

I thank you for your cordial welcome and good wishes. My wife and I very much regret that we are unable this year to make the visit of some weeks to Calcutta which the Viceroy has usually done at this period. You will I am sure appreciate the reasons. Our house has been handed over to the R. A. F. ; and my many preoccupations make me at present something of a bird of passage outside Delhi.

I should like to begin this my first public speech as Viceroy by acknowledging again the services rendered to me on the Middle East during the early part of the war, not only by Indian troops but by Indian industry, which supplied so many of our pressing needs. I can well remember the spirit of co-operation and helpfulness with which our demands on India were always met. There is no doubt that Indian help saved the middle East at a critical time and thus laid the foundation for our successes of 1943 in the Mediterranean area.

Indian troops are still contributing to the security of the Middle East and are  
which is now taking place in

It was as you may imagine, a great regret to me to have to give up my command of the troops in India after just two years in that position. You have in General Auchinleck, who has succeeded me, one who enjoys the confidence and esteem not only of the fighting services, but of all sections of the people in India, both British and Indian. Under his command, the troops in India will be organised and trained for even more important tasks than ever, the final defeat of Japan.

You have had an example here in Bengal of the promptitude and efficiency of the army in the help it has provided to the civil Government in the food emergency.

We have all suffered a great loss by the death of Sir John Herbert. I know well, and I have no doubt you realise that his determination not to leave his post and to carry on with his work at a time when his health was causing him serious trouble contributed to the fatal breakdown, which was also aggravated by his acute anxiety about the troubles of Bengal, which he foresaw some months ago. He was a great gentleman, gallant and upright, whose kindness and friendship I valued highly. Sir Thomas Rutherford was given a most difficult task by having to take charge of Bengal in such difficult circumstances at very short notice, and you rightly appreciate what he has done in these circumstances.

#### PROGRESS OF THE WAR

Like Mr. Burder, I propose to confine myself to a few subjects, the most pressing of which we have to deal with at the present time.

The prosecution of the war is naturally the most important. The United Nations have had so striking a run of successes during the last year, in Russia, in the Mediterranean, in the Battle of the Atlantic against U-boats, in the air offensive against Germany, and in the counter-offensive against Japan, in the South-West Pacific, that we have almost come to feel disappointed and aggrieved if we are not served up with a fresh victory at least once a day. There is a well known quotation from Horace, which says "Keep your head when in difficulties." His next lines are not perhaps so well known; "Refrain from excessive rejoicing when things are going well." We observed the first precept in our bad times, we are possibly in some danger of forgetting the second, now that things are running well. To some of you, the progress of the war during the last month or so has probably seemed slow, in comparison with the summer rate: you must remember that we are just passing through the season of the worst weather for operations in Europe: when the ground has not yet frozen hard in Russia and the roads are a quagmire; when winter storms are sweeping Italy and the Mediterranean; and when fog is apt to hinder our bombing offensive against Germany.

The ruling factor in all military operations is transportation, and in such weather the transportation problem becomes more acute than ever. Moreover, the swiftness of the Russian advances has increased the difficulties of supply and transportation, while the Germans are nearer their bases. We have every reason for sober confidence in a victorious outcome of the war in Europe in a not too distant future: but how far distant that future is cannot yet be determined.

While the progress of wars depends on transportation, their end depends always on morale. The morale of the German army is certainly still high, but that of the German people must be, to say the least of it, causing Hitler and the Nazi leaders an aching of the head and a sinking of the heart.

But the end of the war in the West is no more than the beginning of the war in the East on a scale required to bring about the defeat and unconditional surrender of Japan. The importance of the Eastern War not only to the East but to the whole world and to the future of civilisation still needs to be brought home to some. There can be no security, economic or military, until Japan is as thoroughly defeated as Germany. It is not a matter of recovering lost portions of the British Empire or the dividends in oil and rubber, it is the repulse of barbarism by civilisation which is at stake. The peace and happiness of the world depend on a complete and speedy liquidation of Japanese ambitions. The victory of General MacArthur's forces in the South-West Pacific, the fighting here on the Indian frontier and the resistance of our Chinese allies, have not only halted the Japanese advance but have already begun to thrust it back. The process will be continued and greatly accelerated. The enemy has tried to gain comfort and to make propaganda from the slowness of the Allied counter offensive. All such great efforts are apt to be slow at first, but as they gain momentum and resistance is weakened they sweep forward apace.

## INDIA AS BASE OF OPERATIONS

I am sure that all India wishes success to the newly-established South-East Asia Command, to its inspiring leader, *Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten*, and to the able commanders and staff, British and American, who are gathering under him. The establishment of this new command, to control the offensives against Japan from India does not, of course, in any way lessen India's role, in fact it enhances it. India has to be organised as a base for a mightier force of warships, armies and air squadrons than has ever before been gathered in the East. We shall have ships, men and material in plenty. The difficulty will be to find space in our ports, on our airfields, on our railways and in our depots to accommodate them.

The war effort and preparations we have already made have placed severe strains upon our national economy, and we must take steps to make this stable to support the strains of the next year.

## THE FOOD PROBLEM

The food problem must be our first concern. I do not propose to enter here into a long consideration of how we reached our present difficulties; our business is not to look back, but to look ahead.

Briefly, the main elements in the situation are these; India as a whole is normally almost self-sufficient in the principal foodgrains. But the majority of Indians are certainly under-nourished rather than over-nourished, so that there is no margin or possibility of tightening the belt in an emergency. Also the production of food in India is not evenly distributed, and the producers are mainly small men, farming on a subsistence basis. The position was one which might easily be dislocated by an unexpected shock. The entry of Japan into the war and our reverses in Malaya and Burma, which brought the war to the borders of India, provided the shock. Anxiety about the outcome of the war, and the loss of our rice imports from Burma caused the small farmer to hold more of his crop than usual, and the ordinary consumer to buy more than he really needed for immediate consumption. Lack of consumers' goods was a contributory factor to the tendency to hold on to food. In short, the first main cause was a widespread loss of confidence, which was natural enough, and in itself quite innocent. Unfortunately, there are in India, as in other countries, people who are not innocent, who were thinking of advantages for themselves very different from a mere assurance of their daily bread; and who were prepared without scruple to make money out of food scarcity, careless of the misery and death they might cause. There was undoubtedly hoarding and speculation on a large scale by such people. So that the second main factor was human greed. The third was the difficulty in overcoming the tendency of each province, division or district to treat food as a local matter instead of as an All-India problem; in distributing food over vast distances; and in establishing control over prices. This was an immense problem of administration for which the additional resources required were not easily available. It is small wonder that some mistakes were made in assessing the problem and in devising means to deal with it.

## BENGAL'S FLIGHT

In Bengal abnormal causes were aggravated by the natural disasters of cyclone and floods; by nearness to the war; by the poverty of communications; and by the sparseness of the administration due to the permanent land settlement.

I should like to express my deep sympathy to the people of Bengal on the sorrows that have fallen on so large a portion of a frugal, hard-working population. This disaster has struck those least able to bear it, and the principal sufferers have been the weakest—the children, the women, the old man. It is the duty of us all not only to lessen their present sufferings but to take such steps as will ensure that such suffering does not occur again.

I have tried to outline the main elements which led us to the present position. The main remedies are obvious; to restore general confidence; to deal sternly with those who attempt to withhold food from the people for purposes of undue profit; and to arrange for equitable distribution over India of the available food at a reasonable price.

It is with the last of these aims that I want to deal in a little more detail.

## FOOD AN ALL-INDIA PROBLEM

The first thing to get clear about food is that it is not a provincial problem; it is an All-India and even a world problem. India must have the food she needs; and the other countries of the British Commonwealth, and the United

States, are prepared to help her to import food to supplement her own production. But if by administrative negligence we are compelled to ask for more help from abroad than we really need, we are expecting other countries, whose people are already rationed and whose prices are properly controlled, to deny themselves unnecessarily, and to send us ships which are urgently required for direct war purposes. It is our plain duty to set up an efficient Food Administration more or less uniform throughout the country. If we fail to do so, we may cause distress in other countries, and prolong the Eastern war.

The policy accepted by the Central Government is that recommended by the Foodgrains Policy Committee of last summer. The object is to ensure that foodgrains are available in adequate quantities all over the country at prices which will give the producer a fair, even a generous profit, and at the same time, place food within the means of the poorest consumers. We must not aim to depress prices in favour of the town, so as to deprive the agriculturist, who is the backbone of India's economy, of a profit which will encourage him to grow the maximum amount of food crop ; but he must not be greedy, or he will cause distress amongst his less fortunate brethren. The middleman is entitled to no more than a reasonable profit on the work : he is not allowed to make a fortune out of the cultivator's labour and the labourer's poverty. The key points in our plan are full rationing in the larger towns and control of prices, both backed by adequate administrative arrangements. As Mr. Burder has said, you cannot control prices by the mere issue of paper notifications.

I may say here in parenthesis that I hold personal touch a far better solvent for any problem of Government than paper. As a military commander, I tried never to issue instructions on paper where I could visit my subordinate commanders and discuss operations with them face to face : and I encouraged my staff to do the same. So far as possible, I hope to follow similar principles in civil administration.

You can control food prices only if every dealer from the village up to the main market and down again to the retail shopkeeper is subject to personal supervision and inspection, if the procurement operation of Government are rationally conducted, and if movements are strictly regulated.

#### URBAN RATIONING PRACTICABLE

It is said by some that urban rationing is unnecessary and impossible in India. This is nonsense. It is both very necessary and quite possible. In spite of all the difficulties of the past few months, Provinces such as Madras and Bombay, and States such as Travancore and Cochin, had kept the situation under control by rationing and by control of prices. For these Provinces and States, which are in deficit, stern necessity dictated these controls. In surplus Provinces, the controls are necessary to enable them to be as self-supporting as possible, and to stand the strain both of war and of the immediate post-war period when the world food situation is likely to be tighter even than now. Sind, the Punjab, the United Provinces, and the North-West Frontier Province have recognised the need, and have practically subordinated their provincial interests to the interests of India. Actually, India's interests are their interests, since on this food problem we must stand or fall as a whole.

Measures are being taken to introduce urban rationing all over India, and a system of price control uniform for groups of Provinces. These measures will take a little time. We shall need all the support we can get from public opinion and the Press. If all people could be induced to restrain their demands, shortages must be evenly distributed. The army, coupled with the prospect of a bountiful harvest, have eased the position perceptibly. But there are no grounds for complacency. We still have to fight lack of confidence and greed and to see that administrative action is adequate for the future. The army cannot remain indefinitely to do the work of the civil administration. Bengal has the sympathy of the world at present, but this will not continue unless it is obvious that she is making every effort to help herself. The next six months will be the testing time, during which the Bengal Government's policy must be energetically pursued and its administration strengthened.

You are aware of the main outlines of that policy, which aims at the restoration of confidence, the strict enforcement of the Foodgrains Control Order to prevent speculation and hoarding, and the regulation and control of prices. The solution of Bengal's food problem now lies in Bengal's hands. The Central Government has provided a generous measure of assistance in undertaking to supply food for Calcutta during the next few months. But the Central Government cannot continue indefinitely to "carry" a Province to which nature has vouchsafed so generous a crop if through administrative inefficiency the Province fail to secure that it is properly procured and distributed.

I am in earnest in this matter. To my mind there can be no condemnation too severe, no penalty too stern, for those who attempt to make unauthorised profits out of food—or out of drugs—at a time of national crisis. Nor can lethargy and procrastination be tolerated; nor must political animosities be allowed to interfere with a fair food deal for everyone.

#### INFLATION AND FOOD

Mr. Burder has rightly linked inflation with food. The inflationary problem is incapable of solution if food is not subject to effective control, for food affects the whole price structure of our economy. This battle is everyone's battle. It will profit a man nothing to gain large increments by forcing up prices and thereby causing inflation, since the value of gains will be thereby reduced, and he may cause untold misery to others. The Central Government is determined to check the inflationary tendency by all means in its power. There is no occasion for undue optimism but no need to accept Mr. Burder's somewhat pessimistic view. The general price level has been relatively stable for several months now.

An increased supply of consumers' goods at controlled prices is a necessary factor in the fight against inflation. A start was made some months ago with cotton textiles and, owing to the excellent co-operation between the industry and the Government of India, considerable success has been achieved. Medicines and drugs have now been taken in hand. There are many other articles of which the Indian consumer is short owing to war demands—such as woollen goods, footwear, and iron and steel for the village manufacture of agricultural implements. Of these and other goods every effort is being made to obtain an increased supply, by import or release from war purposes.

Of taxation, which is another method of reducing the waist-line of inflation, I will not speak here. It represents the compulsory absorption of financial adipose deposit. The voluntary method is increased saving, which is much to be recommended. If the Chambers represented at this meeting will advise their constituents to redouble their efforts to support the provincial savings campaigns, and if all other employers in India will do the same, it will be a great assistance.

#### COAL PROBLEM

Shortage of Coal is another problem which the Government is taking seriously in hand. Coal is the essential food of industry and of the whole war effort, and we cannot allow either to suffer from starvation or malnutrition in coal.

Coal also is a world problem, and here again we are playing on a world stage. Our coal production may have an appreciative effect on the course of the war. I do not propose here to deal with the causes or with the remedies which we have in hand; merely to mention the problem.

#### POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

I pass on to the longer-term problems of which Mr. Burder spoke, which may be grouped under the heading of post-war reconstruction. This is a very big subject and a very vital one. The years after the war are going to be of immense import to India's future. The problems and dangers are obvious. There will be a period of liquidation of the war effort, during which the fighting services will be disbanded, industry will return to a peace footing, stocks of war material will be for disposal, and the various economic controls will be gradually removed. Unless these processes can be prepared and undertaken in an orderly manner, great confusion or worse, may result. Then must come a deliberate effort to restart the national life on a better and more efficient footing to provide a standard of living for all Indians, in which account has to be taken of the rapidly increasing population at the present rate of some four to five millions a year.

In making this re-start India has very great advantages. Her natural resources are large. There will be a higher proportion of trained labour than before. In fact, India's supply of labour will be almost inexhaustible while the events of the war have proved that Indian labour under training rapidly acquires a high degree

of skill. India has many efficient men of business with wide experience. India will be a creditor country; she has suffered comparatively little in the greatest cataclysm in the history of humanity; and there is a great sympathy and will to help towards her, both in Great Britain and in America. There will be ample markets for her increased production, both at home and abroad. In fact, there is nothing to prevent India growing to be the strongest and most highly developed nation in the East, if she can solve her internal problems and make a united contribution to peace and prosperity in the post-war world.

The Government has in hand the preparation of plans to take advantage of India's opportunities in as great a measure as possible. In this the Government and industry must work very closely hand in hand. It is quite clear that development must be on an Indian basis and by Indian methods. But it is also evident that India will require assistance and advice at the first to help her to realise the great possibilities that are hers. While recently in England, I saw some of the leaders of British industry who are interested in India, and I found in them a spirit of most helpful co-operation towards India; there was certainly no desire to dominate or control Indian industry, but a desire to help on a basis of mutual advantage. I am sure that a visit by some of the leading Indian industrialists to the United Kingdom, in order to see the developments that have arisen during the war and to discuss India's problems with leading British representatives would be of the greatest possible advantage, and I hope that it may be arranged. The sooner the better; because other nations are already beginning to think about their post-war needs and to place orders for machinery and material.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF POWER SCHEMES

So far as I have been able to discuss the problem with people of knowledge and experience, it seems to me that one of the first necessities is to develop power schemes throughout India so as to provide the driving force for industries. In some instances, it may be possible to combine this with irrigation schemes for agriculture, the improvement of which by all possible means must be our principal aim. Agriculture is India's main industry and is capable of very great development. The land can be made to yield more, the livestock can be improved and the whole standard of our rural community raised.

The development of industry and the improvement of agriculture must go hand in hand in order to provide for India's growing population and to raise the standard of living. The problem of labour, to which Mr. Burder referred, is naturally linked with these developments. I do not propose to go into any detail here of the relations between labour and industry but I know you will realise that there is much to be done.

#### IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

The other great aim of post-war development is the improvement of the social services of which the principal are Education, Health and Medical Services and Communications. These are mainly unproductive in the short-term sense, though in the long-run, of course, both fully proved essential.

I propose to join issue with Mr. Burder, who was inclined to place education in the forefront of his plans. I am the last person to undervalue education, but I think it is clear that from the practical point of view the full realisation of a scheme such as that outlined in the Sargent Report must wait on other developments. India at present has simply not the money for such a scheme. As the country acquires increased riches by industrial and agricultural progress, so it can afford to spend larger sums on education and health. This is, I think, the way in which the social services have developed in other countries, certainly it has been so in Great Britain where industrial development went a long way ahead of educational development and of public health. From the practical point of view, which is the view by which we must be guided, whatever the theoretical advantages of a different course would be, I think that the main social services must be developed in the following order: Communications, Health, Education. I put communications first since I do not see how it is possible to effect any great improvement in health or education in the villages of India until they can be reached surely and quickly at all times.

What I have said must not of course be taken to suggest that we must not allot as much effort and money as we possibly can to Health and Education; it is merely to indicate the practical limitations which may be summed up as "full bellies must come before full minds."

In the course of his speech Mr. Burder fired quite a few sniping shots at

the Government, and once or twice made a note of his shots—participation of the Anti-boarding Ordinance hit and try to repair the hole.

"The bouquets he bestowed on the hon Members for War Transport and Supply will be much appreciated by their recipients. I should like myself to take the opportunity to thank all hon. Members of my Executive Council for their courage and capacity."

#### THE POLITICAL DEADLOCK

I have attempted to review for you the progress of the war and the policy of the Government of India on our immediate economic problems: and to place before you some ideas on post-war reconstruction. I have said nothing of the constitutional or political problems of India, not because they are not constantly in my mind; not because I have not the fullest sympathy with the aspirations of India towards Self-Government; not because I consider political progress impossible during the course of the war—any more than I believe that the end of the war will by itself provide an immediate solution of the deadlock—but because I do not believe that I can make their solution any easier by talking about them just at present. For the time I must concentrate on the job of work we have to do. The winning of the war organisation of the economic home front, and the preparations for peace call for the use of all the resources India has in determination, energy, and intelligence. I welcome co-operation from anyone and anybody who can assist me in these great problems on which the future of India depends. While I do not believe that political differences can be solved by administrative action, I believe that if we can co-operate now in the achievement of the great administrative aims which should be common to all parties when the country is in peril, we shall do much to produce conditions in which the solution of the political deadlock will be possible. As head of the Government—and an old and sincere friend of India—I will do my best during my term of office to guide India on her path to a better future. It is no easy path, there are no short cuts, but I do believe in the future greatness that lies ahead, if we can work together to the solution of our problems.

Proposing a vote of thanks at the conclusion of the Viceroy's speech, *Sir D. L. Drake-Brockman*, Deputy President of the Upper India Chamber of Commerce, expressed the earnest hope that under the wise guidance of His Excellency issues and problems that faced the country at present would find an early solution.

### Proceedings and Resolutions

#### Income Tax Tribunal

After the Viceroy had left, the meeting took up the resolution dealing with the Income-tax Appellate Tribunal, which ran as follows:

"This Association requests the early attention of the Government of India to the following matters connected with the practice and procedure before the income-tax Appellate Tribunal:

(1) That the request for the establishment of local registrars for filing of applications and for facilitating communications with the local benches be reconsidered.

(2) That the decisions of all benches of the Tribunal be made available to the public, if necessary by the amendment of Section 54 of the Indian Income-tax Act, and

(3) That the Government of India take an early opportunity, in consultation with commercial interests, of revising where necessary various provisions of the Income-tax Appellate Tribunal's rules and forms and the practice obtaining thereunder.

Moving the resolution, *Mr. H. Rowan Hodge* (Bengal Chamber), M.L.A. said that when the Income-tax Appellate Tribunal was brought into being by the Income tax Amendment Act of 1939, the intention of the Legislature was to give them not only an appellate body, which was independent of the Income-tax Department, but also a business like tribunal free from the formality and lengthy procedure of the courts and one from which practical and expeditious decisions could be expected.

Referring to the period of sixty days allowed under the Act for filing his appeal by a taxpayer, *Mr. Hodge* emphasised that it was most desirable to see that no time was wasted by having to post the application across India. He suggested the setting up of a district registrar in every place, where the bench

of the Tribunal sat. He requested the Government to publish the Tribunal's decisions by amending Section 54 of the Act.

Seconding the resolution Mr. J. M. B. Gibbons (Bombay Chamber) said that their experiences in Bombay were almost identical with those referred to by the mover of the resolution.

The resolution was unanimously adopted by the House.

#### Rent Restriction Orders

The next resolution moved by *Sir D. L. Drake-Brockman* (Upper India Chamber) stated: "In view of the increased cost of materials and labour and the fact that rents have remained practically unchanged owing to Rent Restriction Orders framed under the Defence of India Act 1939 and other causes, this Association invites the attention of the Central Board of Revenue to the inadequacy of the allowance of one-sixth of the *bonafide* annual value of property, consisting of buildings and lands appurtenant thereto permissible under Section 9 Sub-section (1) of the Income-tax Act (Act 1 of 1922), and recommends that it should be made more liberal by suitable amendment of the Act."

Commending the resolution for acceptance by the meeting the mover said that the proposal embodied in the resolution had already been circulated to constituent Chambers and had received general support, from which he gathered that dissatisfaction with the present position was general.

#### Excess Profits Tax

Mr. W. J. Younis (Bengal Chamber) moved the third resolution, which runs as follows: "This Association urges the Government of India to give an assurance to industry that on the termination of excess profits tax, all-revenue expenses incurred or accrued in earning these excess profits but not already included as a charge because of their indeterminate nature, will be allowed as a deduction in computing the final liability to excess profits tax; and that refunds of such tax in adjustment thereof will be made, should the tax have been removed."

In support of his resolution, Mr. Younis said it was imperative from India's point of view that no business which had prospects of contributing towards the country's post-war prosperity should be handicapped by excessive taxation, particularly in having paid taxes on profits which had been considered to be "in excess" but which, subsequently to the termination of excessive profits tax, could be proved to be accumulation which must be expended in order to restore business to a state from which, under good management, it could reasonably be expected to continue to trade for the benefit of the country and proprietors.

Mr. J. Nuttall (Madras Chamber), who seconded the resolution, said that any new taxation changed in form, or discontinuance of an existing tax resulted in anomalies because of the multitude of methods whereby the accounts of industries were maintained. These anomalies were not always apparent at the time the taxation measure was passed or discontinued, but this was no reason why the possible ill-effects of the change could not be anticipated.

The resolution was carried without any opposition.

#### Self-Sufficiency in Food

Rai Bahadur P. Mukerjee (Punjab Chamber) moved: "This meeting urges upon the Government the imperative necessity of making India self-supporting in the matter of food and recommends that all necessary steps for this purpose should be taken with the least possible delay and in particular, steps be taken to discourage the export of manures (including all commodities of manurial value) and also to arrange for the expeditious import, both of fertilisers and of plant for the manufacture of fertilisers on as large a scale as possible."

Rai Bahadur Mukherjee said that authorities competent to form an opinion anticipated that there would be world shortage of food for some years after the war and the United Nations' Conference on food and agriculture, which met in May last had urged the various National Governments to take steps to increase their food resources.

Seconding the resolution, Mr. F. C. Guthrie (Bengal Chamber) said the present food crisis had accentuated the need for increasing food production in India independently of outside supplies of fertilisers. It seemed to the speaker that technical investigation of the raw material position must first of all be carefully carried out and in particular the clarification of the raw material position, so far as the sulphate radicle was concerned.

The resolution was adopted *nem con.*

### Post-War Reconstruction

The fifth resolution moved by Mr. J. Nuttall (Madras Chamber) stated : "This Association believes that a programme of post-war reconstruction should cover the whole social and economic field, including measures necessary to raise agricultural production and a determined drive against illiteracy, poverty and disease aiming at a substantial rise in the standard of living of the peoples of India and that such plans should include industrial expansion at a socially desirable level. To further the programme, it is resolved to recommend to the Government of India the immediate appointment of a Committee composed of those qualified to plan such measures as are necessary and to remain in session until their work is concluded."

Mr. Nuttall remarked that although the objectives behind the resolution were so far-reaching in their effect, it was none the less vital to deal with the issues.

### Post-War Trade Policy

A resolution relating to post-war trade policy was then taken up by the House. The resolution runs as follows : "While this meeting welcomes the arrangements for international co-operation in regard to currency and trade matters, it desires to draw special attention to the comparative backwardness of India's economy and her low standard of living, and trusts therefore, that such arrangements as may be entered into on India's behalf will not interfere with the orderly development of India's resources both in men and materials, and in the consequential improvement in the standard of living."

"This meeting is further of opinion that in the meantime, a comprehensive review both of customs tariff and internal taxation in India in all its aspects should be undertaken in good time so as to ensure a balanced development of India's economy on sound and secure foundations."

Moving the resolution, *Lala Shankar Lall* (Punjab Chamber) said that the two principal parties to the currency plan were reported to have not come to any agreement on fundamentals. Moreover, there was the danger that in concentrating on remote questions, they might, perhaps, miss those that were much closer to them and were possibly of more vital interest. That was why the resolution suggested an immediate enquiry to be undertaken in regard to operation of taxations in India, so that they might know exactly where they stood before they assumed international commitments regarding their trade and currency.

*Sir George Morton* (Bengal Chamber) proposed that the second paragraph of the resolution should be amended to read as follows : "This meeting is further of opinion that, in the meantime, a comprehensive review of taxation, excise and tariff in India, in all its aspects should be undertaken in the interest of ensuring a balanced development of India's economy on sound and secure foundations."

The resolution as amended was adopted.

### War Risks Insurance

Mr. U. N. Sen (Northern India Chamber) moved a resolution on war risks insurance which stated : "In view of the substantial amounts standing to the credit of the War Risks (Factories) Insurance Fund and the War Risks (Goods) Insurance Fund and having regard to the all-round improvement in the war situation as a whole, the Associated Chambers recommended that the War Risks (Factories) Insurance Scheme be continued for a period of one year from April 1, 1944, at a rate of premium not exceeding one half of one per cent per annum and that with effect from the commencement of the next ensuing quarter, the rate of premium under the War Risks (Goods) Insurance Scheme be reduced to one-half anna per complete hundred rupees per months or part of a month."

Mr. Sen said that the actual receipts under the War Risks (Factories) Insurance Ordinance upto 31st March 1943, were approximately Rs. 908 lakhs and expenditure by way of remuneration to agents, inspecting staff and payment of liabilities, amounted to a little over Rs. 4 lakhs. Out of this sum however payment of liabilities under the scheme amounted only to Rs. 48,000, which showed how small had been the nature of the claims so far under the scheme. The budget estimates for the year 1943-44 of receipts expected under this scheme are about Rs. 7 crores so that the Fund would have at the end of March 1944 a credit of about Rs. 16 crores. The Fund, they believed, would be more than adequate to meet the claims which the improvement in the war situation led them to hope would be negligible.

Seconding the resolution, *Sir Harry Burn* (Bengal Chamber) said that taking into account the amounts standing at the credit of the two war risks funds there

must be very substantial balances available which should, he hoped, go far to provide the necessary cover required by present day conditions. *Sir Robert Menzies* (Upper India Chamber) supported the resolution which was passed.

#### Import of Capital Goods

Adoption by Government of early steps to facilitate the import of capital goods and bullion was urged in a resolution moved by *Rai Bahadur U. N. Mukherjee* (Punjab Chamber). The resolution runs as follows: "While recognising the efficacy of the steps taken by the Government to control inflation of currency, this meeting is of opinion that early steps should be taken to facilitate the import of capital goods and bullion and as a short term policy the import of consumption goods to meet the present deficiency."

While admitting the efficacy of the anti-inflationary measures such as, Government borrowing, control of bonuses and additional taxation so far taken by the Government, the mover thought the remedy for the evil consisted in making available more capital goods and bullion and also as a temporary expedient more consumer goods. The resolution, when put to vote, after having been seconded by *Mr. U. Sen* (Northern India Chamber) was adopted.

#### Claims in Respect of Damaged Property

The ninth resolution on claims in respect of lost or damaged goods against railway administrations reads: "While appreciating the greatly increased difficulties of Railway Administrations brought about by the war, this Association urges upon the Railways the necessity for improving the supervision and methods of handling cargo in transit by rail in order to reduce the heavy damage and losses at present being incurred and recommends that the procedure of the claims section of the various Railways be reviewed by a competent committee with the object of helping them efficiently and promptly to dispose of claims filed against them by the public." Moving the resolution, *Mr. H. F. Stackard* (Bengal Chamber) emphasised that the main object of the resolution was to direct attention of the Railways towards claims for damaged and missing goods. They understood that the Railway Administrations themselves recognised that there was room for improvement and that in some cases special officers had been appointed to investigate conditions. He expressed the hope that the railways would accept the resolution as an offer of constructive co-operation.

The resolution, was unanimously adopted.

#### Trunk Telephone Services

The resolution on trunk telephone services stated: "This Association draws attention to the present almost total exclusion of business interests from the use of the trunk telephone service as an instrument for the transaction of business and recommends that a period of two hours be reserved daily for commercial trunk calls, during which period only the highest priority calls will be accepted from selected departments and officials of Government and of the forces."

Moving the resolution, *Mr. U. N. Sen* (Northern India Chamber) recalled the correspondence on this subject which the Punjab Chamber of Commerce had last year with the Director General of Posts and Telegraphs and the suggestions then made, namely, that it should be impressed upon the civil and military authorities that a more sparing use should be made of priority privileges and to allocate the trunk lines for the use of the business community for some hours each day.

*Rai Bahadur P. Mukherjee* (Punjab Chamber) seconded the resolution, which was carried.

#### TRADE MARKS ACT

The last resolution dealing with the Trade Marks Act, 1940, ran as follows: "This Association invites the attention of the Department of Commerce to the need for an early settlement of the difficulties arising out of the necessity to satisfy the requirements of more than one registration authority in India and urges the Government of India to secure the acceptance of a common policy on trade marks registration as between British India and the various Indian States."

Moving the resolution, *J. Nuttall* (Madras Chamber) suggested that before the problem of trade mark registration became any more involved, the Government of India should at once re-examine how best to influence all Indian States to come within the scope of the British India enactment so that one registration in Calcutta or Bombay might serve for the whole of India.

After *Mr. C. P. Bramble*, *M. L. C.* had seconded, the resolution was put to vote and was adopted by the House.

# The Indian Economic Conference

26th. Session—Madras—30th. December 1943

"It is a blot on civilisation that one-fifth of the human race should live in perpetual starvation, miserably perishing for lack of food, clothes and shelter, steeped in ignorance, harassed by disease and darkening the sunshine of the world's health and prosperity by serving as a perennial reservoir of diseases, plagues and epidemics. And when war and scarcity stalk the land, they die in their thousands like flies by the roadside, a grave and bitter testimony to man's inhumanity to man. Is it too much to ask that every nerve should be strained, every power mobilised to prevent the repetition of such catastrophes and make India safe for healthy living and high endeavour? Here, in India, far-sighted and sympathetic statesmanship has got unparalleled scope for inaugurating an era of plenty and prosperity for all sections of the vast population of India", said Dr. B. V. Narayanaswami Naidu in his presidential address to the 26th session of the Indian Economic Conference which opened on the 30th. December 1943 at the Senate House, Chepauk, Madras.

Delegates from all over India attended the Conference.

## Welcome Address

Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar, Chairman, Reception Committee, welcoming the delegates, at the outset referred to the great loss sustained by economists in general by the death of Mr. N. S. Subba Rao.

Expressing the hope that when peace is restored a new world order would be established, the speaker added, that "many excellent sentiments have been given expression to, when men's minds were shaken by the devastating effects of war, sentiments which in the abstract are beyond all criticism but which may not be as easily demonstrable when peace is ensured and nations begin to turn to the constructive side of the rehabilitation. The Atlantic Charter was naturally hailed as the Magna Carta of human freedoms, for it was conceived on a proper appreciation of human values. The Charter, which has been endorsed by all the United Nations, states in its fifth clause that one of the purposes of post-war police must be—to quote the actual words—to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field, with the object of securing for all improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security. It would appear therefore that the economic reconstruction will be based on a global policy and not on the basis of the demands of individual nations. If such indeed is the future that is envisaged and if there is the remotest possibility of its being implemented, the world would indeed be metamorphosed into a kingdom as near to the Kingdom of Heaven as any that human intellect can visualise." The speaker continued: "Ere the ink on the pages on which the Atlantic Charter has dried, other voices are heard, voices of those who participated in this Charter of the United Nations, which give us cause for serious misgivings and which sound a note of warning." He referred to the colour bar 'raised by the stay-at-homes, to whom moral values make no appeal' and said, "Let us realise that we have to face the task that lies ahead of us, the constructive task of revival and reorientation, such that we may with a firm resolve safeguard the future of our fellow-countrymen and build up a society which shall be ensured freedom from want." He urged economists to give a correct lead "to set their house in order and to implement the many schemes of post-war reconstruction which are now under preparation." It was gratifying to note that at long last there was some sign that Governments were beginning to realise the value of the help and advice to economists and he hoped that in the larger problems of post-war reconstruction their help would be fully forthcoming and their advice would be fully availed of. It was equally gratifying to note that Capital and Industry was taking advantage of the advice of economists of repute—a step that would have yielded them greater profit had they taken advantage of it earlier. Founding a note of caution the speaker added that the economist in India, as indeed in any other country, had to steer clear of the Scylla of officious interference of Governments and of the Charybdis of subtle blandishments of Capitalism.

One of the urgent problems that would naturally engross economists' attention, the speaker stated, was the problem of post-war reconstruction in India in the many phases of its national activity. He added: "In one sense perhaps it is not a disadvantage to think of post-war social and economic problems without the em-

barrassment of party politics and there is some reasonable hope of agreed conclusions which may be of value to any Government of the future, provided the basis of such recommendations is the welfare of the common citizen, who is the real backbone of the Nation." He would like to see in the reports of the post-war reconstruction committees both the ideal and the practical aspects of reconstruction emphasised. It was little use presenting a Nation with a well-drawn up scheme of social security in all its diverse aspects of health, education, freedom from want and insurance against disease, dirt, squalor and ignorance, if such schemes were to be given effect to at some distant future after the War and only when the resources of the country warranted the implementing of such schemes. There should be a plan drawn up but the first steps to implement that plan, the spade work needed should be considered now, if any real change was to be effected in the post-war world.

#### TASK BEFORE ECONOMISTS

The expansion of Industries, the opening out of many new Industries, Heavy or Key Industries, the future of trade and commerce, the relationship of Capital and Labour, the exploitation of the mineral resources of this vast sub-continent, the role of Government in the starting of such industries—these were receiving the attention of many of our eminent countrymen. In this connection the speaker emphasised the need for careful research and planned methods of enterprise. At a time of inflation many industrial concerns might be started by individuals, which under normal conditions might not survive the fierce onslaught of inter-national competition. The world all over was moving towards a merger and it was the economist's duty to advise Capital and Industry to pool their resources, so to share the profits and losses that the enterprise itself might survive the shocks of impact from any quarter. At the same time, the danger of large combines and possibility of exploitation should be guarded against.

The time had also come, the speaker stated, when better understanding and a more intimate association of interests should be established between Industry and Labour. Too long had advanced industrial countries in the West been accustomed to view labour as a means to an end, the building up of an industry or the enlargements of capital. Too long had men pleaded financial insufficiency for the many long-neglected reforms to be put into operation, but this war had opened the eyes of many and the question of finance cannot be pleaded as an excuse for shelving many of these social security plans. If India was to achieve a higher standard of living, he added, she had to develop and with a quick pace, industrially and agriculturally. The role of communications, the place of irrigation schemes for reclaiming barren areas and making them fertile, the implementing of those schemes of power, Hydro-electric or otherwise, over the whole sub-continent to foster the growth of industries and agricultural enterprise so that the benefits of technical progress might be shared by all regions. These surely afforded great scope for constructive thought and planning. The development of "human capital", was also important. The attention that had to be devoted to education and public health and for which economists would have to suggest ways and means for financing such schemes on a generous and expanding scale would prove the touchstone of any genuine scheme of economic reconstruction. The recent scheme for training Technicians as a war measure should be an object lesson to the Government and to Industrialists alike. Too long had education been regarded as a non-remunerative enterprise and financial purists had confined themselves to the delectable task of limiting educational expansion to the available resources of current revenue. It would be for the economists to make it clear that any large scale expansion and reorganisation of education primary, secondary, University, technical and technological, was possible only if a new policy of subsidising these national schemes of reconstruction through large loans raised for such purposes was adopted. The same was true of problems of public health. The responsibilities which would devolve on the State, the manner in which finances were to be raised, the apportionment of expenditure on the different projects of economic reconstruction and the sweep of the economic offensive to be directed against poverty, were tasks requiring the advice of experts, disinterested and humane. The speaker hoped that the Conference, which is discussing some of the problems pertaining to the War period, would not neglect the equally important problems of post-war development.

#### NEED TO PRESERVE ECONOMIC UNITY OF INDIA

Dr. Mudaliar continuing said that whatever might be the forms of Government which this great sub-continent might ultimately decide to have, the need

to preserve the economic unity of India as a whole could not be ignored. The schemes of post-war reconstruction should be "so shaped that they formed a co-ordinated whole, a well knit mattress of closely interwoven enterprises, each unit contributing its own share and all benefiting by that larger and nobler loyalty of "each for all and all for each", such that India as a whole may take its rightful place in the comity of nations commanding respect and admiration alike, by the picture of united effort it may present."

As one interested in University education, the speaker hoped that Economics, which at present was a popular subject with all students, would occupy even a more prominent place in academic studies in the future. He hoped it would be possible to expand and extend those special fields of economic study, which went so largely towards an appreciation of applied Economics. He emphasised the importance of the study of Statistics, economic Geography, modern economic History, Statistical and Scientific methods of economic study and research.

He concluded by reminding them of the lesson of history. "The world is built on moral foundations. Institutions perish, customs change and after, Kingdoms rise and fall. The moral law alone is enshrined on the tablets of eternity."

#### President's Address

After thanking his fellow economists for the honour done to him, Dr. Narayanaswami Naidu, in the course of his address, said : "India's economic position has been considerably changed by the war. Her foreign trade has experienced a rude shock. Industrial production has been diverted towards the supply of war materials. New industries have been started for the supply of goods formerly imported from other countries. Many commercial crops cannot now be exported and the production of food crops has had to be increased owing to the stoppage of imports. Many of these tendencies will be fruitful of good if they are controlled and directed towards the peace needs of the country ; but they must first be protected against the stress and strain of post-war changes in relation to Indian fiscal economy which in particular is quite vulnerable to international price levels. If the desirable trends we now see in Indian economy were to continue, a reconstruction plan should be devised so as to take into account the permanent needs of the Indian people in relation to their progress and development."

Dr. Narayanaswami then referred to the appointment of the Reconstruction Committee and the work which awaited the various sub-committees in their individual spheres. Proceeding further, to consider the ideals that should guide us in the post-war reconstruction of India, Dr. Narayanaswami said that for the complete industrialisation of India, three kinds of industries should be started : (1) Industries that fill up the gap in our industrial structure by reducing the dependence of existing industries on foreign sources of supply for certain raw materials, (2) Key industries without which the large-scale factory-production of consumer's goods cannot be achieved economically and (3) Industries essential for the defence of the country.

But before organising a post-war plan, Dr. Narayanaswami continued, the scope of the reconstruction plan should be defined and in order that any post-war reconstruction plan may become ultimately useful, two essentials should be satisfied. The plan must, firstly, reduce the impact of sudden and drastic changes both at home and abroad on the economic position. Secondly, it must prevent the changes from war to peace economy from either disorganising the national economy or neutralising the industrial and economic progress achieved during the war or from rendering the nation less fit to realise its economic aspirations and aims. Reconstruction plans should render permanent the progress made during the war. Hence it is essential that post-war reconstruction in India should not be of a restrictive kind. India has got raw materials and has a good consumer's market at home for her finished products, and the country accordingly requires all-round expansion of her industries in the post-war period.

#### POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION PROBLEMS

Dr. Narayanaswami went on to refer to the various problems that would arise in the period of reconstruction. On the social side, the cessation of hostilities would bring unemployment to many and this should be solved by suitable adjustments in the capital programmes of Governments, Corporations and public bodies and by organisation of emergency relief. In the field of industrialisation, the plan should be to promote increased self-sufficiency for India and to increase consumption of industrial raw materials in indigenous industries. With regard to agriculture an attempt should be made to minimise the "unexampled pressure of the population

against the means of subsistence" by introducing reforms from all sides, technical, economic, fiscal and social. India's foreign trade was bound to take a new shape altogether in the post war years and new markets should be discovered in America, Australia and China. In this connection, the policy of the Government should be such that the Indian shipping will have scope for rapid development. With regard to finance, the inter-related problems of accumulated sterling reserves and inflation called for early solution. Above all, the important question of public health should be given the foremost place in any scheme of reconstruction.

Dr. Narayanaswami then discussed at great length the old theory of *laissez-faire* and the modern phenomenon of war-time economic control and said: Hitherto the material resources of India have been mobilised for winning the war. The time has now come for us to realise that as soon as the war is over, this mobilisation cannot be dropped, but has to be reoriented for winning the greater victories of peace. It is up to us to realise, that we have to see to it that the war controls are carried on into peacetime and utilised by capable and sympathetic hands for the promotion of India's wealth and welfare. The aim should be steadily kept in view to bring about a maximum utilisation of the material and human resources of the vast sub-continent of India in the interests of all its inhabitants. Such a plan will lead to the providing for all Indians the minimum of necessities like food, clothing, housing, medical help and education.

In any scheme of social welfare, provision for cheap, abundant and nourishing food should take the place of honour. Taking as basis a family of three adults and two children, the minimum annual food requirement for this unit would be Rs. 240, if we are to take Dr. Aykroyd's standard, while other essentials like fuel would demand an additional Rs. 120. According to this computation, every individual with a family, requires Rs. 30 per mensem excluding contributions for social insurance. This would involve a provision for a total income of at least Rs. 3,000 crores a year. At the same time, it must be borne in mind that this is only the minimum; the average is bound to be higher and therefore in order to ensure the minimum to all, the national income will have to be many times this figure.

No effort should be considered too arduous, no expense too heavy for carrying into execution a comprehensive plan which will include both agriculture and industry. Whenever in the past a plea was made for nation-building activities, an old horse, named lack of capital, was trotted out by obscurantists. Where there is a will to bring about a new order in India, the way can surely be devised. If there is to be an easy transition from a war economy to a peace economy, if India's millions are not to be for ever starving, ignorant and suffering, a co-ordinated plan for industrial and agricultural development is a prime need.

#### DESIGNING OF PLANNED ECONOMY

"Any planned scheme of economic development for India", said Dr. Narayanaswami, "must not be a slavish imitation of western industry with its urban civilisation and perpetual clash of classes. Industry at the present day has reached a stage when it is dependent for its very existence and survival on the sympathy, encouragement and active support of the State. When a State like India wants to promote new industrial ventures, it can itself undertake the organization, and see that it is worked in the interests of all the people. Even if new enterprises are entrusted to individual or corporate management, the State should insist that the benefits thereof flow equally to the whole community and are not utilised to promote the profits and interests of a few. In other words, the planned economy of post-war India must be so conceived and designed that surely and inevitably it will lead ultimately to a socialistic new order in India."

"In the middle of the twentieth century," Dr. Narayanaswami concluded, "we in India are living in a mediaeval economy, with the rich man in his castle and the poor man at his gate. The staggering disparity between our present poverty and our potential prosperity should continue no longer. If our present economic backwardness is not to leave behind an inheritance of suffering and misery to generations yet unborn, if modern civilisation is not to proceed from one catastrophic total war to another still worse, India should be strong in herself and capable of standing as an economically prosperous nation. No modern industry can thrive in any country, however advanced it may be, without a full measure of support from the Government of the country. Here, in India, far-sighted and sympathetic statesmanship has got an unparalleled scope for inaugurating an era of plenty and prosperity for all sections of the vast population of India. Given a unified plan for the whole of India, the carrying out of the plan may be entrusted to the provinces. There should be centralised

management and decentralised fulfilment. What is wanted to-day is drive, initiative and leadership. May we be granted wisdom to see clearly, courage to plan nobly and faith to transform the visions of to-day into the achievement of to-morrow! However long the path, however arduous and exacting the journey, let us go forward with the conviction that our goal is no less than a brave new world of health and happiness, international peace and world wide co-operation."

Dr. V. K. R. V. Rao thanked the Vice-Chancellor and expressed the gratification of Indian Economists at the recognition granted to them by the Vice-Chancellor of the part which economists had and could play in post-war reconstruction. During the past 15 months, the economists of India the speaker said, had without fear or favour discharged their duties to the country and many of their suggestions had been acted up to.

The morning session then came to a close.

## Proceedings of the Session

### Control Problems

Reassembling in the afternoon, the Conference discussed questions relating to "Economic Controls in India during the war," Dr. B. V. Narayanaswami Naidu, President, was in the chair.

Dr. R. N. Poduwal (Annamalai University) read a paper on "Wartime Control of Foreign Exchanges in India." He said that as a member of the sterling group of countries, India had to surrender surplus foreign currency proceeds to the Bank of England in exchange for sterling funds in London. The United Kingdom Government thus obtained short-term credits as well as foreign currencies for its external war finance. Dollar balances to the credit of India instead of being surrendered to the U. K. in exchange for sterling could well have been utilised in the initial stages of the war for the importation of machinery, tools, etc. from the United States for the acceleration of the pace of India's industrial development.

Prof. M. Abdul Qadir (Osmania University), in his paper on "Industrial Disputes during Wartime and their Settlement," said that any type of machinery devised for the settlement of industrial disputes should aim at minimising the chances of facile recourse to strikes on the part of workers. Referring to proposals for compulsory arbitration, the speaker said that the tendency to replace voluntary conciliation by compulsory arbitration was not a happy change. Now that the Government of India had recognised the principle of joint deliberation by calling the first conference of representatives of labour employers and the Government, he hoped that the standing committee set up by the Tripartite Conference would act as a machinery permanently available for the speedy determination of industrial disputes and formulation of a planned labour policy.

Prof. V. S. Ram (Lucknow University), presenting a paper on "Price Control in the United Provinces," said that earlier than any other part of India, the United Provinces realised the need for regulating prices and rationing. Price control there was not statutory but was effected through administrative regulations. Price control in the province had so far not been a success; it could not be a success in any area unless it was dealt with over the whole country on a uniform basis.

Mr. V. V. Ramanathan (Andhra University), in his paper on "War and Road Transport Control" said that inevitable effect of control had been a drastic curtailment of supply of transport. The roads were fast deteriorating and local bodies with inelastic revenues were unable to keep them in good repair. The Government should make more provision for allocating large sums to enable them to undertake this work. They should from now plan out the post-war co-ordination of transport, the various motor transport system being brought under groups or syndicates and co-ordinated with the railway.

### PROFITTEERING MUST BE CHECKED

Dealing with the problem of Price Control, Dr. Anwar Iqbal Qureshi (Osmania University) said that price control in the past had miserably failed and it was likely to fail in future also, speaking of it as a peace time measure in a capitalistic economy. But in wartime, when the law of demand and supply did not function normally, it became a question primarily of feasibility; if it was possible to control, prices must, then, be controlled. Slogans like "Blanket control of all prices would not do. Profit control and not price control was the policy that he would recommend. He would claim that this policy had been worked with considerable success

in Hyderabad State. He would also suggest that the penalty for profiteering should be death or public flogging. "Let us not", the speaker said, "launch out on ambitious Programme of controls; let us do it on a modest scale but let us do it thoroughly and effectively."

Prof. B. Govinda Rao (Guntur) read a paper on "Some Aspects of Economic Control in India during the War", in the course of which he stressed the need for planning for future development on the basis of present measures of control.

Prof. Sh. Ata Ullah (Aligarh University) in a paper on "Wartime Control of Foodstuffs in India" emphasised the importance of securing the Home Front. He also read a paper on the system of price control enforced by *Alauddin Khilji*, Sultan of Delhi, during the twenty years of his rule and the elaborate system of control, supervision and punishment devised by him in this behalf. The lesson of that experiment, the speaker said, was that for the success of price control, it was essential to have a well paid, honest, reliable and efficient agency. After the costly experience in Bengal there could be no two opinions as to the need of control of foodstuffs; but the Government should think well over the steps to be taken and then take determined action.

Speaking on "The Problem of Price Control in India". Mr. J. Satyanarayana emphasised the importance of guaranteeing a minimum price for agricultural produce increasing consumers' goods, and drawing off surplus purchasing power by means, among others, of higher rates of interest.

#### Rice Rationing in City

Mr. K. S. Somachalam (Annamalai University), in a paper on "Rice Rationing in Madras City" said that price control without rationing was like a body without soul. Describing the arrangements made in connection with rationing of rice in the city, he said that the rice procurement system worked on the whole effectively. The Government in their anxiety to "satisfy or placate urban population" should not, he urged, "sacrifice the interests of inarticulate but indispensable rural producers," if ceiling prices tended to chill the enthusiasm of ryots, the consequences might be serious and hence he urged the desirability of fixing "floor" (minimum) prices as well. Rationing in Madras had been a substantial success, despite the suspected existence of black markets. The disparity between the estimated consumption of 10,000 tons per month and the real consumption of only 8,000 tons, could be explained by either consumers drawing on secret hoards or reserves built up in the past, their refraining from buying rice on account of its quality not being good or the preliminary enumeration and the estimates built thereon being exaggerated. In conclusion, the speaker pleaded for the introduction of rationing in respect of firewood and sugar also.

#### CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS OF CONTROL MEASURES

A discussion then followed.

Professor Rudra, Economic Adviser to the U. P. Government, said that in dealing with the subject of economic control, one should remember that the success of measures, albeit of the utmost economic validity, depended on the ability, honesty and industry of the administrative staff in charge. Price control should be viewed, not parochially or provincially, but from an all-India point of view. It was high time that qualified students of economics should more closely collaborate with the administration, industrial workers and commercial interests to help, so far as academic research could, to tide over difficulties, solve problems and administer schemes. Price control, to be effective, should take into account not merely territorial parities but also parities of different commodities as well as of agricultural and non-agricultural goods required by producers. A system of ceiling prices rather than price control was desirable and he hoped the U. P. Government would be permitted to follow this line. But if the Government of India embarked on a policy of statutory price control, then the U. P. too would fall into line.

Referring to difficulties arising from competitive buying by "powerful agencies" and organisations like large employers, the transport problem, lack of organisation among traders, Prof. Rudra said that the issue of enormous purchasing power created by no means a small problem. He said that there were instances where one could buy more or less according as he paid in silver and small coins or in paper money. It was therefore, essential, he said, that the media of currency should also be regulated simultaneously if the price control machinery was to work smoothly.

## Second Day—Madras—31st. December 1943

## Price Control and Rationing

The discussion on questions relating to "Economic controls in India during the war" was continued when the All-India Economic Conference resumed its sessions this morning at the Senate House, Cheyauk.

Prof. *B. Sheno* said that the main consideration of the Government at the present time was the maintenance of law and order in the home front and from that point of view the Government had introduced rationing mainly in bigger cities and in his opinion the system had been working well.

Prof. *R. B. Bhan* (Kashmir) said that price control and rationing need not necessarily be an all-India affair. They could be worked out fairly successfully in smaller regions.

Mr. *J. J. Anjaria*, Reader of Economics in Bombay University, said a completely centralised control of production and even of distribution was necessary. But the practical difficulties in the way of applying a unified policy were the political relationship which subsist between this country and England, and the want of co-operation by the public to the extent necessary. Under the present circumstances there was no way by which we could devise a procurement machinery which was equitable to the producer and the consumer.

Principal *D. G. Karve* (Poona) observed that even within the provinces themselves there was no unified control. A separate department solely concerned with the control question should be established.

Dr. *P. S. Lokanathan* observed that there was necessity to alter some of the assumptions which the Government had taken for granted in their policy of price control. Instead of a vague policy, if the Government had gone on a selective basis, they would have achieved better success, and the working would have also given wider satisfaction.

Prof. *Giunchand* (Patna) said that there should be one central buying organisation which should buy for all requirements, both military and civil.

Mr. *Lakshminarasu* (Hyderabad) said that in other free countries civilians had as much priority as the military and that condition must be made applicable to India also. He said that the financial policy of the Government of India was also responsible for the present situation. The armies of other countries now stationed in India must be paid for by their respective countries. They could not have any efficient and effective machinery for price control unless there was a popular government in the centre and in the provinces.

Dr. *V. K. R. V. Rao* said we could not really tackle economic controls, even of a diluted type, without the people having the feeling that the interests of the public were identical with the interests of the Government. Only a responsible and responsive government could achieve efficient results.

Prof. *Vakil* (Bombay) stated that till there was a change of outlook on the part of the Government and in the methods adopted by the business community in general, and unless the political tension in the country was lessened, there could not be any effective control of prices and distribution.

Prof. *S. Vydiyanatha Aiyar* (Dacca) said that it was largely an administrative problem. It was the lack of co-ordination between the different departments and the apathy of the public that were responsible for the present position.

Dr. *A. Krishnaswami* suggested that the problem could be solved by having a single procurement agency.

The discussion on the subject concluded,

## REGULATION OF BANKING

Reassembling in the afternoon, the Conference discussed the question of Regulation of Banking in India.

Mr. *V. R. Pillai* (Travancore) in his paper said that legislation could not go far enough to establish and work a sound regulation system, as banks were not flourishing in all parts of the country. He then surveyed the growth of Joint Stock Banking Companies with particular reference to its growth in the Travancore State, where recently as they all knew a great crash had occurred. He next referred to the amendment of the Indian Companies Act in 1936 and stated that this amendment, in his opinion, was having a salutary effect in eliminating mushroom and fraudulent banks. In his view, some of the suggestions of the Reserve Bank for safeguarding the interest of depositors were not good enough for the progress of banking. The safeguards seemed to hinder the business of banking. For example,

the insistence on cheque habit was too premature. Legislation could not prevent failure of banks. Steps must be avoided to ensure good management. For that purpose the Reserve Bank should make arrangements to give training in banking and organise inspection of all banks periodically. In fact it should devise a co-ordinating system by which it could have a direct or indirect control over all banks in the country.

Mr. A. R. Bhat of Poona, in his paper which was read by Prof. D. G. Karve, stated it would not be in the interest of proper growth of banking institutions in the country to lay down statutory restrictions on investments and day-to-day management of banking companies. He suggested that no banking firm should be permitted to be organised as a private limited company if the depositors' interest was to be safeguarded. It was also necessary to restrict the number of votes which a shareholder could possess. The Reserve Bank's recommendation of Rs. one lakh as the minimum paid up capital to start a joint stock bank would affect many an existing banking concern and it would almost be possible for mofussil areas to float their own banks.

A discussion then followed.

Mr. Manuhami Aiyar (Annamalai University) stated that banks in South India had successfully defeated the purpose of price control methods and that they were playing a prominent part in bumping up textile prices. There had been no doubt a belated ordinance prohibiting forward dealings, etc., by banks. The time had come to give a place on the directorate for the representatives of deposit-holders also. On the analogy of the Legal Practitioners' Act, he would like some restrictions to be imposed on banks for the purpose of diverting their finances for helping industrial enterprises instead of speculating on land properties and plantations.

Mr. L. N. Govindarajan (Jayola College) said the proposal of the Reserve Bank that 30 per cent of the working fund of the bank should be invested in Government securities, would be a great handicap for small banks in which most of the deposits were saving deposits. In his opinion, a desire to earn profits and to build a reserve fund were not opposed to the development of sound banking.

The Conference then rose for the day.

### Third Day—Madras—1st. January 1944

#### Control of Inflation

Discussion on the question relating to currency expansion during the war, took place to-day when the All India Economic Conference resumed its session at the Senate House, Dr. B. V. Narayana-swami Naidu presiding.

Mr. T. Sathyamurayana Rao (Guntur), leading the debate, emphasised the need to bring down prices of commodities and to have a comprehensive and co-ordinated plan for control of monetary system. He also pointed out that inflation could be checked by adopting a scheme of compulsory borrowing and by limiting the income of certain classes of people in the urban areas to Rs. 2,000.

Dr. B. K. Madan, Director of Research, Reserve Bank of India, Bombay, speaking on the inflation in the Indian economy, pleaded for a clear understanding of the essential character of the problem. After pointing out that the primary source of war-time inflation lay very largely in the additional expenditure undertaken by the Government, he referred to the measures adopted against inflation by increasing production and restricting people's incomes by taxes or loans. Referring to the controversy as to whether the rise in prices resulted from the general scarcity or shortage of goods in relation to demand or from the expanding monetary circulation, he said that the controversy appear to betray a confusion of thought resulting from the fact that the problem of rising prices was alternatively viewed from two different angles, which disclosed opposite facts of what was essentially and fundamentally the same phenomenon. Scarcity in relation to demand and currency expansion were the simultaneous expression and outcome of the considerable diversion of real resources from civilian to war services, effected by the issue of purchasing power created to this end and they together contributed to the rise of prices. The supposed antithesis between the two explanations was thus artificial and unnecessary. As regards broad lines of the existing financial controls the position was, indeed, one extreme satisfaction as far as the revenue of the Government of India went, the estimated deficit and capital expenditure on defence up to the end of the next financial year being all covered by the increase in internal debt. After referring to the accumulation of sterling balances in Britain, Dr. Madan stated that the present inflation arose out of a process which while immediately inflationary also created the material for damping the inflation

in due course, and therefore also served as a check upon the degree of active inflation. Touching upon the question of the anti-inflation programme, he emphasised the need for intensified production and fair distribution of food supplies.

Mr. M. A. *Aliseshayya*, (Madras) suggested the modification of the lease-lend agreement between India and other Allied countries for effective control of inflation. He also stated that the economy of the country should be divided into two sections, military and civilian, and steps must be taken to block the currency going into the military section. The income of the people residing in urban areas might be controlled.

#### NEED FOR CO-ORDINATED SCHEME

Professor *Kapur* (Lahore) observed that in his opinion the expansion of currency in India had not been made to an undesirable extent.

Mr. V. R. *Pillai* (Travancore) pointed out that in the present circumstances inflation might appear to be treacherous because it goaded people into the belief that they had sterling assets and that things would right themselves on the basis of that security. After all that security might prove illusory.

Professor *Muthia* (Pachaiyappa's College) suggested that steps might be taken to get possession of the British investments in India for furthering war efforts instead of merely inflating the currency.

Mr. T. T. *Krishnamachari* asked the Conference to definitely give a lead to the country in what way inflation should be stopped and what the Government should do to meet the future demands of the Allied countries for supply. He also desired the Conference to concentrate attention upon the present method of the Reserve Bank selling gold and whether that was a right policy in the interest of India.

Professor *Vakil* (Bombay) replying to the question stated that they did not know the actual facts as to how and wherefrom the Government got the gold and how it was being sold. Unless they knew the exact position, they could not usefully discuss the problem. Of all the anti-inflation measures the most urgent one was a settlement of the political tension in the country.

Mr. *Zacharias* (Madras) suggested the delinking of the rupee from sterling and the sale of the sterling now as the two measures for checking inflation.

Dr. P. S. *Loganathan* stated that the expansion of currency was one of the methods by which this war was being conducted. Under the present circumstances what they must insist upon the Government doing was a guarantee to the people of their essential needs and then draw upon the balance for military purposes.

The discussion on the subject then concluded and the Conference adjourned for luncheon interval.

#### POLITICAL DEADLOCK, A HANDICAP

"The greatest anti inflationary measure which can be adopted in this country is to resolve the present political deadlock compared with that measure every other measure is of secondary importance", said Professor *Gyanchand* of the Patna University.

"A total war effort," the Professor said, "requires total co-operation of the people and total co-operation of the people would be unobtainable if political difficulties of the kind that are there should continue."

The Conference next took up for consideration, "Recent structural changes in capitalistic economy." Professor *Gyanchand* (Patna) opening the discussion referred, among other matters, to such developments as, the growing recognition of the desirability of giving to the people, according to their needs, the idea that labour was not a vendible commodity, development of corporations with criteria of production based on social costs rather than money costs and the realisation that displaced labour was a liability and therefore technological developments should be limited by this factor. He added that the developments now witnessed had not changed the centre of gravity of capitalistic economy.

Mr. K. C. *Ramakrishnan* (Coimbatore) referred to the growth of "agricultural capitalism" and large scale farming in some of the districts of Madras and suggested the desirability of exploring the possibilities of co-operative effort in this connection.

Bringing the proceedings to a close Dr. *Narayanaswami Naidu* reviewed the work done during the three days of the Conference. Despite differences in methods of approach to problems, he had no hesitation that all economists assembled were agreed on the fundamentals. The poverty of India was, they were all agreed, the most important factor that confronted economists and statesmen to-day and they were equally unanimous that all that could be done must be done to see a better standard of living assured to their countrymen. While he welcomed the suggestions

that industrialisation should be rapidly promoted, he thought "*Laissez faire* was good once for all." He urged that care should be taken to see that industrialisation was effected in a way as would promote the general well-being of the people at large and did not fall into the hands of vested interests. He thanked the authorities of the Madras University for placing the University buildings at the disposal of the Reception Committee and the delegates, the volunteers and others who had co-operated to make the Conference a success.

Prof. Gyanchand conveyed the thanks of the delegates to the Reception Committee for the arrangements made and Prof. Zacharias proposed a vote of thanks to the President. The Conference then concluded.

## The All India Philosophical Congress

18th. Session—Lahore—21st. December 1943

Sir Manohar Lal's Opening Address

"The reproach has often been made that in India philosophy ceased with the ancient school, at any rate after Sankara. Would that remain a lasting stigma on the genius of Hindustan"? asked the *Honble Sir Manohar Lal*, Finance Minister, Punjab, while inaugurating the 18th session of the Indian Philosophical Congress before a representative and distinguished gathering of philosophers from all over India, in the Hailey Hall of the Punjab University at Lahore on the 21st. December 1943.

Inaugurating the Congress *Sir Manohar Lal*, amidst cheers, said:—I possess no title to address your learned and scholarly assembly—and just these days I happen to be immersed deep in the vulgar calculations of our provincial finance and no oracle has appeared to offer me inspiration. The age that lies behind us extending even beyond the limits of the present century, has engaged in much crude reasoning and wishful thinking, and been troubled by pressing economic and political problems. I note that in economics, may be under stress of war, dissension is giving way to considerable agreement in approaching questions though final aims still await firm determination. Immediate tasks, the work in hand, absorb all attention though in thinking of the new world order, broader questions of welfare at least in limited fields, cannot escape attention. In the political field, divers have been the objects of study and interest, some thinkers regard idealism as the ever-growing trend that dominates thought. Shall I be correct in venturing upon the thought that much recent philosophy has departed from its ancient abstract reflexions upon the nature of reality, and abstruse cogitations upon the meaning of truth and being? Such as might have been forceful philosophers in another age are now occupied in the humbler business of evolving the significance of democracy—and this has often meant nothing higher than justifying one's own ways to men. Present-day philosophy tends to become a handmaid of advocacy to lead others to believe that our constitution is the best, and that, with possibly some minor modifications, it would form such an ideal that the world must bend to its demands and its needs, while it is also intimated that such constitution would not be universally suitable. History, actual fact, man's prejudice and partial thinking hold the field; the philosopher seems to have merged his existence with the interested political reasoner in this essentially unphilosophical inquiry and assertion.

"Will you look round, not round this hall, for here indeed we have a galaxy of distinguished thinkers, have we today in the world, have we had during the past thirty years or more, any first-rate philosopher engaged in philosophising? Take England; we have not even a *Bardley* or a *Green* or a *James Ward* or a *Mac Taggart*? Is this not symptomatic? We have occasionally an odd explanation why a thinker adheres no longer to pacifism—under stress round factual facts. In other countries a similar situation prevails: philosophy ranges round factual data presented by physics and the material world, the work of remarkable thinkers typified by *Einstein* and *Plank*, and they of course have their counterparts in England, the *Jeans* and *Whittakers* of Cambridge. How is it that philosophy's own rich fields tend to become barren; there is much humdrum summing up and second-rate comment but no emergence of striking synthesis or subsumption, no

overpowering attack on the citadel of the secrets of the 'world as a whole'? In India I understand, much high class and sound history of philosophy has been successfully attempted, and some graceful exposition of doctrine achieved, but the days of creative thought seem to have gone for ever. As linguistic and literary material gathers, this tendency may be intensified. Is that not a danger against which those who have the necessary equipment must strive? The reproach has often been made that in India philosophy ceased with the ancient schools, at any rate after Sankara. Would that remain a lasting stigma on the genius of Hindustan? In the West perhaps Bergson is the greatest recent name for original thinking. Perhaps Freud forces attention in his limited field, if philosopher would receive him within their jealous portals.

"It has been said that philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the point, however, is how to change it. In this endeavour the philosopher has perhaps surrendered his identity today. It is for you to pronounce whether the present well-nigh complete transformation, desire to define the ratio and the direction of the change is worthy of our great discipline or would soon be discarded, tolerated today only because of the force of circumstances."

"The name of Croce has gained prominent mention today. For sheer delightful expression, he could not be surpassed, thinking proceeds with remarkable ease, and the grace and quiet charm of his language offer lasting joy. But of him it has been said that he shares the English philosophical indifference to the insoluble questions of metaphysics. In the state of European thought, is there not chance for the Indian mind to open out and fasten on the eternal problems of philosophy? What is knowledge, does it exist, is it possible? What is existence, in what sense and measure does our perception furnish any basis for reality, its understanding lie within its purview. Are we ready to address ourselves to the high endeavour of facing the many issues of the manifold problem—perchance to discover fresh and compelling light, may be further to thicken and embroil its complexity?

#### LET US NOT BE LOST IN CONTROVERSY

"Let us not be lost in the controversy—butter or guns, nor in the ingenious but at present perhaps pointless questions of the new world order. Dark things around us remain unilluminated, not a mystery cleared up, and not a disputation resolved. Man's task is unbounded while the meaning of truth, the significance of good and evil remain undefined, unsettled. Martin Luther said and the famous Burton rendered it thus: 'Where God hath a temple, the Devil will have a Chapel.' Is this the final pronouncement of philosophy, is the strife eternal and real, or merely appears to be so? Can we afford to let the world run on without ceaselessly attempting to face such eternal questions?

"Perhaps I have spoken at random and without pertinence, and deserve castigation at your hands—then my excuse would be lack of qualification to approach your mighty minds. Perhaps, I have sailed near some worthwhile considerations—then I would say, taking liberty with the poet's words, 'somewhat versed in books and shallow in himself. I have much pleasure in inaugurating this Congress."

#### Principal Chatterji's Address

Principal G. C. Chatterji, Vice-Chairman of the Reception Committee, extending a welcome to the delegates to the conference, said that, though the Congress session had been called in December 1942, due to circumstances created by the war over which they had no control, the Congress had to be postponed twice and it might have been postponed again this time. Due to certain restrictions on entertainments and petrol, Principal Chatterji regretted that more adequate and comfortable arrangements could not be made.

"The Punjab and its capital alike," said Principal Chatterji,—represent unorthodox India which is sick and tired of its hoary past, and which longs for a future which is free and untrammelled." Principal Chatterji further said:

"In India the introduction of democracy, combined with provincial autonomy, has resulted in increased conflict between nationalism and communalism. In Europe the challenge of Bolshevism, on the one hand, and that of Nazism, on the other, have caused a ferment in the customary ideas of social obligation and of individual morality. The menace of Japan and the heroic struggle of China for self-preservation and rejuvenation and finally the outbreak of world war No. 2 with its tale of untold misery, despair and famine, as well as that of human endurance, sacrifice and endeavour, have caused such an upheaval and shaking up of human beliefs and attitudes, that no philosophy worth the name can afford to ignore them.

I may be told that philosophy is not concerned with such mundane affairs and that its quest is the Unconditional and the Absolute. But a philosophy which does not base itself on the bed-rock of human experience, and which does not attempt to guide and illumine that experience is but a sham and a mockery. Too long have we philosophers been content with the idle web-spinning of speculative systems, systems which become sacerdotal and act as clogs and fetters to the human spirit. A new age is being born around us through the travail of humanity, an age with new problems to face, new tasks to accomplish. It is for philosophy to wake up from its dogmatic slumber, and to apply the canons of critical thought to the citadels of ignorance, prejudice and error which threaten this new phase of the evolution of man. It is only when philosophy boldly faces once again the real problems of our own times, that it will win back that honoured place in the estimation of men which it has lost."

Dr. T. M. P. Mahalevan, Secretary of the Congress, introduced the President of the Congress, Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari, who then delivered his presidential address.

#### Presidential Speech

Prof. P. N. Srinivasachari said :

"Modern life suffers from racialism in social life, sectional thinking in science, nationalism in politics and fanaticism in religion. What is sorely needed to day is a new synthetic outlook that will combine the seriousness of the thinker with the social virtues of the man of action, break down the barriers of department thinking and exclusiveness, heal all discords and given a new spiritual direction to society."

"The moral genius of India has recognised the reality of moral evil in its individual and social aspects, and has shown the way of overcoming it by love and by self-suffering. Evil by contact with good becomes sterile and self-destructive and thus gives rise to the reign of universal love. The modern 'yogi' of India insists on a new integration of divine life in which there will be a gradual ascent to supra-mental life as well as a descent into the physical life with a view to spiritualise it. He has a vision of a universal transformation of society as a whole in the future by the descent of divine life on earth and the creation of a new race of super-spiritual men. The religious prophet of India lived and realised the truths of various religions and heralded a new age in which all religions will be harmonised without losing their individuality. The Indian philosophers to day with their synthetic thinking and syncretic vision have already attempted a new orientation of Indian thought by utilising the best thoughts of the West and interpreting the West to the East and the East to the West and thus bringing about a better understanding between them. India's service to the world is the gift of her spirituality. In the words of one of India's leading philosophers, the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity have a deep spiritual meaning. The freedom of man is the freedom of the self-development of divinity in man. The equality of men implies the recognition of the same Godhead in all human beings, and the ideal of brotherhood is a unity of mind and feeling based upon the inner spirituality of man. Thus the political ideals of the west can be spiritualised. Freedom in the positive sense is to be utilised by the free man in the service of the ideals of world-welfare by his renouncing the egoistic and individualistic outlook. All men are equal in the sense that they have the same divine destiny. This view furnishes the most inspiring motive for intellectual co-operation and inter-religious understanding so necessary for realising the ideal of the federation of the world. Such a consummation can never be achieved unless mankind gives up its present antagonisms based on differences of race, culture and religion. It is up to the Indian philosopher with his age-long tradition for solving world problems to face the present confusion, examine its causes, and point the way out of it.

Continuing the President said, the Song on the Chariot in Kurukshetra, true to the synthetic genius of India, was a call to the philosopher to be not only a spectator but also a man of action participating in the battle of life and working for world welfare. In every world war which is really a warfare of ideals, the Indian philosopher has always fought in defence of the ancient world heritage of spiritual culture and the re-establishment of its synthetic ideal.

The best way of retaining the soul power of India is to keep alive her synthetic philosophic outlook by removing the barriers of isolation and exclusiveness on the one hand, and the evils of the slavish imitation of alien ideas on the other. Science has destroyed distance only in the physical sense but not in the philosophic and

spiritual sense. It is only philosophy applied to practical life that can really bring men together and make them live a new spiritual joint-family life. Philosophy in India is not divorced from life but has always permeated everyday life. What is now required is not more philosophy, but more philosophers, who would, as heirs of India's cultural heritage, consecrate their lives to the pursuit of philosophic thinking and set an inspiring example to others in their views and ways of life.

The social philosophy of today reveals the tragic fact that culture and civilisation are on the very verge of collapse owing the decadence of faith in the moral values of life and the dignity of personality. The evolutionary theory of the survival of the fittest affords a scientific and moral justification for the growth of the evils of cut-throat competition in all walks of life, and dictatorships or the rule of supermen with their will to enslave humanity. The gospel of material progress based on the triumphs of modern science has reduced man to a machine and a mere item in the programme of exploitation. The machine created by man has become a menace to his very being, the idea that the State is an end in itself and is beyond moral laws and that the individual is only a means to an end has undermined the foundations of true democracy and self-rule. The theory of chosen races and religions has increased racial bitterness and religious fanaticism. Religiosity has taken the place of religion and dogmas and rituals masquerade as spiritual faith; and religion itself is regarded as a morbid obsession. Psycho-analysis has exaggerated the meaning of the sexual instinct as an all-powerful but repressed feeling clamouring for satisfaction, and made sex training and education in nastiness and licence. Society itself is threatened with extinction by the total war that rages everywhere and some thinkers say that life is now decadent and will soon be destroyed. It is the supreme task of the philosopher to restore the higher ideals of life and reconstruct society on a moral and spiritual basis.

Professor A. R. Wadia, the outgoing President, thanked *Sir Manohar Lal*, who, he said, also inaugurated the Congress Session 14 years ago in Lahore.

"*Sir Manohar Lal* is a shining light among the economists", he said, "but he is certainly one of us as a philosopher in spite of him."



सत्यमेव जयते

# Indian Debate in Parliament

House of Lords—London 20th. October 1943

## Food Situation in India

The House of Lords held a debate on the food situation in India on the 20th. October 1943.

The *Earl of Huntingdon* (Labour) asked Government whether they had any further statement to make regarding the famine conditions in certain provinces in India, and what steps would be taken to relieve the situation. He quoted published figures of starvation cases and deaths in Calcutta, and said that in country districts, mortality figures were difficult to get, but the famine was acute. "In fact," he said, "the straggings of starving people into the cities is, I understand, one of the gravest complications to be faced by the authorities. I have no wish to give any more of these harrowing figures, which are enough, I think, to confirm the dreadful stories of starvation and misery which are coming from India to-day especially the Deccan, Cochin, Travancore, and particularly Bengal."

Lord Huntingdon spoke of a big increase of prices and said there was shortage not only of grain and rice, but also of milk. In fact, food stocks of all kinds seemed to be in great scarcity and at exorbitant prices. Whenever food was very short, cholera made its appearance.

After giving figures of the number of cases, Lord Huntingdon referred to grim stories of patients not wishing to be cured from cholera because their only alternative would be a long-drawn out death from starvation. But without such stories, the figures themselves were enough to stir one's imagination and show how appalling the conditions in India to-day must be. "When confronted with such a situation, the major concern of all of us must be firstly to express our deepest sympathy with the Indian people and particularly with sufferers from these terrible conditions in Bengal and other areas in India, and secondly what measures of relief can be brought to these people and how quickly." "It was with great thankfulness that many of us heard that food-ships were on their way to India, but I am sure everyone in the House must really feel that more drastic measures are essential if we are going to deal with this acute crisis. I ask Government whether they can give us any fresh news of the situation and also what steps are being taken now and can be taken to deal with the crisis. I would also ask whether more grain cannot be shipped from Australia or even from the United States and if some army reserves could not be released—a greater amount of it—to feed the civil population. This could later be replenished from further arrivals of grain. I should like to urge on the Government that shipping food for to-day is a vital war need."

Examining the causes of the disastrous conditions Lord Huntingdon said, his object was to find out future remedies, if possible, and stopping any recurrence of such a major disaster. Lord Huntingdon said, the Gregory Committee's report had suggested that the loss of Burma rice was a very strong contributory cause. It had to be remembered, however, that the rice imported from Burma amounted to about one and a half million tons, of which less than a hundred thousand tons annually went to Bengal. Thus the situation could not be completely attributed to the loss of Burma rice. The cyclone in Bengal in 1942 and the failure of the monsoon in Madras were other contributory causes. On the other hand, these losses were largely made good by exceptional crops in Northern India in the spring of 1943. Grain bought for the army and army reserves must also be a contributory cause. Moreover, there was the fact that the Indian as a soldier eats very much more than the Indian as a civilian can afford. "Looking at the whole situation, it would seem not to be so much an absolute shortage of foodstuffs as a complete breakdown in distribution."

With increasing prices, the terrible poverty of the Indian peasant left a very small margin between subsistence and starvation. "It stands to reason that a nation that is so reduced in poverty as to have cow-dung for fuel, instead of using it for manure is, one might say, well on the road to committing race suicide. Many people are worried over this point: why was that situation, which was foreseen a long time ago and was developing for months, allowed to grow, why did not the Central Government of India take the profoundest measures before the famine reached this disastrous extent and the situation became completely out of hand."

## CENTRAL GOVT.'S FAILURE

Referring to Mr. Amery's remark at Birmingham last week that the dangerous possibilities of the situation were fully realised soon after the loss of Singapore and Burma, Lord Huntingdon said the loss of Singapore was some time ago. Why were none of the measures advocated in the Gregory report put into operation? The problem was so obviously an all-India one that it could have been dealt with only by the Central Government. Mr. Amery in the same speech, suggested what the reason was, the Central Government's reluctance to encroach on the Provincial Government's functions. The ultimate power rested with the British Government just as the final and ultimate power in the Central Government rested with the Viceroy. "These powers are immense. We have seen the Central Government's powers exercised in a most drastic and sweeping way, pushing everything aside, very recently. But why, in this case, were not drastic reforms instituted by the Central Government in the welfare of millions or at least hundreds of thousands of Indians, dependent on the measures being taken?"

After referring to the absence of sympathy and co-operation on the part of the Indian people with any scheme originating from the British Government, Lord Huntingdon said: "If we are to cope with this famine, I would earnestly press that the problem of the future of India should be brought out of cold storage and we should again attempt to thaw Indian mistrust by sympathy and generous understanding in this crisis."

## "UNITED NATIONS MUST GUARANTEE INDIA'S FREEDOM"

"Once we have won the confidence and friendship of the Indian people, half the problems connected with the famine will be solved. Public opinion in India could be brought to support any scheme of regulation. Leaders of different parties, if given the chance, could induce farmers and merchants to release their stocks. The public would be prepared to make any sacrifices demanded of them. Confidence would be difficult to create, but a gesture to prove the integrity of our aim might succeed. For this gesture, I am going to suggest the British Government might, as it were, declare India to be in a state of trust or wardship. She would be as it were, a ward in democracy. We should ask our great Allies to join with us in guaranteeing India's future freedom. Inter-Allied co-operation, now envisaged in high places as the basis for world peace, is so vast and so thorough that I do not think it will be impossible for us to ask the United States, the Soviet Union and China to act with great Britain as guardian who will jointly be responsible for India's present welfare and guarantee her future freedom. With her future freedom thus guaranteed, the distrust of Indians of all parties might be dispelled and leaders might be able to co-operate in the most drastic scheme for fighting this battle against famine. Again in this mutual co-operation, Indian leaders might be prepared to work not only to fight the famine but also in the prosecution of the war. Such a beginning might be the first step to India's working together to find a basis for the future constitutional Government of their own country. The security of the Pacific Front and above all necessities of humanity demand that the Indian people must be saved from the disaster which is threatening to engulf them."

## FAILURE OF TRANSPORT MAIN CAUSE

Lord Catto (Liberal National) said Lord Huntingdon had wandered somewhat from the terms of the motion into the political aspect of the question.

"I don't propose to follow him in that because, quite candidly, I don't know what he meant by the 'ward of democracy,' and I doubt very much whether any of my Indian friends would understand such an expression. We are not discussing the merits or the demerits of constitutional arrangements in India, or even how or why this calamity has fallen upon a poor people. We are discussing how best to relieve them in the quickest possible time. The part of India chiefly concerned is one I know well and I can speak on this matter with strong feelings. The famine is a preventable thing. After saying that the horror of famine in India from which she had suffered from the dawn of her history, had become almost a thing of the past through the great efficiency of relief organisation, Lord Catto declared that relief measures had proved inadequate because the manifold difficulties of internal and external war-time transport were not sufficiently taken into account."

Lord Catto concluded: "We are not discussing this matter only because of its humanitarian aspect. We are discussing it because we have direct responsibility. By the constitution, the British Parliament is responsible for the welfare and good government of India. We are part of that Parliament and we share that responsibility."

*Lord Hailey* said it is the opinion of economists that hitherto the increase in India's production had preserved a somewhat responsible ratio to the increasing population. It had left a very narrow margin to deal with an emergency of crop failure, but it had not left India in a state of normal sufficiency. India had been able in the last ten years to deal with larger shortages. Clearly, the cause has been internal maladjustment in reference to transport, profiteering and hoarding. There could only be one solution in the present situation—some drastic measure to control all prices of foodstuffs and force them on to the market. The Government of India had taken such powers. The Punjab in particular was still very far from being in a mood to co-operate. It was clear a situation had been allowed to go on which, though it might be bettered by vigorous administrative measures, would continue to present a grave difficulty until the prices were brought altogether nearer the normal by the importation of rice from Burma and the possibility of the importation of wheat from Australia or Canada. Looking back, he thought, they could fairly say that the Bengal Government certainly did not show itself sufficiently farseeing or sufficiently active at an early stage of the situation. "Its attitude seems to us to compare unfavourably with that of Bombay and Madras in circumstances not entirely dissimilar. If any criticism of the Central Government can be justified, it is on the grounds that it showed undue hesitation in putting sufficient pressure on the non-co-operative provinces."

*Lord Hailey* said he joined with *Lord Catto* in deprecating any suggestion of a gesture to India such as *Earl Huntingdon* had proposed. "India has only one objective and one ambition and that is independence. Ward trusteeship as used by us is in very little favour in Indian political circles. I doubt whether the association of our Allies or the United Nations in the form of the guarantee suggested or the joint assumption by them of trusteeship for India would be any more satisfactory to India than it would be flattering to us. But looking to the future, there is certainly one lesson which sticks out. There could be no stronger argument than that provided by these events to prove the inadvisability of the fragmentation of India which would inevitably result from such schemes as that for the creation of a separate dominion consisting of Moslem provinces."

#### MASTERLY DEFENCE OF INACTION

*Lord Strabolgi* said: "I congratulate the Government on the masterly defence that had just been made by *Lord Hailey*. I most respectfully congratulate *Lord Hailey* himself. I never remember hearing so masterly a defence of inaction and indecision, no more competent finding of reasons why nothing could be done and what that it was inevitable and I cannot withhold my personal admiration of his speech." *Lord Strabolgi* said *Lord Hailey* informed us that India was self-supporting in food. *Lord Strabolgi* thought however that it was correct at the present time to say that if we had not come, India could only have been self-supporting in foodstuffs. If we had accepted the inadequate standard of diet for a very large proportion of the Indian population, *Lord Strabolgi* added: "The unfortunate fact is that considerable quantities of food had to be exported from India for war purposes to the middle East. It went out because it was a normal thing to do and unless there was some strong hand at the Centre as *Lord Hailey* says will always be needed to stop these exports and insist on the forces in the Middle East getting foodstuffs from elsewhere, then you are bound to have this trouble."

*Lord Strabolgi* said, "I have here a telegram received yesterday morning in answer to a cable sent by a friend of mine to a gentleman whom *Lord Hailey* knows very well—*Martin Harlthy*, special correspondent of *Reuters* in New Delhi. He was asked about this question of exports. If I trouble you with the telegram and particularly recommend it to the attention of *Lord Hailey* it reads as follows—this was an independent source. *Reuter's* chief correspondent is impartial and he knows all facts—"In the early part of this year, the Indian Government realising the possibilities for food shortage pressed for large imports of food into India and received 150 000 tons. This was only a part of the amount asked for. With operations in North Africa and with U-boat sinkings the position became acute and in view of these facts, coupled with the bumper harvest in the Punjab, the Government decided not to press for further imports. It is now admitted that this was a serious mistake. The Government's next step in July was to appoint a committee to work out a long term food policy and the report of the Committee was presented to the Government at the end of September and its recommendation can be summed up as (1)—import of food; (2)—rationing; (3)—drastic tightening up of the machinery

for acquisition of food; (4)—drastic revision of rationing in the provinces; and (5) statutory price control.

[Lord Strabolgi later told *Reuter* that he had been misinformed in stating that the telegram referred to by him as having been sent by *Martin Herlihy* was sent to a private individual. In point of fact the message was issued in *Reuter's* News Service.]

#### BUREAUCRACY'S FAILURE

After referring to the message of *Reuter's* special correspondent in New Delhi, *Martin Herlihy*, Lord Strabolgi said, "I am afraid it discloses what indeed was implicit in the defence of Lord Hailey." Lord Strabolgi added: "Once more we see this fatal disease of bureaucracy—procrastination." They started too late, set up too many committees, thought too long what they were going to do and in the meantime this horror man of famine was galloping along. To show how dilatory was not only the Bengal Government but the Central Government in dealing with this matter, between January 1, this year and March 15, from Bengal alone, to fight the loss of Burma rice, 300,000 tons of rice was exported."

Lord Hailey interjected: "That has been denied."

Lord Strabolgi: "It was said in the Bengal Legislature. If it has been denied I am very glad to hear it.

Lord Hailey: "It was officially denied by the Government of India that there had been this alleged export of 300,000 tons of rice from Bengal."

Lord Strabolgi added, in addition to the large number of soldiers, Indian and European, there was another cause—enormous number of Indian labourers working for the Government on the various schemes who also had to be fed.

"Thank Heavens, Lord *Wavell* has arrived in Delhi," continued Lord Strabolgi. "There is a man used to dealing with realities, a proved organiser and he at any rate will, I hope, be supported in taking the most drastic steps to deal with this famine." Lord Strabolgi urged the release of some of the army foodstocks to feed these starving people and use the army to administer the distribution of foodstuffs and provide transport as well.

Lord Strabolgi said he thought the Japanese propaganda that they would feed Bengal with rice released from Burma was probably nonsense because he understood that in Burma, the Japanese methods had so upset the cultivators that there was shortage of rice in Burma. The whole trouble has been lack of action on the part of the Bengal Government. There is the new Viceroy and we all wish him well. I feel that if he is supported by the India Office, he will accomplish great things.

Replying to the debate, Lord Munster, *Under-Secretary of State for India*, defended the India Government against the charges levelled against it and stated that "it would be contrary to all the facts in this very complicated story to assume that the Government of India was content to do absolutely nothing until the situation had developed into the serious dimensions that we see to-day." He referred also to the reluctance of the Central Government to encroach on the powers of the provinces unless "a province had failed to co-operate in handling the food problem to such an extent that the war effort was seriously affected."

Lord Munster said: "I have no wish myself to be drawn into the future constitutional problems which may confront India and I shall therefore, reserve my remarks entirely for this very highly complicated question. I should like to record my deep and sincere sympathy with the Indian people in this dire misfortune that has come upon them."

Dealing with the fundamentals of the food problem, Lord Munster said, "Despite the increased acreage which is now under cultivation, the amount of foodstuffs available per head has, in consequence of the vast increase in population, remained practically stationary from year to year".....Should anything occur to disturb the normal flow of trade between the small subsistent farmer and the great urban population, a man-made artificial famine is at once created, a famine quite distinct in every way from that caused by the failure of crops over which mankind has little or no control. At the moment, Bengal is enduring both forms of disaster—man-made and natural."

#### PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS AND THE CENTRE

Turning to the question of responsibility of His Majesty's Government, the Government of India and the Provincial Governments, Lord Munster said: "It is a substantial and important point, this question of duties which fall to each of those authorities under the Act of Parliament. Any of you who know India will not forget that under the existing Constitution—leaving aside for the moment the Indian

States of a greatly differing size and wealth—the Indian Empire is made up of eleven Provinces, some as great as the principal European countries, to whom certain responsibilities have been allotted to enable them to function as autonomous units in many respects practically fully self-governing. Provincial Governments under the Government of India Act of 1935 are responsible for, among other matters, agricultural development and for the production and distribution of foodstuffs. In fact the House will see they are primarily responsible for the execution and carrying out of any common food policy in India than that provided by the administrative organisations of the Provinces and States. It is true the Central Government has certain powers of co-ordination and has used them to give advice, assistance and help to the autonomous Provinces but for the functions of Government which have been devolved on the Provinces it has no administrative agency of its own and it must, therefore, depend on the machinery which is in existence in the Provinces. That is the position at the present time in all the Provinces and of course in the States too.

"Let me now pass on to the Central Government and explain the position it has occupied: The Government of India has special war time powers which enable it to override Provincial Governments if necessary to secure that Provincial action conforms to all India requirements. These powers were, I venture to think, not granted by Parliament with the purpose of coercing Provincial administration who in the performance of their proper provincial functions seemed over anxious to protect the interests of their own population or failed to move at that speed which might have been expected of them. They were granted for use in time of emergency and when India was threatened by war. That is the governing situation. But it would be an extreme measure to use these power to deal even in wartime with a problem of these nature. It may perhaps be said that the granting of provincial autonomy has resulted in lessening the efficiency as viewed from the All-Indian standpoint but that is no reason why the Central Government should encroach on the provincial responsibilities except in the most exceptional circumstances. If it should prove that a Province has failed to co-operate in handling the food problem to such an extent that the war effort was seriously affected, then the Central Government would be justified in using these powers. But I think myself that it would be an unhappy development if the Government of India were to exert these powers and brush aside responsible democratically based Governments, whenever an ugly situation threatened or developed in a particular province.

"I ask myself this question: What is the first task of any democratic Government? Surely it is to look after and safeguard the well-being and interests of all people, both the majority and minorities, and most elected Governments are usually deeply sensible of this responsibility. I should have thought myself that it is quite clear that the Central Government has adopted the only possible course short of the extreme measures I have mentioned, because it has continually and earnestly sought to obtain the loyal co-operation of the Provinces. It would be contrary to all the facts in this very complicated story to assume that the Government of India was content to do absolutely nothing until the situation had developed into the serious dimensions that we see to-day.

#### BREITAIN'S RESPONSIBILITY

Dealing with the position of His Majesty's Government, Lord Munster said, "Quite apart from our statutory and constitutional responsibilities that we retain for securing the safety of the peoples of India, it would be our natural wish at all times to render every conceivable form of assistance and help to all our partners within the Empire, whatever their precise and constitutional position, wherever they may be situated, and whatever the cost. That wish of course is magnified in times of great tribulation and need. Loyalty to the Empire implies an obligation on the part of all of us, a natural safeguard of common interests and recognition of the duty of mutual assistance to one another. The problem then so far as we are concerned, here at home, in the matter of internal administration in order to secure an effective distribution within India, is limited entirely to the provision of shipping for carrying food supplies that India requires from outside sources. I think it is hardly necessary for me to remind the House of the many calls that are made upon us in this matter of shipping. We have to judge in the light of all relevant factors and all other urgent demands of the United Nations and allot shipping here and there as and where it can be of most use and assistance to the war effort. I am happy to think that the efforts we have made have not been without some considerable degree of success and considerable quantities of foodgrains are now

arriving in ships which have been diverted to meet the pressing need of food shortage in certain districts of India."

#### INDIA GOVT'S MEASURES

After referring to the measures taken by the Government of India and the unforeseen difficulties when they came to consult the provinces on the quantity of surplus foodgrains available, Lord Munster said that despite the excellent wheat harvest in North-West India it became obvious in the middle of this year that the basic plan had not provided sufficient remedy to meet the difficulties of the more hard pressed areas and therefore an amendment was found necessary to this plan. In normal peacetime, imports of foodstuffs into India spread throughout the period of twelve months, amounted to about two-and-half per cent of the total consumption. The situation therefore, differed fundamentally from the position in Britain where by far the greater amount of foodstuffs were imported and price control of vital commodities could easily be instituted without great difficulty. The basic plan did deal with price control but it was believed its effective operation would bring foodgrains on to the market at reasonable prices.

During the early months of last year, the Central Government instituted the grow-more food campaign which brought an additional eight million acres under foodcrops last year, and would probably bring twelve million acres this year. This would normally have met the deficiencies following the fall of Burma, but unfortunately it did not. The Central Government had and was continually and energetically devoting itself to the food problem. Last July, the Government appointed a committee and Provincial Governments' special representatives could make representations on what was described as a long-term food policy. That Committee reported at the end of last month to the Government of India. We received a telegram late last night explaining that the decision included a new and revised edition of the basic plan for managing provincial surpluses and deficits.

As regards prices, statutory price control, both for foodgrains and other commodities, was to be established, ultimately being built up on provincial and regional basis. Provincial control of prices was, meanwhile, to be subject to Central approval. Full rationing of towns with a population of over one hundred thousand was accepted as fundamental. If this scheme worked well, it would prevent a recurrence of this famine which had caused so much anxiety among us.

#### CAUSES OF BENGAL CRISIS

Explaining the reasons for the shortage of foodstuffs in Bengal, Lord Munster said, "The present unhappy situation which has developed is due to a variety of reasons. The loss of Burma has its repercussions upon Bengal and other districts in India. But the Provincial Government was not seriously alarmed at that time because there were reserves of stocks from an excellent crop which had come on the market at the beginning of the year and were in the hands of a number of traders and cultivators. Cyclone and floods occurred in rice-growing areas in Bengal and destroyed not only a portion of the coming season's crop but also resulted in the loss of some of the reserve stock held by the traders and cultivators. As a result of this the last harvest was poor with probably a 25 per cent reduction in the quantity of the former years. The distribution of foodstuffs was also hampered by a lack of small craft which had been removed by the boat denial policy instituted at the time of the threatened invasion from Burma. In addition the railways in Eastern India were carrying immense quantities of military personnel and equipment. All this aggravated the case and caused a shortage in the reduction and distribution of foodstuffs. The traders in all crops tended to board in the hope of obtaining a substantial rise in prices and the cultivators were reluctant to dispose of any surplus they held for the fear of having to buy back at a higher price, if the famine conditions spread or the next harvest failed. Thus the position as a whole was accentuated by the loss of Burma, by adverse supply positions, by fear of invasion which at that time was very much alive, and by lack of any marketable surplus through hoarding and withholding of stocks for speculative reasons."

Lord Munster then recalled the measures taken to deal with the crisis since August and said: "The Central Government has treated this question as a matter of first-class importance and has taken a number of steps to assist the Bengal Government. Arrangements have been made for the running of special food trains daily to carry foodgrains from North-West India to Calcutta and beyond. Deliveries of foodgrains to Bengal since the beginning of April on Government account has amounted to 181,000 tons of rice and 194,000 tons of other foodgrains. During the month of September, deliveries amounted to 72,000 tons."

"We must and, of course, are making every effort to remedy the situation as quickly as it is humanly possible to do so. We must endeavour to return to normal conditions without any undue delay. The rice crop has already been harvested and it should carry Bengal through the new year when the winter rice crop, which is the main crop of Bengal, will come on to the market."

*Lord Munster* concluded, "May I be so bold as to conclude my remarks by referring to a matter which does concern this House and indeed concerns the country at large? I refer of course to the appointment of Field Marshal Lord Wavell as Viceroy and Governor-General of India. I feel sure you will naturally wish to express your best wishes to the noble Viscount in the gigantic task which he has undertaken. It is, I think, one further indication of his willingness to serve his country in whatever position he can render most useful service. This, perhaps, is not the time to refer to the work performed for 7½ long and arduous years, four years of which we have been at war, by the noble Marquis of Linlithgow who will shortly be among us again, but I must say that fortune has not been kind to him during the last few remaining months of his Viceroyship. The hideous spectre of famine has raised its ugly head in spite of the many remedial measures which he took and had undertaken to relieve it. Nevertheless we are grateful to the noble Marquis for the loyal, long and very distinguished service he has given to us and to our great Indian Empire."

Expressing his thanks to *Lord Munster* for his reply, *Lord Huntingdon* said: "I cannot agree with *Lord Munster* in his remarks about emergency powers. I understood those powers were given to Government for use in any wartime emergency. Surely this famine is about as great an emergency as we could possibly come up against. May I express agreement with *Lord Hailey* about the importance of price control? May I express the gratitude of all members on this side of the House on hearing that grain ships and relief are going to India and I hope the Government will continue every effort to fight this dreadful famine."

### House of Commons—London—4th. November 1943

#### Food Situation in India

After reading for many days past the harrowing account of distress caused by the Bengal famine, members of Parliament assembled to-day (Thursday) to debate the situation. Some came in a very critical frame of mind, following the revelations in the recent White Paper, but all were more interested in finding food for Indians than in finding scapegoats for the breakdown in supplies.

The attendance, both on the floor of the House and in the galleries, was mainly composed of people with special interest in India. Mrs. *Amery*, wife of the Secretary of State, was in the Speaker's gallery. A number of Indians were among the visitors.

The chief Labour speaker, Mr. *Frederick Pethick Lawrence*, opening the commons debate, said that though nearly all his political life he had been a student of the Indian situation, he could not pretend to a full and complete knowledge and background possessed by many members of the House of Commons. "My sense of responsibility is increased by the fact that I realise that in opening this debate I am not only speaking to members of this House, but also to the people of India and in a sense to the people of the whole world. I am very sensible of the risk of letting slip one word that might come in the way of dealing with the very important question of famine itself or in our relationship with that continent of India. We have a new Viceroy with great imagination who has already shown his deep interest in this matter of famine by his action and I should be very loath indeed if anything I said to-day could be regarded as queering the pitch in attempting to solve or mitigate, at any rate, the great disaster which has taken place in parts of India. This House is ultimately responsible. If this terrible death rate had occurred in any part of the British Isles, the member who sits for that locality would be vociferous in demanding that something should be done. He would not allow any member of Government to rest while these terrible things were happening and the House, every day and all day, would be continuously confronted with the need for a drastic remedy. In this House there are no actual members for that immense part of the British Empire, the sub-continent of India, and that fact must not be allowed for one moment to let this House, responsible at it is for India, forget its grave responsibility."

#### "PARLIAMENT ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE"

"There is a sense in which we are members for India and we have all that duty to perform so that in the last resort it is we here, in this House, who are

responsible for what takes place. If there has been lack of imagination in the handling of this problem, lack of initiative, and failure to take full cognisance of facts and bring the best remedy to bear, we in this House are ultimately responsible and we cannot shirk that responsibility. If, as a result of our enquiry, any conclusions should be reached, we must not hesitate for one moment to carry them into effect, however distasteful they may be and even if they involve personalities, those in high places, we must not shirk from the consequences (hear, hear).

"The explanations that have been given are that it was an act of God in giving a bad harvest in certain parts of India, that it was the King's enemies in the shape of cutting off supply from Burma and other parts of the Far East to India : that it was the creating of dual responsibility brought about by the passage of the India Act and the reluctance of the provinces with surpluses to sell them to full extent that might have relieved shortage. It was also said to be due to individual hoarding ; to difficulty of transport, external and internal, and on one or two occasions, Mr. Amery has mentioned the matter of inflation. It would be quite unfair to Mr. Amery to suggest that he faces with complacency or anything like complacency the tragic events in India. Mr. Amery, he said, is greatly troubled by what has taken place and taking place to day. But having brought into review at various times all the adverse circumstances with which the Government of India has been confronted he feels that if they have failed, and they have failed, that failure is not a dishonourable one. Like a swimmer who battles nobly and fails to make land, they are to be pitied and not blamed for what has taken place.

"But let us be quite candid with ourselves, that is not the view taken by a very large number of our Indian fellow subjects." It was not the view taken in the United States nor by himself. He had no desire to oversimplify the problem and did not dispute any contributory and extenuating causes detailed by Mr. Amery on many occasions. "But having said that, I still think our Government of India—including in that expression all our acting personnel both here and in India—must take a substantial share of the blame for what has taken place. In my view that arises because they are directly responsible for what are the main causes of the trouble."

#### MAIN CAUSE OF FAMINE

Mr. Lawrence referred to the visit he had paid to India 40 or 50 years ago during which there was a local famine. At that time there was plenty of food in India, but the main cause of starvation of certain individuals in that particular area was that they were without the means to buy the food they needed. It had been one of the great triumphs of the Government of India that in recent years up to the present disaster, famine had been almost unknown (cheers). He thought the main cause of the present famine was the same—large numbers of people in certain provinces had not got the purchasing power to pay for such food grains as would keep them alive.

The main cause of this increase in price was inflation. For the inflation, the Government of India and nobody else could be held responsible. He did not think Mr. Amery would dispute that inflation was, at any rate, one of the causes—he would say one of the main causes of the present situation. Mr. Amery had stated on October 21 in reply to a question that inflation was a contributory cause. "We may differ as to the degree of importance which is attached to this particular thing but as a fact it has been a contributory cause. If any evidence is wanted on inflation—and I am using the word inflation deliberately as distinct from the rise in prices caused by other means—I think it is more or less proved by the fact that increase in prices is not confined to food grains but extends, as far as I can learn, throughout all commodities, though not precisely to the same extent. My information is that the general index has risen something in the nature of three hundred per cent." The things the farmer wanted to buy had increased in price from 400 to 500 percent : food grains 500 to 700 per cent and specific commodities as much as 900 per cent.

Lord Winterton (Conservative), interposing, asked if there had been any rise in the wages.

Another member wanted to know if the figures were for India as a whole or only Bengal.

#### MEASURES TO COMBAT INFLATION INADEQUATE

Mr. Pethick Lawrence replied that Mr. Amery himself had disclaimed any ability to give the general level of prices. One of the disadvantages to which the House was subjected at present was the difficulty to get information which was not official. The same answer applied to what Earl Winterton said : Frankly, I

don't know what the level of rise in the wages is. None can possibly tell what was the general rise in prices without careful investigation, which only the Government of India could have carried out. Perhaps later in the debate, Government will answer that question." "There is no mystery as to what caused inflation. Of course it is perfectly true that there has been a certain amount of debt repatriation and that is as far as it goes. But it has not gone to the full extent necessary in order to prevent inflation. I do not see how the Secretary of State can possibly deny responsibility for this. It is not a matter of the Provincial Government." He said he could not see how *Sir John Anderson* could deny it, particularly seeing that he is the head of the Treasury which, under his predecessor, had been most careful in avoiding inflation in this country. "But the Government of India has not taken the same care regarding inflation that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has taken in Britain." He appreciated that the Indian Government were missing a very courageous, able and wise man in *Sir Henry Strakosch* who died in the last few days after an illness of two years. Without disparaging merits of *Prof. Gregory*, he was not a man of the financial experience and calibre of *Sir Henry Strakosch*.

Referring to the shortage of harvest of grain crops in India during 1943, *Mr. Lawrence* said it had been increased by the stoppage of imports from wheat zones. Government were really the only people responsible for bringing the remedy, because the local provinces could not deal with the matters of export or import of grain. "That is a matter which must be dealt with by the Central Government and has no doubt been decided by the Central Government in India all through."

#### PLEA TO SUBSIDISE FOOD PRICES

Turning to the question of remedies, *Mr. Lawrence* said, although it was wrong to meet inflation with deflation it was certainly not wrong to stop further inflation and that was the first problem confronting Government. Steps must be taken to cut of the surplus purchasing power either by taxation or loans. It might be necessary to subsidise prices of food. He thought some form of rationing should be instituted in others part of India as had been done with some substantial success by the Government of Bombay. Exports must be stopped and not restarted until the food situation in India was on a much firmer basis. There must be imports on as large a scale as possible. He would suggest to the War Cabinet that the result of the famine in India may be equivalent of a military defeat. He wanted to say a few tentative words—and he emphasised tentative political aspect. *Mr. Lawrence* said he was afraid they could not get out of their minds that unhappy political divisions in India had not made it easier to solve this intricate problem, but he noticed that *Mr. Jinnah* on October 31 had made a statement to which no exception could be taken. It was couched in words that would not give offence and was designed to help rather than hinder. If some method could be found of enlisting the co-operation of all sections in the humanitarian work of alleviating and ultimately bringing to an end the famine conditions in India he hoped it would not be lightly rejected.

*Mr. Leopold Amery*, Secretary of State for India, speaking next, said he thought the whole House was obliged to *Mr. Pethick Lawrence* for a most temperate and fair analysis of the nature of the problem with which they were confronted. He did not think that he differed from him on a single point of that analysis, though possibly he might have given a slightly different emphasis to some of the facts. "In any case, I would echo what he said at the beginning of his remarks, namely, that it was only right and fitting that this House should devote attention not only to this immediate and grievous calamity with which the unhappy people of Bengal are faced and the people of some other districts of India but also to the anxious general economic situation in India as a whole. I undoubtedly agree with him there.

"I might add that the problem is one of even wider dimensions. Only the other day, *Lord Woolton* told us that we are running into world shortage. Since then, *Mr. Wallace*, Vice-President of America, has declared that food will be a dominant problem in 1944, that the output will not begin to meet the overwhelming demands of 1945 and that proper organisation to meet a common world food crisis beforehand is a question of life or death for millions. The breakdown of Nazi tyranny in Europe may well confront us with an appalling situation. This wider problem is rightly engaging the attention of the United Nations. Meanwhile as *Mr. Pethick Lawrence* has insisted, we have our own more direct responsibility.

"In the case of India, we undoubtedly have a constitutional responsibility of which we have not divested ourselves even if in a large measure we have transferred legal powers and the actual working machinery of Government to Indian hands. In any case, we are concerned with the suffering of men, women and fellow citizens of the Empire whom it is our duty to help and succour to the best of our ability in time of danger and distress. I hope the House will bear with me if I go in some detail into the economic background and past history of the present situation.

"This Bengai famine is something more than an isolated incident. It is a danger signal, warning us of long-range measures which are needed as well as immediate relief. The vast majority of the population of India have always been and still are subsistence cultivators. They wring a meagre and precarious existence from their small holdings, and only the need for finding a little ready money for rent, for payment of debts and for purchase of the very minimum of necessities and petty luxuries leads them to sell such narrow margin of surplus food as they can manage somehow or other to do without. It is from this narrow and fluctuating margin from over fifty million small holdings from which urban and industrial India has to be fed. In former times, famine in India, as in China, was endemic extending to smaller or larger areas whenever failure of monsoon rains or floods or cyclones led to local or general crop shortage.

#### INCREASE IN POPULATION

Under British rule, the construction of over 40,000 miles of railway and vast irrigation projects and not the least the ever present availability in peacetime of shipping have enabled supplies to be rushed to deficit areas. As my friend pointed out in his interesting reminiscences in that case the immediate problem in the famine area was to find money for relief works and otherwise to enable starving peasants to survive. With the help of these balancing factors and of a highly developed organisation for famine relief, Indian authorities have in recent times been able to keep in check the ever present menace of local famine. But these measures, coupled with such other factors as improved health conditions, have only contributed to that unexampled pressure of the population against means of subsistence which is the gravest long-range problem which India has to face. In the last 12 years, the population of India has gone up by some 60 million. Every month there are over 300,000 additional mouths to be fed in British India alone.

"Members will have read in the White Paper a review of the situation by Sir Azizul Haque, who till the other day was Food Member of the Viceroy's Council. Sir Azizul spoke with all the authority of one who has not only filled in the Bengal Assembly the high position which you, Sir, hold in this House, but who as himself a son of the soil has devoted most of his life to the cause of the Bengal peasantry. He pointed out that the annual production of rice per head in Bengal had gone down over the last 30 years from 384 pounds to 233 pounds as a result of the increase of the population in that one province alone of over one million a year in the last decade. Part of the increase is no doubt accounted for by the growth of urban and industrial Bengal. But the main increase has been in agricultural districts, where in some cases the population runs to over 2,000 to a square mile and is reflected in the growing fragmentation of peasants' holdings which now average only three and a half acres. We in this country are faced by the great problem of an imminent shrinkage of the population below the optimum required for the maintenance of our standard of living and of our social and international obligation. In India the gravest problem in future will be to find ways and means by improved agricultural methods, by industrialisation, and by education, somehow or other to outstrip the pressure of the population which leaves so little a margin of surplus, whether for individual standard of life or for financing social reform.

#### IMPACT OF WAR

"I would now ask the House to consider what impact the war has made on so precariously balanced an economic structure. India has played an immensely important part in this war. She has raised nearly two million men for her army, all volunteers. I need not remind the House of the part which Indian Divisions have played both in saving and then in garrisoning the Middle East (cheers). Over and above that she has furnished an enormous volume of military supplies and industrial raw material of all kinds to this country. It is perfectly true that we have undertaken the ultimate cost of that part of her effort which is not concerned with the immediate actual defence of India.

That does not, however, affect the immediate war situation, during which vast sums have been spent in India, with no sufficient outlet in the shape of consumers'

goods, whether imported or home produced, to absorb them. It was really inevitable that under these conditions prices should tend to rise. The Government of India has made great efforts within the compass of what was possible in the very difficult conditions of India to cope with this. But no degree of taxation upon a very limited tax-paying class could get away from the position that a vast sum had been spent in India to agriculturists and others and there were no consumer goods to absorb the sums. For the first two years the tendency to inflation was kept in check. It was only late in the summer of 1941 that, effected by diverse war news, the price of agricultural products began to rise really seriously. Once the prices began to rise, accompanied as that was by an increasingly general uncertainty by the actual fear of invasion, and, I must add, for several months in 1942 by the widespread and unnecessary disturbances, that the situation did deteriorate at an increasingly rapid rate. The peasant, finding that he could meet his standing obligation by the sale of less produce, and unable to buy goods which he needed, naturally in many cases tended—and who will blame him?—to keep a little more for his own undernourished family. In other cases he held back his crop to make sure that if his next crop failed he might not be forced to buy food at an exorbitant price, as many have in recent months had to do.

"I entirely agree with what Mr. Pethick Lawrence has said about that. If there had been money the problem would not be nearly as serious as it is to-day. At the same time merchants small and large, in villages, towns and cities, followed suit. The effect of all these factors, each operating on a relatively small scale upon supplies and prices in great urban and industrial centres, was of course wholly disproportionate. It was with this increasingly anxious situation that the Government of India was called upon to deal, amid many other urgent pre-occupations, during 1942. The problem has throughout been one of high prices and local shortage, both essentially due to maldistribution rather than of an absolute overall total shortage for the whole of India. The figures given in the White Paper show that the total supply of principal food grains for consumption in India during the past crop year have been nearly two million tons above the average of the two preceding years. Mr. Pethick Lawrence referred to exports. It is true that there has been a small export during the last crop year, much smaller than in the two previous years and actually the net export figure given in the White Paper is not wholly correct, because it does not include the pretty substantial imports of food grains on Government account during that period. Such export as there was, has been for regions no less distressed or in danger of distress than India itself, namely Ceylon, where conditions are very similar to India, and which suffered the loss of the Burma rice crop and coastal regions of the Persian Gulf. To the difficulties in the way of geographical distribution we have also had to induce a rice-eating population to accustom themselves to a change of diet.

#### CONSTITUTIONAL DIFFICULTY

"We must bear in mind the nature of the constitution which was set up by this House under the Government of India Act of 1935. It is very difficult for us, accustomed to a centralised and all powerful legislature and executive, to realise the workings of a federal constitution in which the powers of the centre and the constituent units are strictly defined and over wide areas mutually exclusive. Agriculture and food are in the provincial field and for the Government of India to invade the field of provincial responsibility would in normal peace time have been not only unconstitutional in the sense that we use the word, but actually illegal. It is perfectly true that under Section 102 of the Act, strengthened at the outbreak of the war by a new section 126-A, power to override the provinces both in the legislative and the executive field is given to the Centre when India's security is threatened by war. But to invoke those sections in the absence of any administrative machinery or trained staff with which to enforce them, was not an easy matter. It was not want of foresight or courage, but ordinary commonsense which led the Government of India to handle the problem from the outset by a conference with the Provincial and State Governments primarily responsible for dealing with the food problem, and by persuasion rather than by coercion.

"In doing so, the Central Government naturally came up against the particular interests of different provinces. To bring up the fact that these several and divergent interests have not been altogether easy to reconcile is not an attempt to disparage Indian self-government. All self-government is, by its very nature, self-regarding. The more democratic and more efficient, the more apt it is to be zealous in the defence of its own constituents."

Mr. Amery continued: "I need not recapitulate the series of conferences to deal with the question of food prices which the Government of India convened from October 1939 onwards. They are fully dealt with in *Sir Azizul Haque's* very full and clear review and they show how continually alive the Government of India was from the very first to the possible dangers of the situation. Among other measures within the scope of the Central Government's powers it initiated and subsidised a 'grow-more-food' campaign early in 1942, under which some twelve million additional acres had been brought under food crops. Towards the end of 1942, the situation especially as regards wheat, but also in consequence of the loss of Burma to which certain parts of Southern India had been accustomed to look to supplement their rice supplies, looked so threateningly, not only as regards prices but as regards actual supplies in many provinces that Government convened an All-India Food Conference with Provincial and State Governments. At this, it was decided first of all to drop price control on wheat which had been found to keep wheat supplies off the market. Secondly, the Provinces all agreed to estimate their supply position and inform the Central Government of their estimated surplus or deficit. They then undertook to procure all surplus supplies and make them available for distribution by the Centre to areas which were in deficit. On this foundation the Government of India's basic plan for feeding deficit areas from surplus producing areas was drawn up."

Mr. Cove (Labour) intervening said: "Was this information conveyed to Government here? I am not trying to score any debating point, but I have a quotation from Mr. Amery in January this year in which he said there was no fear of any famine of any kind whatever, that everything was all right as far as India was concerned, and that there was no cause for great alarm of any kind. Was any information of that kind conveyed to him, and if it was what action did the Government here take?"

#### MENACE OF WIDESPREAD FAMINE AVERTED

Mr. Amery continuing said: "I was naturally in constant touch with the Government of India over the situation, and while the Government of India had its anxieties the measures it had taken were in their hope—and I may add the hope was justified in a greater part of India—sufficient to meet the needs of the situation. But if Mr. Cove will have patience for a few minutes more, he will find a fuller answer to the question he has asked in the statement I am going to make. What I was going to say was that these arrangements, helped as they were by the substantial emergency imports for which the Government of India in good time asked this country, and which this country supplied in spite of the shipping difficulties, and also helped a little later by a bumper wheat crop in the Punjab—aided by these windfalls the arrangements made by the Government of India, in the main achieved their immediate purpose. If we are to judge the situation as a whole and in its proper perspective, we must remember that what threatened India a year ago was a widespread, possibly almost universal famine. If members will look at the notes in section 5 of the White Paper on the position of other areas than Bengal, they will realise the extent to which that menace was averted or brought within narrow limits. For that credit is duly given in the notes to the administrative action taken by the province in particular where the danger at one time seemed the greatest, the fore-sight of Sir Roger Lumley in the early enforcement of rationing in Bombay City and in general the energy of his administration are deserving of recognition. In the States of Travancore and Cochin only the most drastic measures have averted what might have been a terrible calamity. Much good work has indeed been done all over India to which it would be difficult to do justice in a brief summary."

"All the same, credit should justly go to the Government of India for their part in dealing with this grave problem and for their success in steadying an anxious and precarious situation for more than three quarters of India. I should like her to pay my tribute as his partner and fellow-worker to Lord Linlithgow who from the first to the last in all innumerable difficult problems and anxieties created by the strain of the war proved himself, by his fore-sight, energy and wisdom a tower of strength (cheers). If disappointment attended the high hopes with which he set out over seven and half years ago of seeing a United India well-launched on her way to full constitutional freedom, history will assuredly not leave the blame with him."

Mr. Seymour Cocks (Labour) intervening: When did he visit the famine area?

Mr. Cove (Labour): Why did he not do what Lord Wavell has done?

Mr. Amery replied: "That is not an altogether reasonable question to ask. Let me now turn to the particular and distressing case of Bengal. Members who have read the White Paper will have seen that at last December's Food Conference the then Premier of Bengal, Mr. Fazlul Huq, was not prepared to join in any collective scheme, and only wished Bengal to be allowed to manage its own affairs. If it could not help others, it could at any rate manage to subsist on its own rice crop. Mr. Fazlul Huq's attitude was no doubt influenced by the fact that the main anxiety at that moment was about wheat and in a lesser degree about the effect on Southern India of the loss of rice import from Burma upon which Bengal had never depended to any serious extent.

#### FREE INTER-PROVINCIAL TRADE STOPPED

"Unfortunately, Mr. Fazlul Huq's optimism about the actual Bengal situation proved unfounded. Within a few weeks of that conference it became clear that the main Bengal rice crop was seriously short and presently it was realised that the total supply would be less than seven million tons, a deficit of over one million tons below the normal. This alarming revelation of an all-over shortage came on top of a situation already gravely affected in several large areas of Bengal by local calamities. I need only mention the devastating cyclone in Midnapore district last year and the flood which followed a few months later. In other areas the military necessity of removing river-boats, which might have facilitated Japanese invasion, added to the difficulty of equalising the supplies. By May the situation had become so critical that the Government of India withdrew from the provinces in the eastern zone powers by which they had been able to prevent inter-provincial movement. The object was to attract to Bengal by the ordinary law of supply and demand supplies from other producing provinces. This undoubtedly afforded some immediate relief, but the rise of prices which resulted in the neighbouring provinces other than Bengal was so sharp that the provincial authorities protested strongly and vehemently in the interests of their own people and the free trade experiment had to be abandoned. I might add that subsequent reports of the very representative Food Grains Policy Committee did not indeed reject the policy of inter-provincial free trade as only calculated to raise prices.

#### EFFORTS TO TRANSPORT FOOD TO BENGAL

"In the last three months every effort has been made to get food through to Bengal from the rest of India. There has been no failing in the transport system, which is the responsibility of the Central Government. Deliveries has been increased from an average of 1,000 tons per day in July and August to 3,700 tons a day during September and October. In the six months since last April 3,75,000 tons of rice and other grains have been delivered to Bengal on Government account, in addition to 1,00,000 tons imported commercially in the free trade period. At the present moment a further 300,000 tons from various sources, sufficient to see Bengal through the next three months to the main rice harvest, would seem to be assured and the most acute problem now is that of distribution within Bengal to districts most seriously affected. It is largely from these districts that a great number of destitute villagers, landless labourers and professional beggars have drifted into Calcutta, often in the last stages of weakness. It is their immigration that has been mainly responsible for the heart-rending scenes of suffering which have so deeply touched and disquieted us here. The present Bengal Ministry, helped by the long experience of provincial and district administration of the acting Governor Sir Thomas Rutherford, has been doing all in their power to cope with a desperate situation both in Calcutta and the outlying districts. They are at this moment distributing food from 5,500 free kitchens subsidised or maintained by Government. In one way or another over two million persons are receiving daily free issues of food.

Every effort has been made to make price control effective, a far more difficult problem in India than here, and that is beginning to show some signs of success. A rationing scheme for Calcutta is being worked out and should be in operation in the course of the next few weeks. Meanwhile the tragic tale of loss of life has continued and is still continuing. The death rate directly or indirectly due to starvation for Calcutta alone has amounted to some 8,000 between August 15th and October 15th. There are no reliable figures available for outside districts, but I fear that in south-west and south-east Bengal figures may have been even worse than in Calcutta. Even now that sufficient total supplies seem assured, there may well be some time no diminution in the loss of life until the organisation of distribution has effectively covered all ground. In this deplorable situation Lord Wavell as the first act of his Viceroyship has intervened with striking results (hear,

hear). Lord Wavell, like another great soldier before him, came, saw for himself, and took action. Under his impulse the Bengal Government are taking steps to move all destitutes from Calcutta to relief camps where they can be fed and medically reconditioned until they are fit to return to their own homes. A senior military officer with adequate staff has been lent to the Bengal Government to supervise the movement of grains into the districts out of the Calcutta bottle-neck.

A member, intervening, asked whether that was on the initiative of the Viceroy.

Mr. Amery: "I was referring to his impulse. The army which on Gen. Auchinleck's initiative has already placed considerable quantities of stores and particularly of milk products at the disposal of the civil authorities has been encouraged to use its resources up to the utmost extent to help tide over the situation until after the harvest.

"Troops are being sent to all the worst affected districts in order to help the civil authorities with transport and safe distribution of food. Additional troops are being moved into Bengal for this purpose. Field Ambulance and clearing stations and a medical staff are being made available for the establishment of a large number of small local hospitals.

#### FOOD IMPORTS AND SHIPPING

"What the House now will wish to know is what we, in this country, have been able to do and are doing to help. The problem here is entirely one of shipping. Wheat is available in Australia and elsewhere in quite a sufficient supply if only ships can be spared to lift it. I need not remind the House of the vast quantities of shipping required, not only to feed the munition industries and the population in this island or the great armies accumulated here, in the Mediterranean and elsewhere as well as for supplying Russia, but for every serious military operations enormous quantities of shipping have to be concentrated.

Mr. Sorensen, interposing, asked: "Are you aware that reports have appeared in the press recently of loads of foodstuffs coming from Canada and Australia? Could not such shipping be used for taking foodstuffs to India?"

Mr. Amery continuing said: "If I might just continue on this question of shipping, I would remind the House that something like 2,500 vessels were required for the Sicilian landing alone, and that was only a foretaste of the need of the larger operations still to come. I admit that our shipping resources are improving with the success of the campaign against U-boats, but our military commitment are all the time growing with our resources. We have managed to find ships to deliver a considerable tonnage of grains to India between now and the end of the year.

"The first few ships have already unloaded and arrivals will continue steadily during the next few months and for as long as may be required. But I must repeat that the task is no easy one, for every ship released for this purpose is a diversion from the war effort and we have all the time to balance against our desire to reduce the effects of the famine in India our urgent duty to finish the war as quickly as possible. It is only in that way indeed that we shall relieve the strain of war upon India which has led to the present distress and which will continue to give cause for anxiety until victory is won. Meanwhile every effort will be made to expedite the dispatch of such less bulky and strengthening foodstuffs as can be conveyed to India in one way or another. We have already some weeks ago released from this country 500 tons of dried milk for which shipping was provided. South Africa has generously offered to put at India's disposal from her own resources a considerable quantity of milk products as well as a cargo of maize. As a result of the suggestion made the other day by the Member for Streatham, Mr. Robertson, the Minister of Food has provided for India one million Maltibut oil capsules containing Vitamin A—a consignment of these is already on its way by air—for use in treating starvation cases in hospital. The army in India are also releasing from their stocks a quantity of their own standard Vitamin capsules which can be replaced later. Is there then, the House might ask, no effective way whereby the generous sympathy of our public can be shown for those who are victims of this tragic catastrophe? Certainly.

#### APPEAL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

"Over and above the direct provision of food by the Government there is a great amount of valuable work in helping to organise distribution in looking after women and children in providing clothes and other aftercare and later on the looking after the orphans for which private generosity has been enlisted in India and of which private generosity in this country can and I trust will contribute. Lord

Wavell has already set up a Central Relief Fund from which to supplement the various local relief funds in Bengal and elsewhere and the High Commissioner for India here in conjunction with the Lord Mayor and myself, has appealed for contributions to Lord Wavell's fund to be sent to him at the India House. Other funds have, I know, also been initiated for the same general good purpose. I have no doubt our public will not be behindhand in showing through one channel or another their practical sympathy for the distressed in India. They will not have forgotten the generous spirit in which the Indians showed their practical sympathy for those who suffered here from the enemy's air attacks two years ago. I might add that Ceylon, among the many parts of the Empire anxious to help, has already made a contribution of Rs. 2,50,000 to Lord Wavell's fund.

So much for the immediate situation. Much remains to be done before the anxiety as to the general food situation in India can be regarded as in any way diminished. The Government of India at the All-India Food Conference early last month decided to tighten up and strengthen their whole basic plan for the procurement and distribution of foodstuffs. They are working towards the ultimate establishment of an effective statutory price control on a regional basis. They have decided on the introduction by Provincial Governments at the earliest possible moment of rationing in all towns with a population of over a hundred thousand. In the event of any failure or delay in the execution of these measures they have made it clear that they will not hesitate to use to the full their war emergency powers. Meanwhile the provinces are everywhere improving the organisation. Some form of price control is now in force in almost every province. Urban rationing is being actively taken in hand. What is not less important is that public opinion in India is becoming more and more alive to the necessity of measures required by the situation. The Government of India are engaged actively in considering how to combat inflation which has so largely contributed to the present crisis by more vigorous efforts to get consumer goods on the market at reasonable prices and by the ordinary financial expedient of loan and taxation policy. For the last six months the general price level has been stabilised. We can, I think, feel reasonable confidence that in this and other ways the Governments in India—the Central and the Provincial Governments—will by their co-operation enable India's economic life to stand up to the strain which war has imposed upon it without a recurrence of such calamity as that which we are witnessing in Bengal.

#### "WILL NOT IMPAIR OUR PLEDGES TO INDIA"

The House will have realised from the account I have given and from the account given by Mr. *Pethick Lawrence* the nature of some of the problems which confront India not only in war but also in peace. These problems will continue to confront India whatever the future form of her Government. The realisation of that cannot affect in any way the desire of this House or the people of this country to see India advance as rapidly as possible to the full control of her own destinies as an equal partner in the British Commonwealth and an equal member of a society of free nations. Nor can it in any way impair the pledges we have given. But it does emphasise one aspect of these pledges, namely, the immense importance to India's future of a system of Government based on agreement and co-operation between all its parts and elements. Only on that foundation can India live secure from external danger and from internal economic breakdown and attain to the greatness and prosperity to which her natural resources and the gifts of her people justly entitle her (cheers).

Mr. *Hore-Belisha* and Mr. *Wardlaw-Milne* both expressed disappointment about shipping and urged the Government to release more ships.

Perhaps the most stringent criticism came from Sir *George Schuster* (Liberal National) who was a member of the Viceroy's Council in India from 1928-1934. The Government of India, he said, should have had an All-India plan. He agreed that the main task and executive action must be left to the Government on the spot but on almost every question of major policy, the India Office with their continuity of experience should be able to give wise advice and guidance to the Government of India. The responsibility which rested on London had not been fully discharged.

Sir *John Anderson*, replying to the debate, said: "I have followed the course of this debate with deep interest and I confess with somewhat mixed feelings. I was in Bengal in intimate touch with the affairs of that province for six years and despite difficulties and anxieties by which I was beset from time to time during those years, I can truthfully say they were among the happiest years of my life

and certainly the most interesting. The country and the people of India take a grip of one. That is a universal experience of those who have lived and worked in India. And among Members of this House, there are many who have had that experience. We never seem to lose interest in what is happening in that great country. And I certainly tell the House that I heard of the misfortune and disasters in India with a great sense of personal affliction.

"I have found the course of this debate somewhat painful. Some of the speeches, particularly that of Sir *George Schuster*, seemed to be designed to give impressions of mistakes, muddles and incompetence all-round. Well, in this business it is no use talking about where moral responsibility rests. What we have to consider is where that responsibility in fact rests. It is no use talking as if the grant of Responsible Self-Government made no difference. To say that, is to deny Self-Government. Where the penalty of failure has to be paid in human lives, in suffering and in death, we should surely all beware how we apportion blame and indeed it is not in my judgment always right, when human affairs miscarry, to conclude at once that someone must have been at fault. Misfortunes fall often in the course of human affairs in ways that are quite incalculable, and indeed natural calamity has played its part, and no inconsiderable part, in the present situation.

"First, I think it is of great importance to avoid the fallacy of judging Indian affairs by standards that are applied here. The situation is indeed vastly different. We are a highly organised community, rich, compact with a great store of experience and great resources in organisation and technical knowledge and possessing an administrative machinery of remarkable flexibility and power and with it all, there is a great fund of goodwill which comes into prominence at every time of trial. That is vastly important. Turn to India. What a contrast: there can be no real comparison. India is a poor country, mainly of small agriculturists spread over a vast area with a very primitive social and economic structure. To say it is primitive is not to condemn it. There is no unitary system of government. The responsibility is divided by the Constitution itself between the Centre and the Provinces. Primary responsibility for all services touching the life of the people rests with the provincial Governments. This division of responsibility is reflected in the organisation of public services in India. There are no highly organised Departments of Provincial Governments as we know them here. The system I have been describing is admirably suited to the traditional task of Government in India but it is subject to distinct limitations when it comes to carrying out of a central policy in a new field. In the speeches heard to-day the Government of India have been very severely criticised on hollow grounds—first as regards the financial policy and then their omission or failure to override the provincial authorities.

#### GOVT. SLOW IN FIGHTING INFLATION

"I think when it is realised to what extent the Government of India are inevitably dependent on Provincial Governments for their sources of information and technical advice, because it is the Provincial authorities only that are in touch with local conditions which vary from place to place as they do in the continent of Europe, it will be recognised and generally accepted that the Government of India were very wise to endeavour to proceed in consultation with Provincial Governments to try to carry those Governments with them. When some honourable members say the Government of India ought to have taken action very much earlier, they attribute to the Government of India primary responsibility in such a matter as this which does not really constitutionally or properly belong to that Government. This complaint that the Government of India might have acted much earlier relates to a time when people were not dying. I am bound to say, however, I do think that in regard to inflation it is unfortunate there was not more prompt realisation of what was happening and more vigorous action in a matter definitely within the sphere of the Government of India. I am not here to whitewash the authorities which may have been backward or in any way failed in the discharges of their responsibility. I do recognise that it is very easy to be wise after the event. We here had the advantage of being able to profit by the experience of the last war, whereas the Government of India are in a rather different situation. Although I do not entirely agree with Mr. *Pethick Lawrence* in treating inflation as the main cause of what has happened, I think inflatory spiral prices did contribute very largely to a hold-up in the supplies of grain, particularly rice, which I regard as one of the main causes of the unfortunate situation which had come about.

"Remedies for the situation are in principle fairly obvious. The trouble in India arises from an enormous expenditure of goods and services by our own Government, military authorities and American authorities on the one hand and a

serious curtailment in the supply of the consumer goods on the other. There is a very serious disequilibrium there. Apart from that there is a great need for action which will divert as much as possible of surplus purchasing power either by adjustment of taxation or a more vigorous savings campaign. These are the directions in which action is certainly required and I am glad to note that the Government of India are handling this matter now with great vigour and determination.

"Sir John Anderson said he did not wholly agree with the view suggested that the situation which had developed in Bengal in course of this year might have been foreseen much earlier. "To all appearances as far as Bengal is concerned up to the end of the last year there was no particular cause for worry. The rice harvest in 1941-42 was exceptionally good—it was definitely in excess of local requirements at the end of 1942. The then Chief Minister of Bengal, Mr. Fazul Huq expressed the opinion at a conference in Delhi that if Bengal was left to itself it could win through. That was the responsible opinion by a Minister who had exceptional knowledge of the people of this Province. I hold no brief for Mr. Fazul Huq who was my Chief Minister upon the inception of the present reform until I left India in 1937 and during all that time our relations were not marred by any single disagreement.

"Nevertheless, I hold no brief for him. He is very well able to speak for himself but I say that the responsible opinion which he expressed was the opinion to which the Government of India rightly paid attention. They would have been open to a very serious reproach had they not done so. I am not so sure myself that Mr. Fazul Huq could not put a pretty good defence for the view he then took. In the previous year, the rice harvest had been particularly good. In the year 1942 the prospects of the main paddy crop were "normal until fairly late in the year when a considerable part of western Bengal was stricken by a cyclone and devastated by the result of floods. That had a serious effect upon the harvest, but nevertheless, I can well believe there may have been good ground for supposing that the return of the harvest would be normal until it became apparent that there had been superimposed upon the effects of the flood a very serious insect blight. Apart from these two causes the harvest might have been normal and we might have heard nothing at all of the famine in Bengal."

After stating that accurate assessment of the food position in an Indian Province was a matter of extreme difficulty, Sir John Anderson said: "You have 40 million people in Bengal living directly on the produce of small holdings of an average expanse of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  acres. You have 20 million who are dependent on aggregate surpluses that can be gathered together from all these small holders. It is very easy to make miscalculations and it might well be that those concerned in the matter in the Provinces took the view that to talk about a prospective shortage might be the surest way of bringing such shortage about. It may be there are traders in Bengal who have secured stocks from cultivators and are holding up stocks and I agree that the most drastic action should be taken against any such attempt."

"But there has been also on the part of the cultivators a very natural tendency—and this is not blaming anybody—to hold the grain back partly to safeguard their own position and partly to attract better prices.

Mr. Sorensen (Labour): Will Sir John Anderson make it clear that the alleged hoarding is divided into these categories and that a far greater part of the of the hoarding is due to prudent reasons for keeping back stocks?

Sir John Anderson: That is my profound belief and I am not blaming anybody. One has to be very careful in designs to extract grain from a reluctant cultivator because the action may be too rigorous and stocks not sufficient to carry them through. If any words of mine can reach the cultivator in Bengal I would say he would be very well advised to release now everything he can above the reasonable requirement for his family. Such action would be in the interest of the province, it would be in the interest of the Government of India, it would tend to bring victory nearer and I believe it would be in the interest of the cultivators themselves because in the view of the action which the Government of India are taking I sincerely believe we have reached the peak of the inflationary processes which have been going on and that prices will tend in future to decline. Bengal, unlike most other provinces in India, is what is called a permanently settled province. It is extremely important because it means that you have not got in Bengal a vast army of minor officials living on land in villages and in close contact with individual cultivators which you find in every province where there is temporary

settlement. When it becomes the question of attempting to improve the method of procurement of supplies and machinery of distribution the lack of a body of officials who really know local circumstances and have the confidence of cultivators is a very serious defect.

I am glad to think that *Lord Wavell* is doing his best to remedy that position by enlisting the help of the army, but even so he is not likely to be able to reproduce the position which attains in temporary settled province. It is only fair to my own province and to those who are responsible for the administration there and to the admirable body of officials who are carrying an immense burden of care and anxiety that this should be made clear.

#### BRITISH GOVT'S POSITION

Turning to the position of His Majesty's Government, Sir John Anderson assured the House that he would never be a party to any decision which betrayed "callous disregard" and he would like to give the House, in order to show the attitude His Majesty's Government had taken up in regard to this very important question of imports of additional supplies of food into India, information which he thought had not previously been disclosed. In the course of 1942, when the wheat situation—not the rice situation—seemed likely to cause anxiety the Government of India made an urgent appeal for help in procuring additional supplies of wheat to compensate for foodstuffs which the Government of India were having to export in the interest of the common effort to Persian Gulf and Ceylon, and may I say incidentally state that is the limit of export that has been allowed during these difficult times. To make good the deficiencies resulting from that export and to build up resources of food for the Indian army which were thought to be running down, this urgent appeal was made. It was made at a time when our shipping situation had just been brought under review by the War Cabinet and when the decision had just been taken most reluctantly to divert certain ships earmarked for military purposes in order that they might be put on the North Atlantic route to improve our food and supply position at home which was in that moment running down rather anxiously. That was the situation when that urgent appeal was received.

"The appeal of the Government of India was considered, in relation to claims on shipping. Despite the fact that ships earmarked for military purposes had been diverted as a matter of great urgency and at considerable cost in regard to future military operations in order to meet our situation at home, it was decided that a sufficient number of those very ships should be again diverted to meet the requirements of the Government of India. And that was done and food was loaded. I can tell the House this now because it relates to the past. I cannot give the same precise detail of information about current transactions. That was how that matter was dealt with. Food was loaded and dispatched to India. It was not in fact all delivered, because before the last delivery was made, further information from the Government of India showed that the harvest of wheat in Upper India in Spring this year was going to be extremely good as it was and one or two of those ships were in fact again diverted to East Africa where a difficult situation had arisen owing to the large number of prisoners of war and Polish refugees who were in that territory.

"In the course of this year further urgent appeals were received from the Government of India on the ground that a very serious situation was developing in Bengal. Those appeals were considered on their merits and decisions were taken. Action was taken as a result of which supplies of grain are now flowing freely into Bengal. Its process will go on up to the end of this year. I am not going to give the quantities. We are doing everything that is practicable having regard to distribution of war shipping to put into India up to the end of the year the maximum amount of additional grain that can be imported. By the end of the year we shall know precisely how the main paddy harvest for this winter is likely to turn out. If that paddy harvest is, as it promises to be, very good—and a very good harvest in Bengal means a harvest of ten million tons of paddy against the estimated normal consumption of eight million tons—we shall be very near the end of our troubles. At any rate by the end of the year we shall be able to review the whole situation and such further action as may appear necessary will have to be taken on a review of all demands upon shipping and upon available supplies of foodstuffs. I think I have said enough to show that there is on the part of His Majesty's Government a very full realisation of the situation in India. There has been no tendency to shirk responsibility. Of necessity in view of the constitutional position, responsibility must be divided between His Majesty's Government, the

Central Government of India and the Provincial Governments. We shall continue to watch the situation with keen interest and, I assure the House, with readiness to do everything possible to meet the needs of the situation as they may be disclosed towards the end of this year.

#### MR AMERY REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

The suggestion that modern milling technique should be introduced into India with a view to mitigating any further rice shortage was made by Mr. E. Smith (Labour) in the Commons to-day. He said the new British method not only preserved the vital germ of the grain but resulted in larger product. The method had already been taken up in the United States and was about to be started in Britain.

Mr. Amery said, he had heard of the process. There were certain drawbacks to its application even to the 27 per cent of Indian rice that was not hand-pounded, but he would consider communicating any information Mr. Smith had on the subject to the Government of India.

Replying to another question, Mr. Amery said, imports to India of food grains on private account during the three months April to June 1943 were negligible.

Miss Rathbone (Independent) asked: "In view of the rather startling fact that during the fiscal year 1942-43 exports of food grains exceeded imports by no less than 361,000 tons, can we be assured that the balance has now been redressed and that imports are exceeding exports?"

Mr. Amery: Yes certainly, those figures of imports do not include imports on Government account. Otherwise the figures would look more closely balanced.

When Miss Rathbone asked whether export of food other than grain from India was continuing to any considerable extent, Mr. Amery said, the recommendations of that Food Grains Committee were that no export of food should be permitted unless such exports were fully compensated by imports. He had not seen the actual orders passed by the Government of India on this point but they could be relied upon to safeguard the food supplies required for Indian consumption. Mr. Amery said, he would look into the question of stopping the sending of individual food parcels from India.

Sir Stanley Reed (Conservative) asked Mr. Amery whether he would advise the Government of India not to hesitate to draw freely on the Indian Peoples' Famine Trust set up in 1900 for relief of distress, although it was not money famine but food famine at the present time.

Mr. Amery said he was sure the India Government would consider it.

Mr. Hore Belisha (Independent) who followed Mr. Amery said it was fitting that the House of Commons should be profoundly disturbed by these occurrences.

"The initial act of Lord Wavell, characteristic of the man, inaugurates a great Viceroyalty which will be animated by human understanding. From time immemorial, famine has been the recurrent lot of the people of the East. Mr. Amery has referred to the increase in the Indian population which has multiplied two and a half times in the last hundred years and is increasing at the rate of five million yearly and is in fact the quickest growth of population that has ever been recorded. This increase has taken place in a country in which the greater part of the population draws its living from the soil. But the conditions of agriculture are primitive. When Mr. Amery was describing them, somebody in the Labour benches interrupted to say why have we not improved them, but, you are dealing here with a country in which handloom is held up as a national idol.

Cries of 'By whom'.

Mr. Hore Belisha: By Mr. Gandhi.

Cries of "not by the Indian people."

Mr. Hore Belisha, continuing said, "There are in fact twelve million wooden ploughs in the country and the harvest is reaped with sickle, the grain is separated by oxen, trodden down or beaten out by hand and wind is the winnowing fan."

Mr. Silverman (Labour): Is Mr. Hore Belisha seriously suggesting that mechanical industrialisation of India, if it ever comes, would be accompanied by a fall in the population? The industrialisation of Britain led to a rapid increase in population and so it has been everywhere.

Mr. Hore Belisha: I was not dealing with that aspect of the matter at all. If we wish the world to understand the situation we ought to do ourselves the justice of explaining it to the world. These conditions reflect themselves in fertility figures. The yield of rice per acre in India is 731 lbs, in Japan it is 2307 lbs, in Egypt it is 2879 lbs. The yield of wheat per hectare is seven quintals in India and 21 in Great Britain. It is a primitive instinct to withhold your goods if you cannot get

silver or gold or the results of the use of silver or gold. I am not suggesting that everything possible has been done to ameliorate the situation, but the facts explain it. When you add the impact of war to a nervous people, influx of refugees, and, if you wish, inflation and a general disorganisation of conducting military operations, you have more than enough to explain these matters. What should be realised is that before the war, we had mitigated, if not eliminated, famine from India.

#### URGENCY OF SHIPPING NOT FULLY APPRECIATED

After quoting figures showing the numbers of dams built to save monsoon rains and river improvements to prevent flooding, etc., Mr. *Hore Belisha* added: "These are the achievements of British rule which must be borne in mind. Under the category of bringing relief in time of famine, it is obvious that means of communications are required. Forty thousand miles of railway have been built in India. There are new roads and shipping was always available in times of peace without difficulty. But none of these means can be used freely in time of war. The Railways must be used primarily for military purpose and shipping cannot be available to the same extent. I do not accept that it is impossible to do more in respect of shipping and I am going to urge Mr. *Amery* to regard this need as having certain priority because these people are starving.

Measures intended to produce victory which will bring relief to us all, in some respects, must come first, but I do not feel satisfied that the urgency of shipping is sufficiently appreciated. We do, however, appreciate that shipping has to pass through waters wherein Japanese submarines are lurking and we do recognise that the Japanese are in occupation of the Andaman Islands. But it would transfer into action the wishes of the House if Mr. *Amery* were sustained in his demand to the War Cabinet for more shipping.

#### WARTIME ADMINISTRATION OF INDIA

Dealing with administration in India in wartime, Mr. *Hore Belisha* said that Mr. *Amery* had remarked that organisation had not been completely established. "We understand the difficulties," said Mr. *Hore Belisha*. We know that when you consider rationing in India and other modern methods of dealing with war-time conditions and base our demand upon what exists in Britain, you are making a false and indeed impossible comparison.

"There are only about 1,200 members of the Indian Civil Service of whom about half are British. That is not a very big staff on which to rely. If further officials could be sent out to India by aeroplane to assist in this organisation I think it should be done. The Hot Springs Food Conference pointed out in very vivid language what the food situation of the world in fact is. They said there had never been enough food in the world to supply all the people and there is going to be very serious shortage after the war and that effects of this shortage can only be abolished by concerted action among the Nations. Put in against the background of the world as a whole the Bengal situation is only an indication of of what will happen elsewhere. But India is in a better position than almost any other country in the long-term view.

"How has the war affected India as a whole? How have we put into operation this economic imperialist exploitation of India of which complaint has been made by the Labour benches? India has completed transition from a debtor to a creditor country. Before the war India owed us 360 million pounds. That has been entirely wiped out and we now owe India, who has accumulated sterling balances, to an even greater amount."

Mr. *Molson* (Conservative): "Total is 85 millions."

"I submit to Government that this disaster which is so universally deplored and the effects of which we determine by every resolution to remedy, is also like many other disasters an opportunity. The war will compel us to reconstruct our international life in many particulars. Have we not here a chance to look again at this Indian problem and remove the real defects which the disaster discloses, namely, defects of provincial administration, because the more power is handed over to the provinces inspired by this spirit the more will be the dangers for India in the future? If *Sir Stafford Cripps* had come back from Delhi as the Foreign Secretary will come back from Moscow with complete triumph and if it were possible to imagine that British influence and authority had been excluded to an even greater extent than it now is, would this situation have been better or worse? There is no doubt about the answer. We are not going back upon the course upon which we have embarked, but it is in the interests both of India and ourselves that we should look at the whole matter and not at one small aspect in the light of

these experiences in order that we may in the British Empire be given one more evidence of our capacity to organize in a manner which promotes the greatest good of a great number of the mankind."

*Sir John Wardlaw Milne* (Conservative) said the House would feel disappointed that Mr. Amery was not able to give a more definite statement regarding shipping which would be available for famine relief (cheers). He pressed for immediate action. Regarding hoarding, he said there had been some very unpleasant rumours about those responsible for the real hoarding in Bengal and hoped that inquiry would reach those who had taken part whether they were people of position or even members of the Administration themselves (hear, hear).

Referring to the enormous increase in the Indian population, *Sir John Wardlaw Milne* said: "Looking back over the last 30 or 40 years, one cannot honestly say that the intelligentsia of India have ever taken this problem up sufficiently and impressed upon their own people the dangers of the present situation (hear, hear). While I pay tribute to the few who have, I am bound to say that this problem, which can only be dealt with by Indians themselves, has never been fully tackled". On the question of responsibility, he said the Government of India were in this extraordinary position—if they let the people starve they were inhuman, but if they forced any action, they were interfering with the Indian Government. If the Act of 1935 had been put into full operation and there had been a strong Federal Government, things might have been very different. Meanwhile, he said, "It must be made clear to the Central Government, which is to exist until the new constitution arises, that it must be able to take power and act for the whole of India. This famine has shown that nothing but a Central Government for the whole of India will do and we must have one whether it be composed as now of a large majority of Indian members or of all Britishers—you must have a strong Central Government". He was tired of the constant blame on the British people for this famine. "We are blamed when the blame really rests upon Bengal primarily and on the Central Government secondarily.....I have seen the Bengal Famine put forward as a ghastly example of British inefficiency and misrule. It is nothing of the kind. If anything, it is extremely damaging to the Indian case. But I prefer to look at it as one of those mistakes that are bound to happen when power is thrust into the hands of people. They are apt to go far and think some blame attaches to the Central Government". *Sir John Wardlaw Milne* added: "We are constantly said to be inducing India to come into the British Empire. Membership of the British Empire, I hope, is not for sale. We are not in a position wherein we have to beg people to enter the British Empire. India's membership of the British Empire would be a great asset to the Empire, but it would be a far greater asset to India and I wonder indeed how she would ever exist without it. I object to this constant misrepresentation."

*Mr. Graham White* said the debate was very much overdue and there ought to be far more discussion of Indian affairs. He did not think Mr. *Pethick Lawrence* was well advised in suggesting that there should be an inquiry and allocation of responsibility. "You cannot feed a starving people on criticisms nor feed a starving people of Bengal on scapegoats." He thought the action taken on the formation of the Food Grains Advisory Committee might well have been taken earlier. "I am the last to urge that this central authority should interfere in the arrangements of the Provincial Governments, but it became obvious, at last by this time last year, that the situation could promise nothing but famine."

*Mr. Graham White* wanted to be sure that everything was being done in a short-term policy to bring an end to the famine and oust this calamity to make an opportunity to start on a long-term policy—which perhaps might only come to fruition in 25 years—to make it economically possible for the people of India to live at least on a standard of life appropriate to an eastern country." The debate afforded an opportunity to show how deeply Britain felt for fellow citizens in India. British opinion and sympathy had been profoundly stirred by these events. "They have been allowed to arise." *Mr. Graham White* mentioned that a friend of his had read 400 letters accompanying gifts for India. Among them no less than eight were from old-age pensioners who had contributed something like a week's pension. It was a touching evidence of the way people in this country responded to the needs of the Indian situation.

*Sir Alfred Knox* said he was convinced that the cause of the present position in India was economic nationalism—the jealousy and determination of the different provinces of India to save their own people, to keep their reserves of grain and not let them to provinces which had deficits. Surely it was the duty of the

Government of India to override that and force Governments which had excesses to give up their grains to others. The Food Department should have been set up a year or two earlier. He asked if they had power under the Government of India Act to force the Government of Bengal to take steps for the safety, livelihood and lives of the people. Had the Bengal Government taken sufficiently strict measures against hoarders? Had any punishment been given to the occupiers of the three shops in Calcutta which had 5000 lbs. of grain and rice while men were dying at their doors? We are going to have one of the greatest tragedies of the world in India unless some method can be inculcated—perhaps the Government can take a lead by which the people of India may get some realisation of the necessity of, in some way, limiting the population before a disaster occurs.

Mr. Ridley (Labour) said in this grave tragedy the air is thick with chickens coming home to roost." There was a complete absence of any ability to comprehend the consequences of the situation and to deal with them. The powers now being used could have been used with greater effect months ago. Price-fixing and rationing have saved this country. In India, it seems the situation was allowed to go from bad to very desperate, and until that stage was reached, nothing substantial was attempted. References in the White Paper to what was said to have happened in Bengal were on the face of it disturbing, but he preferred to take the view that there might be more than one interpretation of what had been said of Bengal. Because of a general failure to be resolute, the death rate had risen to figures that even now defied understanding. He doubted whether Britain had here any more than a modest conception of the state of Bengal, of any understanding of the reasons why so many human beings died just of sheer physical starvation. As to remedial measures, he asked whether the Central Government had accepted all recommendations of the Food Grains Policy Committee, including the appointment of a rice expert for the duration of the war and raising the import level. Would it be possible and would Mr. Amery strive to make it possible to create a Central Food Grains Reserve which the Committee recommended? Would shipping be available and what were the prospects of increasing the available shipping? Lord Wavell, he said, had shown capacity for sympathetic understanding and a desire to help without the accompaniment of pomp and circumstance. The inescapable and uncomfortable fact remained that they were dealing with a normally heavily undernourished people. The mass of the people had been living at an economic and nutritional level to which human beings should never be subject. It was an astonishing fact that despite greatly increased knowledge of scientific methods of agriculture, the total agricultural production in India had remained static.

Mr. Cove (Labour) also asked for fuller information and full inquiry. "The responsibility must be fixed and fixed quickly," he said. The inquiry might be by a select committee of the House or a Royal Commission, but it was quite clear from the tone of Mr. Amery's speech that the House needed further information. "The war has provided an acid test of our rule in India. We have been there for 200 years and when a war of this character breaks out our machinery in India, so far as morale etc., is concerned, has broken down. We have lamentably failed. It is quite impossible to meet the situation unless we, at the same time, try to remedy the political difficulties in India. Our friends like Pandit Nehru and others are in gaol. We may as well be frank—there is no co-operation from the Indian side among leaders there for our cause and I believe that is due to our fault. Not only have we to get food ships to India, but we have to release leaders of the Indian Congress from gaol. "We should seize the great opportunity of solving the political problems that confronted us in India." Mr. Cove asked why the same powerful direct drastic action taken against the Congress leaders had not been applied to feeding the Indian people. What action had been taken in this total war to see that the morale of the Indian people was maintained? "It is all the more an indictment against the Government and Mr. Amery that India is always on a low level and had no surpluses to speak of. That fact itself ought to have made the Government aware of the situation that might arise. What is the Government's answer to that? Look at the inertness, stupidity and lack of humanity of the Secretary of State for India in reply to questions in this House". Mr. Cove quoted sentences which, he said, were reported as having been uttered by Mr. Amery in January such as "no cause for alarm. With care and proper distribution, there should be enough—to go round— . . . . . But the distribution problem is undoubtedly difficult."

# The Convocation Addresses

## S. N. D. Indian Women's University Convocation

In the course of the Convocation Address at the Shreemati Nathibhai Damodher Thackersay Indian Women's University at Bombay, delivered on 3rd July 1943, Dr. Sir *Chimantlal Setalvad*, Kt., K.C.I.E., B.A., LL.D. said :—I have dwelt at this length on this element of weakness inherent in our constitution, to emphasise perhaps the most noticeable defect we have to remedy as effectively and quickly as possible. But before coming to that, I should like to claim all the credit we reasonably can for our peculiarity that has distinguished our University from the start. We have insisted from the first on using the mother-tongue as the medium for all our subjects for all our teaching and examinations at all stages. We trust that this departure brings the student closer to the subjects she takes up, enables her very soon to think for herself, supplement the material her text-books and her teachers place before her own independent observations and investigations, and eliminates from her work all mere cramming and learning by rote. Instead of being a merely passive receptacle for information sedulously poured into her, she begins to offer intelligent and active co-operation from a very early stage, and is thus in reality educating herself as much as she is being instructed and educated from above. Under these circumstances the development of her faculties becomes much more natural and rapid, and keenness is aroused in the subjects she is pursuing, not merely for passing her tests, but for her own sake. This is the theory of the advocates of the mother-tongue as the natural medium of thought, study, investigation and expression. This is the ideal. We have pursued it now for generation, to a much greater extent than any other University in the land. Are we actually succeeding in this ? Do our students get into closer and more living contact with, do they feel a keener and more abiding interest in their subjects, than do students of the same calibre in other Universities who still cling to English as the principal medium ? We hope so ; but the results we have so far attained are far from decisive on this point. Perhaps, the experiment has to go on resolutely for a much longer period. Perhaps there may be some great defect in our endeavour, some deficiency we have to make good before we can expect to reap the full harvest of our better system. This requires to be proved very carefully and dispassionately by all advocates of higher education on our lines.

And another thing. While insisting on the fundamental value of the mother-tongue for higher education, we have laid equal emphasis on our extensive and adequate familiarity with English Language and literature, the secular Bible of freedom, modern humanism and individual self-realization. Nor has English history and literature only this high spiritual value to recommend it. From a practical and material standpoint also, the English language is the universal medium of global inter-communication. My own venerable professor at the Elphinstone College, in the eighties, Dr. *W. Wordsworth*, as good a liberal and as sympathetic a friend of India as England ever sent out to this land on her civilising mission, may be cited in support of my first point. "Deliberately and without craven fear ( he said at the University of Bombay on a memorable occasion ), we have invited the Youth of India to study our history and our literature, and have permeated them with our ideas ....Can we imagine that it is now possible to retain a people thus aroused, stimulated and enlightened, in the leading strings appropriate to a time which has for ever passed away ?" And who can deny that the study of English history and literature has created and stimulated the great urge for the freedom and independence of our mother-land ?

Sir. *S. Radhakrishnan's* observations to us at our Jubilee celebrations (1941) support my second contention as to the outstanding value of the English language for Modern India, on the eve of this New Age of a greater mutual intercourse between all the nations all over the world than at any time in the past. Sir. *S. Radhakrishnan* stands, if I may say so, next only to Mr. *Gandhi*, *Rabindra Nath Tagore*, and *Shrimati Sarojini Naidu* in winning genuine homage from the self-complacent West, for our Indian Culture and our innumerable spiritual heritage. Both travel and contact with many minds have also widened his outlook. Agreeing that fundamental importance he assigned to the Mother-Tongue in higher education, he nevertheless adds,—"Let me also tell you that this is not enough. It should

not be at the peril of our learning the English Language. Let us understand that our national ideals, our cultural fellowships and international contacts, are all through the medium of the English language. And in a world which is growing increasingly interdependent it is not wise for India to cut adrift, and therefore there must be sufficient emphasis on the English language as well."

If you need a third argument to stress the vital importance to Modern India of English language and literature, which the fanatical advocates of an extreme (and I may even say without exaggeration) a suicidal nationalism are so busy belittling—I may point to our modern vernacular literatures in the decades of their marvellous vitality and manysided advance in recent times. It began with *Raja Ram Mohan Roy*, *Michael Madhu Sudan Dutta* and *Bankim Chandra* in Bengali, with the *Kayastha* Munshis and the *Munshi* Moulvis in Urdu; the Brahman and Jain Pandits in Hindi. Look at all the others, Gujarati, Marathi, Canarese, Telugu, Tamil from the Pamirs in the North to Cape Comorin in the far south. I do not wish to flood my address with lists of names. Take the modern Indian language, you know best; by preference, your own mother-tongue. Make lists of the best known and most influential modern writers in it. For Gujarati shall we say *Narmada Shankar*, *Ramanbhai*, *Manilal*, *Goverdhanram*, *Narsingrao*, *Gandhi*, *Kishorelal Masurvala*, *Kalapi*, *Munshi*, *Balvantrai Thakore*, *Ramanlal Desai*? Add only three out of the younger men, *Dhumaketu*, *Jhaverchand Meghani*, *Gunvantrai*. Those who are exclusively or mainly poets I have excluded; for they appeal to a smaller if more select audience, and their general influence in contemporary life and thought is comparatively less. Now look at the work of these leaders of our literary renaissance in the mass. Is it not saturated through and through with the spirit of English literature? We admire their penetrating descriptions of Indian life and local scenery. We marvel at the realization of each individuality but who can miss the fact that the spirit of the best is English literature? Boycott English language and literature from our education, exclude this vital element, concentrate on Swadeshi nationalism in our schools and colleges and where would this new life and vigour, this welcome growth and rich modernity and warm humanity of our own mother literatures be? They have only had a few short decades so far to develop in. Cut off from their English sources will they not shrink to nothing in a few more decades? Even nationalism ceases to spiritual good, if fanatically exaggerated into provincialism, communalism and sectarianism.

Thus, I cannot but endorse my friend *Sir R. P. Paranjapye's* definition of the aim and object of our University to make our students "*bilingual*," equally proficient in the Mother-Tongue and in the English Language. It is indeed as noble spiritually as it is worthy from the practical and material point of view. And I revert to the question I suggested a little earlier. Are we succeeding in our ideal? If not yet, it is merely because we have not yet pursued it long enough, or what is it that stands in the way of our realization? Is it the want of suitable text-books, or proper methods of teaching, or most fundamental of all, a more highly qualified staff of lecturers and professors? I call the last the most fundamental because with a qualified staff, suitable text-books and proper methods would follow as a matter of course. Now, I have no desire to dogmatise. And I have nothing but praise for our staff as a whole. The best of them can stand comparison with the best lecturers and professors in the other Universities. But I believe we must face the fact in all candour that the culture of our students cannot reach higher levels unless we have a more numerous and a better qualified staff. Nor is this merely a question of funds, salaries and prospects, although a minimum living wage is of course the *sine qua non*. What I am anxious to communicate to you is my fear that we are not providing this minimum living wage to attract to our University an adequate number of scholars with a lifelong devotion to their chosen field of intellectual activity and research. Only such professors have the rare gift of educating all the keenness of fresh young minds and inspiring them with something of their own love of learning and their own austere reliance upon only the most scientific methods of research. To avoid misunderstanding, let me add, I do not know your institutions intimately enough to be sure about my diagnosis. But I may say universally that no educational institution was ever injured by a strengthening of its staff to the limit of its resources.

I have time for only one more question. In most Universities young men and young women study together. Our University is exclusively for young women. Nor do we specialise very much on subjects which might be looked upon in a special sense as pertaining to the women's sphere in life. We insist upon the same high general education for our students as for their male contemporaries. The

subjects which might be considered the special province of the sex occupy but a secondary place in our courses also. Why is this? How can this be justified or defended? I can quite understand warm advocates of female education to prefer co-education. They feel that as economic and other stresses force the male portion of the people into special grooves and particular intellectual discipline, the hiatus between the two sexes grows, and happy marriages and harmonious domestic living are endangered until the girls also are as they grow up emancipated from their traditional mentality and outlook and modernised to yoke harmoniously with their male contemporaries to the waggon of life. But it seems to me that many parents in our society, while admitting the general force of this view, instinctively feel that co-education is hardly the right solution. They are afraid lest co-education might make the young girls a greater misfit for such future as they have to make the best of. Both views have equal support from different groups of people and we must leave it with the commonplace but practical remark that it is not very difficult for people on such a point of practical psychology to agree to differ. Where reason is not quite able to perform its function as a guide, it is only natural that many of us should fall back upon instincts and traditions.

## The Madras University Convocation

"A University is an organ of national life and culture and not its adverse critic. In other countries it fulfils its higher purpose by entering, as it were, into the heart and soul of the nation. It cannot afford to do otherwise in India," declared *Dewan Bahadur P. Venkataramana Rao Naidu*, Chief Justice, Mysore High Court, delivering the Convocation Address of the Madras University on the 26th. August 1943.

At the outset Mr. *Venkataramana Rao* referred to the new world order that will emerge out of the present war and said: "With insight and imagination and the illumination of faith, one can perceive, that in the midst of the negations and contradictions of war and through the travail of suffering, we are reaching forth and grasping the great truth, *viz.*, the world idea." Stating that "in commerce, finance, communications, science and culture we have transcended the bounds of nationality; in politics alone we remain bound to nationality, putting forth resistance to the march of events," he urged that this resistance must be overcome either by the higher methods of international law and agreement, if possible, or by the lower methods of conflict and war, if necessary. But overcome it must be. "To you, the children of the university filled with ardent zeal and hope, the call comes that you should build on the corner stone of world society, so that in future, community and nation may not frustrate and nullify the achievement and realisation of world-wide human solidarity. Though in India at present you have to lead your lives under limitations both political and economic, the fact cannot be gainsaid that there has been such a widening of political and economic life through inter-national contacts that sooner or later the limitations are bound to pass, and you will be inevitably drawn into the vortex of world affairs, and your movements and interests will touch at every angle those of men and women of different nations and races in the world; and the life of isolation is a thing of the past."

Speaking next of the purpose and function of a University in India, Mr. *Venkataramana Rao* said that the primary object set for the University was to extend the domain of knowledge of its *alumni* and to initiate them into sciences, by far the most munificent of the gifts of the West. But this task could not be performed without introducing the students to the literature of the West. In the company of its poets and artists and in the atmosphere of its patriots and prophets a new outlook of life and a new ethical perspective were imparted to youth. The first fruits of this new culture were a moral zeal and a desire to judge society and social institutions in the light of ideals of liberty and justice. The function of a University was also to provide equipment for life. The demand for utilitarian education eclipsing the desire for liberal culture was, however, only a passing phase.

Referring then to research as a function of the University, Mr. *Venkataramana Rao* said, "the movement of research is in its infancy in India. While our achievements are by no means humble the importance of research and its potential value for India in the new world order to enable her to take her rightful place in the Commonwealth of Nations have not been sufficiently appreciated. Apart from

the contribution which scientific research makes towards material advance it is also not sufficiently realised that 'scientific research, as a social effort, is radical by its very nature and will do as much as anything else to bring about transformations in society without alienating people by the use of political notions.'

Mr. Venkataramana Rao next stressed a University's attitude towards the culture and civilisation of its country. "With the best knowledge and equipment which has been imparted to you in the University, you should not remain strangers and aliens in your own land, without desire or capacity to enter into your own inheritance and preserve the continuity of your traditions. Moreover, our contacts with other nations and with the new idealism that is abroad everywhere have kindled in us a desire not only to share in the intellectual wealth of nations but also to contribute to it. The renaissance in India sums up the complex of forces and motives that mark the birth of a new life in our midst. The Universities have to take part in the movement, clarify its aims, strengthen its purpose, shape its ideals and supply its energy. A University is an organ of national life and culture and not its adverse critic. In other countries it fulfils its higher purpose by entering, as it were, into the heart and soul of the nation. It cannot afford to do otherwise in India."

#### THE NEW WORLD ORDER

"The new order," Mr. Venkataramana Rao, continuing, said, "will be a world order. It has a cosmopolitan outlook and is collectivistic in character. It secures for men, irrespective of their status and development, certain fundamental rights and liberties as inalienable attributes of world citizenship and humanity. It is not new in content but in comprehension, not in substance but in the principles of structure. In one of the Upanishads there is a description of the tree that has roots in heaven and grows downwards towards the earth. This tree is a symbol of the new order. In the architecture of the new world we reverse the principle of the old. We begin with the conception of world society and go down to nation, community and citizen. We must make the world consciousness and unity permanent terms of our thinking and the basic factors in our social life. Thus alone we can save the new society from the dangers that menaced the old. As the Poet Tagore says, "There is only one history, the history of Man. All national histories are merely chapters in the larger one."

"All the contradictions and calamities of our civilization arise from the fact that modern societies are primarily competitive and their main method of self-expression is struggle; their main endeavour is aggression." The only remedy for the perpetual contradictions of civilization and the only escape from constant crisis in the body politic lie in making the world idea the foundation and in building the lesser units of nation and community on its basis. Our nationalism should not be a reaching forth for a higher level against forces of gravitation but a coming down from the higher. Our communalism should be a subsidiary factor in nationalism and not a rival to it. Thus only we can inaugurate an era of history without war, of economics without want, of society with room and opportunity for every individual to develop.

"The introduction of the world idea in the context of the Indian situation will present you with some of the most difficult problems that statesmanship has ever been called upon to solve, he added. We in India are yet struggling to realise complete nationhood. Unless you attack the problem with a determination to win through and are prepared for radical and even revolutionary changes in society, you may be unable to adjust yourselves to the demands of the world society."

Stating that culture is the racial genius manifesting universal values in the concrete setting of historic circumstances—the soul of a people expressing the world idea in its native tongue, the speaker said the problem of unity expressing itself in the fusion of cultures and in the development of a larger consciousness was not a political but essentially a spiritual problem. The working out of an Indian culture transcending yet retaining the attributes of its component cultures was our characteristic way of fulfilling the world demand. Our art, music, literature best expressed our highest self when they were grounded in the unity behind the diversity." Concluding, he referred to the home as a great school and said: "In the university of the home women are the *gurus* and guardians of the new generation. On their vision depends the future of the race."

# The Mysore University Convocation

The Convocation of the Mysore University was held on the 13th. October 1943 in the Jaganmohan Palace, Mysore, H. H. the Maharaja, the Chancellor, presiding. Sir J. C. Ghosh, Director of the Indian Institute of Science, delivered the address to the new graduates.

After the degrees were conferred, Sir J. C. Ghosh, delivering the address, first referred to the invaluable services rendered by the late Mr. N. S. Subba Rao, Vice-chancellor of this University, who "has been one of the builders of the University and has wielded an immense influence for good upon a generation of students who will willingly cherish his memory."

## BENGAL'S TRAGIC FLIGHT

Sir J. C. Ghosh then gave a detailed description of the conditions of life in Calcutta—that city of palaces—where, he remarked, a drama was being played by the men and women of every condition of life—the newly rich, the well-fed worker, the hungry and the dying poor, generous citizens and noble volunteers working hard in hundreds of free kitchens which received from Governmental stores on payment, four ounces of cereals per day for each person fed and behind the curtains in the homes of the petty clerk, the ill paid school master and the impecunious lawyer, men, women and children half-starving but too proud to come out in the open and beg for food. This was the grim tragedy; but to one who looked deeper it portrayed as nothing else could, the character and culture of the Indian people.

Speaking on the conditions here, Sir J. C. Ghosh observed that it was a relief to return to Mysore where a beneficent administration had carefully made plans well ahead to avert a similar disaster. Paying a tribute to Mysore Government, he stated that it was held even in ultra-democratic circles that, while in British India, the Government did too little for the people, the Mysore Government did so much for her people as to leave them little to do for themselves. They had the assurance that a competent government was tackling this difficult situation leaving them all free to pursue their own avocation. A food policy and a food department should be the *sine qua non* of every civilised Government.

Continuing, Sir J. C. Ghosh said that any State planning for the welfare of its citizens should begin with food, adequate food for all, and such a policy was the spear-head of movement for all-round prosperity. He criticised the tendency of producing money-crops, depending for foodgrains on other countries and the nemesis has, therefore, overtaken them. It was a crime in the circumstances not to get the most that one could not of the soil. They had come to the parting of ways; the war and the famine had created a universal yearning for a new order, and it was imperative that they should make a decision between a philosophy of life which led to pathetic contentment and fatal complacency and a philosophy which made human society a purely secular and rational organisation thriving on scientific knowledge and efficiency.

## MYSOORE STATE'S EXAMPLE

Nowhere had planned development, the speaker added, met with greater success in India than in the model State of Mysore, and he referred to the development made with foresight, of its natural resources in power, water, minerals and forest products. The foundations had been truly laid, things of vital importance belonged to no one in particular but were there for the good of all; and here the State and the people were one, even though in moments of passion they might say that they were not.

"Believe me", Dr. Ghosh continued, "when I say that there is no better solvent for mental inertia than scientific training and education, I hold the view that life in India will be stagnant if we fail to assimilate the characteristics of the present age, which consists in applying the principles, properties and products revealed by scientific research to industries and agriculture; that stagnation is the halfway house to death and to ignore science which has changed the national economy and cultural levels of the rest of the civilised world, by invading every industry, craft and art, will be to invite effacement."

Continuing, he said that to-day the purpose and content of education should not be the spread of culture which was mostly the relic of a dead past, when science for practical everyday purposes did not exist. The aim should be to find out what an average boy or girl was good for, what he or she could do that was useful and

worth doing and how he or she could be helped and fitted to be able to do so. New adjustments had also become imperative in their higher education, primarily aiming at the moving target of the future employment market, if it were not to miss its mark. Employment for the individual was a psychological necessity and the output from each type of higher educational institution must be planned ahead in relation to anticipated requirements of highly trained personnel for industries, transport, agriculture and the so-called learned professions. In India, they had the familiar tragedy of thousands of educated men who failed to get employment suited to their training and then trying to eke out a living in the over-crowded lawcourts. The conviction had now become universal in England that finding employment for the individual was a national obligation and the Beveridge plan of social security was possible of fulfilment only on this basis.

#### WORK BEFORE THE YOUTH

Concluding, Sir Ghosh said that the defeat of the Axis Powers was in sight and in India would remain after the peace, the powerful Axis combination of poverty, ignorance, and disease; and a Government with a war mentality was essential to defeat this evil combination and liquidate them within a fixed period of time. He hoped that right decision would be taken. And then, young graduates, Sir Ghosh emphasised, you would all be called upon to become soldiers for this campaign. He wished them this joy of battle to become leaders who would look forward and not look back and not to lay down their banner until they had won this war. The future of their State, of Mother India, was bound with their own future. Let them go forth, with ideals and courage and might success but not necessarily happiness attend their efforts.

## The Travancore University Convocation

The highlight of the Fifth Annual Convocation of the Travancore University which was held at Trivandrum on the 27th. October 1943 was the conferment of Honorary Degrees on an eminent jurist and a well-known educationist.

On the opening of the Convocation, the honorary degrees were conferred on Sir Maurice Gwyer and Mr. C. V. Chandrasekharan, followed by the conferment of other degrees in law, education, science and arts. Presentation of medals and prizes over, the address of Sir Brojendra Lal Mitter, Advocate-General of India, was read on his behalf by Mr H. C. Papworth.

Addressing the new graduates, Sir Brojendra Lal Mitter said that the University life fifty years ago was dull, dreary and uninspiring. There was no guidance, no conscious effort to train the youthful mind and no plan for individual development. The sole business of the teacher was to deliver lectures at crowded classes and the sole aim of the undergraduate was to pass the examination.

Continuing, Sir Brojendra observed: "Compare those conditions with what the State of Travancore has provided for you to-day. The undergraduates here are the wards of the university where their body and mind are sought to be developed on sound lines, according to plan and with conscious solicitude. They pursue their studies in cheerful surroundings. Your residence and health are the concern of the college and the university. You have arrangements for games and excursions and you have extra-curricular activities for social service. You are trained here for good citizenship on the profoundly true maxim that the most precious capital of the State is the brain of the youth. A new and fuller way of life awaits you and you have been equipped for it by the university. In after years you will be in possession of happy memories. I wish you to ponder over what the university has done for you and what is expected of you in return."

#### PERFECT UNITY OF INTEREST

"As you know," Sir Brojendra proceeded "the State of Travancore is not the property of any human being. It is dedicated to Sri Padmanabhaswami and His Highness Sri Chitra Tirunal is the trustee. Dedication to the deity means that the State has to be ruled as happily as it has always been ruled by King Marthanda Varma and his descendants, for the benefit of the people. It is not a case of the trustee being himself the beneficiary. Here, in Travancore, there is between the ruler and the subject, perfect unity of interest. The ruler serves Sri Padmanabhaswami by serving the people and not by personal aggrandisement. What ensures

for the benefit of the people is a question which has to be determined in the light of existing conditions for the time being. In any case, the will of the people, as expressed by their leaders, is always an important factor in such determination. And you, young graduates, are destined to be such leaders. If you realise this, you will realise your responsibility and your obligations of the State. Your responsibility is the greater when you further realise that Travancore is not a feudal state, but highly advanced, and in some respects probably the most advanced part of India. I do hope you will nobly fulfil your part and thus vindicate the role of your university as the nursery of useful citizens and leaders of your people."

Discussing the various ways in which the young graduates could usefully employ their energies, Sir Brojendra said: "In considering this question we Indians have to keep some fundamental facts in mind. An era in the stage of human progress is coming to an end and a new era is about to begin. We have been out of the main stream; we are in the backwaters. Big questions like permanent peace, international settlement, collective security, world federation and so on are outside our ken. The Atlantic Charter does not apply to us. We are not of the west nor is our civilization or culture based upon western conceptions and certainly not upon western practices. We are politically dependent and economically depressed. Nevertheless we can usefully adopt President Roosevelt's Four Freedoms as our aims in life—freedom from want, freedom from fear, freedom of speech and freedom of worship. Our political subjection and economic depression may be serious handicaps in the pursuit of these aims but as an ideal they are worth striving for. I cannot think of a higher ideal for our people.

#### THE FOUR FREEDOMS

"If you, young graduates, keep the Four Freedoms in view, you will find that your energies will not remain idle. Young graduates, you have much to understand, much to destroy and much to create. I do not know the conditions in Travancore, but were it in northern India, I would exhort you, in the first instance, to free public life of corruption and charlatanism, before you begin to create. The best way to make political advance is not by written constitutions but by just advancing with clear ideas and firm steps. You, young graduates, have to assume that leadership. The attribute of leadership is not accumulation of knowledge but informed and balanced thinking as a guide to action. Your intelligence and activities have to be creative if you are to create the country's future. Such activities must not be in bondage to the dead past, but the past is to be used as a preparation for the future. Your organized intelligence is to create healthy public opinion to the end, that the masses may aspire to a higher standard of life and the leisured classes may not shrink from labour.

"I now come to President Roosevelt's second freedom from fear. The fear we in India have to guard against is different from the President's fear. It is not fear of aggression by unscrupulous neighbours, but fear of internal forces of disintegration. And they are many. Disunion, selfish sectionalism, religious prejudices or communalism, privileges, vested interests, and above all, intolerance. These are all impediments to ordered progress. It is up to us, who have received benefits of education, to find the remedy. You youths of Travancore, can fight these malignant forces in the State, and with the help of sympathetic and enlightened ruling house, it may be possible for you to rid your society of the fear. Remember, we have considerable leeway to make up if we are to establish a society where we can live our own life according to the genius and traditions of our people. We cannot afford the luxury of perpetual quarrel. You, young men and women, must make up your mind to succeed where your elders failed."

Sir Brojendra next proceeded to discuss in detail freedom from fear, freedom of speech and freedom of worship and said that His Highness, in throwing open State-controlled temples to all sections of the Hindu community had set an example for all India. Freedom of worship was perfectly secure in the State. The means of securing freedom of speech was the promotion of unity and elimination of misunderstanding and suspicion. There was no reason why in the State of Travancore there should not be complete understanding between all its people since the ruler was at one with the people.

#### "PRESERVE INDIA'S HERITAGE"

Sir Brojendra, concluding, exhorted the enlightened youths of the State to exert themselves to preserve the heritage of Indian culture. It was one of the important aims of the ancient Indian system of education. Above all, it was your business to preserve and enrich their literature and to express themselves in the

language of the people so that the gap between the classes and the masses might be steadily abridged and the whole people might form a happy unit of India's varied population.

## Patna University Convocation

Emphasising that it must be one of the basic aims of a national system of education to impress on students the essential unity of India, Dr. M. R. Jayakar, in his Convocation address to the Patna University on the 26th November 1943 suggested creation of Faculty of Indian Culture as a compulsory branch of study in all universities. Dr. Jayakar called upon Indian universities to see that Mr. Sargent's scheme for educational reconstruction was carried into execution after the war. In the course of his address, Dr. Jayakar said :

"We are meeting to-day under the stress of the extraordinary times caused by the war and the dreadful food situation in the country. If India had had her own wishes, to be drawn into the war with the full assent of her representatives, if, later, she had been accorded the position of an equal partner in the active prosecution of the war, if her moral approbation had been secured as a valuable asset in support of the great ideals for which the Allies are said to be fighting, we, all young and old, would not have been here to deliver or listen to Convocation addresses. Like the nationals of free countries amongst the Allies, we would have been on active service, either on the battlefield or elsewhere on the Front, each occupied according to his respective age and capacity.

### THE SARGENT SCHEME

Problems of post-war education, he went on, were already engaging the official and public mind in India. It is a hopeful sign that Mr. John Sargent, the official adviser to the Government of India in matters of education—a personality which in the midst of petrified official environment, has succeeded in keeping alive the freshness of a democratic and liberal outlook—has published a well-thought-out scheme of post-war educational reconstruction, which is of the highest importance to Universities like you. This is not so, because his scheme holds out an early prospect of realising the ideals which Indian educationists have dreamt of for several years, but because it shows the right direction in which progress has to be made." Dr. Jayakar, after giving an outline of Mr. Sargent's scheme referred to the British scheme for post-war reconstruction of education and said, the former was a "very modest proposal" compared with a British scheme. India should be able to find the large sums necessary for carrying out Mr. Sargent's scheme. If India's resources were judiciously utilised, the cost of the scheme (over Rs. 200 crores a year) would not be beyond the capacity of the country."

"The Universities of India," Dr. Jayakar said, "are vitally interested in the early and active promotion of this scheme of national education. Apart from the employment which the scheme will provide for its alumni the ideals of education will be set on a firm footing of progress and freedom such as has never been hitherto enjoyed by our Universities. The Universities must therefore take great care to see that Mr. Sargent's plan does not share the fate of similar ones and find itself safely reposing in the archives of a somnolent secretariat.

### EDUCATIONAL AIMS

Discussing the question how best Universities can help to promote plans of national education, Dr. Jayakar observed that any national system of education must have the following characteristics : (1) It must be based on the actual needs of the entire nation in all its stages and give an opportunity to every man, woman and children to develop personality to the utmost extent and to live a full life ; (2) Its objectives, methods and standards of performance must have relation to the facts of the complete life of the people, and to their economic, social and cultural needs, so that it touches society in all its various sections and cross sections ; (3) It must be based on a new conception of citizenship, the requirements of which will have to be carefully planned by the State and the people meeting together in a spirit of co-operation. (4) It must aim at creating a new type of administrator fitted to work the new constitution which will arise after the war. (5) It must at every stage of school and college life inculcate the necessity of national unity and peace and adopt practical methods to bring them about.

Proceeding, Dr. *Jayakar* said : We must keep in view the fact that the bulk of India's population lives in villages and there are about seven lakhs of them awaiting development. A nexus has to be created between the university and the villages. Experience has shown that village regeneration cannot proceed from under-educated or ill-educated men. It must be taken in hand by young men, whose instincts are sympathetic, training adequate and methods modern.

#### FACULTY OF INDIAN CULTURE

"Another vital factor to be kept in view in post-war reconstruction is the essential unity of India. We have amongst us various communities, but their cultures must meet on a common platform of corporate effort. It will be necessary to have at the university a faculty of study, aiming at what may be called the 'intellectual nation-building of the people.' I am speaking here from my own experience which is more or less that of every graduate of my time. How often have I felt that, though calling myself educated, I knew so little of the intellectual achievements of Indians outside my own race, community or province? How little do I know, for instance, of Urdu poets, past or present? What do I understand Tamil Literature, the delicate beauty of which is far famed? It must be a very defective system indeed which has not awakened in me quick centres of response to what my countrymen in other parts of India devoutly honour and adore. I would therefore recommend the creation of a 'Faculty of Indian Culture' as a compulsory branch of study at the University. Experience has proved that there are many points of affinity between the culture of the important communities inhabiting India. The case of Muslims is an instance in point, notwithstanding the present desire of some of them to regard themselves as a different 'nation.' It may be pointed out that though originally the Muslim of pure descent came as an invader, he lived with the people and assimilated himself to his surroundings which, in their turn, reciprocated to his contact. The course of their history in this country is replete with instances of cultural and other occupations which they laboured, jointly with the Hindu, to pursue, perfect and perpetuate with the utmost devotion.

"It would be wise to employ our four years in college in acquiring a capacity for assimilating new ideas. Youth is the best gift of the Gods, says an old Upanishad. Let us rejoice in it while we have it. It is the great formative period of our life, brief but powerful. We are then able to face the world with feelings pure, and with ambitions unworldly. The bounds of our friendship, sympathy and fellow-feeling are not then set. We can push them as widely as we like until they encompass all that is worth knowing amongst our fellows. If we so wish it, we can pass out of our college, proud in the feeling that amongst our intimate friends we possess a Muslim, a Hindu, a Christian or a Parsi; that we can, on that account, instinctively feel, appreciate and respect the discordant features that make them seem so different from us. One such friendship formed at college will save us in later life from the extremes of racial or communal antipathy, which are always the result of ignorance and prejudice.

"I cannot do better than conclude this address by quoting the wise words of an ancient seer, one of the composers of a Vedic hymn, centuries ago. There is a great deal in this address which is of perennial importance. I am, therefore, justified in quoting an extract from it. 'Meet together; talk together, may your minds comprehend alike; common be your action and achievement; common be your thoughts and intentions; common the wishes of your hearts; so there may be thorough union among you.' (Rig Veda X-12-191.)

## The Allahabad University Convocation

Delivering his address at the Convocation of the Allahabad University on the 27th November 1943, Dr. *Bidhan Chandra Roy*, Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, exhorted the graduates in these remarkable words :—

"If we are to have a durable peace after the war, if, out of the wreckage of the present, a new type of co-operative life is to be built on a global scale, then Science and Philosophy, the West and the East, must play their part. The intellectual life of the world, so far as Science and learning are concerned, is definitely internationalised and "whether we wish it or not an indelible pattern of unity has been woven into the society of mankind."

When the rapidly expanding materialism of the West touched the shores of India, towards the beginning of the last century, Dr. Roy observed, the two conceptions of life—the Eastern and the Western—were arrayed in a grotesque hostility. On the one hand, the effort of the East, in civilisation had been primarily metaphysical, the Eastern thesis was, that true betterment must come through the soul; the West on the other hand, held to the view that man's betterment on earth must be achieved through a process of continuous political experiment, that to achieve the real good, a rational application of science, equity, and political theory was necessary. This Western method applied to India, had devastating results.

"But," Dr. Roy proceeded, "the moral effect of this Revolution" was even more devastating. We imitated to perfection, not merely the qualities that have brought material success to the Westerner, but also his most insignificant and ridiculous mannerisms. But the evil did not end there. In India, our inferiority had a counterpart in the arrogance of the Westerner: as we discarded self-confidence, that of the Westerner increased; white pigmentation of the skin, at first only a symbol of material prosperity assumed, and was paid, the homage of divine attribute, until, to question the divinity of Western invention, deencies and ideals, was to question the New Incarnation, of which every white man became an apostle. Thus, in this country, a disastrous form of racial antagonism, involving colour, ensued.

"And yet the reality is that the East and the West cannot afford to ignore each other; the continued expansion of Western ideas is inevitable; technical and scientific education, on the Western methods, open up new avenues of knowledge and opportunity, which the East cannot overlook and which must to a large extent displace older traditions or schooling.

"If India is to exit, fulfil its mission and exert its vital humanising influence in the world of the future, if she is to successfully withstand the ever growing competition she must imbibe, the "best" which the West can give so that her own "best" may be doubly effective, so that India might assimilate Western ideas to the furtherance rather than to the destruction of her spiritual gifts.

#### NEWER PROBLEM

The problem that faces the nations of the East and the West to-day is how to win the war and at the same time preserve those intellectual ideal and standards, "those great things of the spirit," without which a military victory would in the end be nothing but ashes. History shows us that it is possible to lose a civilization while armies and navies are triumphant.

"The solution of this problem, Dr. Roy went on, namely the killing of barbarian Fascist Dictatorship and all that it signifies and yet saving the soul and culture of a nation rests with the Universities of the world, their teachers, research workers and students. "In 1881 the College of William and Mary in Virginia closed down its doors for nearly seven years. The battle of the Civil War had been fought up and down the Peninsula and had left the College in ruins; and although it struggled to keep going during the bitter times of the Reconstruction it was finally overcome by financial catastrophe. But every morning during those seven years President Ewell rang the chapel bell. There were no students, the faculty had disappeared: and rain seeped through the leaky roofs of the desolate buildings. But President Ewell still rang the bell. It was an act of faith. It was a gesture of defiance. It was a symbol of determination that the intellectual and cultural tradition must be kept alive even in a bankrupt world". "In every school, college and University of America to-day", says the above chronicler, "we need to hear the bell ringing".

The problem before the University teachers and students in India to-day is complex. They see a titanic war being waged which is called by Henry Agard Wallace a fight between a slave world and a free world an epic milestone in the march towards an even fuller freedom than the most fortunate people of the earth having hitherto enjoyed. The peace must mean as better standard of living for the common man not merely in the United States and the United Kingdom but also in Russia, India, China, Latin America not merely in the United Nations but also in Germany, Italy and Japan."

"The students of the Allahabad University naturally asks, "If this be the war aim and the peace aim, have I any task to perform in this epic struggle for freedom and if so, what and how." Let me try to study the mind of the student who asks this question. He has, in his study of History, Art, Literature and Philosophy, attempted to reach the Universal Truth; in the laboratories he had patiently searched after Truth. He appreciates and understands, though he cannot

always express it in so many words, that 'the search of Truth and the weighing of values cannot be maintained in an atmosphere from which freedom had vanished.' He sees round him abject poverty and insecurity, sickness and slum conditions and such social and economic distress in which human beings cannot be free. He had studied carefully, in the class room, Civics and Political Philosophy and has formulated high ideals for securing "the greatest good of the greatest number." He is convinced that scientific knowledge and Truth were originally meant to be implemented for the purpose of increasing the comforts and security of man. And yet he finds a world outside, where it is said, "science has corrupted our morals," where the Dictator while doing lip service to Universal Truth, to civilization, culture and morals, prostitutes them in order to suppress Truth, in order to forge newer and deadlier weapons for widespread destruction and human slaughter.

#### STUDENT'S HELPLESSNESS

"The student feels helpless in this world of contradictions and conflicts. He knows, he understands rivalries and competition in the class room and examination hall but he staggered at meeting the stupendous conflicts arising from misunderstanding, selfishness and greed among races, communities and individuals. He finds himself hedged in by all forms of disabilities and restrictions, injustices and iniquities which set at naught all higher ambitions of securing a better and freer world to live in. In the absence of any creative opportunities, his mind collects a large number of dark emotions, hatred and fear, which refract thought; 'fear of the self, fear of the foreigner, fear of history and its possibilities, fear of freedom and of thought, fear of the unknown and undefinable—it is all one winding sheet of *Tamas*.' Fear is an unworthy feeling, for, out of it is born a sense of "Frustration which leads to an Inferiority Complex, loss of self-confidence. But let me bear witness, as a result of my life's experience, that 'fear' can be controlled, confidence can be restored, even in a mind which is today distracted with fear. "Sages have controlled want, saints of self and the man of culture of the foreign and unfamiliar"; why not you and I? Merely to blame the Government and rest content is not a pleasant pastime, it is unworthy of moral beings. But the restoration of self-confidence requires supreme effort and resolution. Are you ready?

The remedy for all these ills, not in running away from or avoiding those social conditions where he had failed but to meet them broadside; not to avoid responsibilities for fear of further failures, but to undertake tasks, may be of smaller dimensions, than those which he had failed to fulfil.

"It is unfortunate that in this country, University education is mainly secular, "where a teacher may be so severed from the religious sympathy of the taught, that he must either be silent on the relations of man to a higher world or if he discusses them, he may be suspiciously heard or imperfectly understood." This is a serious handicap to our University education and must be remedied. We must impart to our students training in morals and discipline; how else can we produce leaders of thought and action, workers dedicated to the service of the Nation?

The University is justly regarded as the home for that freedom of spirit which is True Liberty—liberty to think, liberty to speak, liberty to teach. Therefore our future leaders of the country will be able to appreciate and respect such principles of Freedom to the extent they are disciplined, self-governed, self-reliant. Self-government, which we so earnestly desire, means not merely the privilege of governing others but the preliminary capacity of disciplining and governing oneself. Truest independence exists where authority is least assailed; enlightenment truly expresses itself through discipline.

"Finally, students of the University, you have been seekers after Truth. When you go out into the distracted world, do not give up this quest. Keep the doors of your mind wide open for the Universal Truth to reach its innermost recesses, and there you will find that after all there is no antagonism between Science and Philosophy, between the Western method of scientific analysis of external phenomena and the Eastern system of search of the ultimate verity of life by analysing the internal world. Indeed, with the progress of scientific knowledge, the findings of science are strengthening and not undermining the foundations of Philosophy. The two meet at a point where humanity stands as an indivisible unity. Therefore, science would fail in its noble task of promoting human brotherhood if it caters only to the animal instincts of man and be an instrument of destruction in the hands of politicians. Likewise, if philosophy do not foster a spirit of harmony and fraternity among mankind, on the basis of its spiritual oneness, it too would stultify its noble mission.

Thus, it lies with you to demonstrate the oneness of mankind; under your

guidance the East and the West will attempt to know each other's mind and assimilate the best features of each for their mutual well-being.

"Gentlemen, if we are to have a durable peace after the war, if, out of the wreckage of the present, a new type of co-operative life is to be built on a global scale, then Science and Philosophy, the West and the East must play their part. The intellectual life of the world, so far as Science and Learning are concerned, is definitely internationalised and "whether we wish it or not, an indelible pattern of unity has been woven into the society of mankind." Wendel Wilkie once said, "Man's welfare throughout the world is interdependent."

"From birth to death, we are surrounded by an invisible host—the spirits of men who never thought in terms of flags or boundary lines and who never served a lesser loyalty than the welfare of mankind.

"Graduates of Allahabad University, here is your task. Shake off your lethargy and discard your hesitating, halting Inferiority Attitude. If the newly developed historical science is correct, namely that Physical Geography of a country has a great effect on human activity and development, the sacred shores of Tribeni, the meeting place of three holy rivers, should lead your thoughts and activities towards Inter-Communal, Inter-Racial and Inter-National unity. Such unity does not imply a drab uniformity. Let strains of different culture and learning flow uninterrupted into one. May you never forget your rich inheritance from the time of Asoka, may you always preserve the treasures of the spirit, which you should hold in trust from the past, for the benefit of the generations to come.

## The Annamalai University Convocation

The Thirteenth Convocation of the Annamalai University took place at the Srinivasa Sastri Hall, Annamalainagar on the 30th November 1943 with H. E. the Chancellor, *Sir Arthur Hope* in the chair, *Sir R. K. Shanmukham Chetti*, K. C. I. E. delivered the Convocation Address.

*Sir Shanmukham* referred in his address to the war and the challenge of Fascism and Nazism to civilisation and the need to meet it. At the same time he made it clear that he was no "apologist for the British Empire." "How can I with any sense of self-respect enthuse over our position in the Commonwealth, he asked, when the men of our own race are subjected to the utmost humiliation in South Africa even before the blood which our valiant heroes shed in that very continent has become cold and frozen? But, he added, that notwithstanding all these he had no hesitation in advising the new graduates to give their unstinted help in the war effort. Enlightened self-interest and humanity were his reasons for making that appeal. With Japan on the side of the Axis' powers, no sensible Indian could delude himself about the fate that was sure to overtake their country in the event of a victory for the aggressor nations.

### WAR AIMS AND PEACE REALITIES

*Sir Shanmukham* then referred to the global nature of the present war and of far reaching social reconstruction that was being promised and in fact was under active preparation. Political security for smaller countries and social security for individuals in every country were the main objectives of the New World Order being planned. The tragedy and travail of the First World War gave concrete shape to such ideals, and in the League of Nations and other international organisations men saw the instruments for shaping these ideals into live realities. But bitter disappointment soon overtook the World. The same old greed and unscrupulous diplomacy were in evidence at Geneva. The world need a second baptism of fire and had got it. Out of this ordeal, human civilisation must either emerge in a purified form or totally perish.

The speaker pointed out how voluntary social service by individuals can supplement and facilitate in their own way, the larger schemes for social security and human happiness now on the anvil. In his own experience he had come across the silent and unostentatious work done by Christian missionaries and nuns in remote and unheard of villages and hamlets; and he had often asked himself the question, "Why is it, that in spite of all its great philosophy the Hindu religion has not kindled this spirit in the hearts of its votaries?" The missionary spirit of social service seemed to be alive to their temperament and upbringing.

Was it because Hinduism was not a proselytising religion and they needed the zeal of the preacher to feel the call for service? Somehow this explanation did not satisfy him. The emergence of the Ramkrishna Mission had demonstrated that even in the Hindu fold, they could find men dedicating their life to the service of their fellowmen. Even if it failed to give them this urge for service, the culture that they had imbibed in the University must kindle this fire in their hearts. The man of culture knew that the noblest way of serving God was by service to man.

*Sir Shanmukham* then dwelt on the welcome progress of technological education in the country in the past and added that if the standard life of their people was to be raised all round, it was necessary that they should take the fullest advantage of scientific knowledge and discovery and make ample provision for study and research and training. But while he lay the fullest emphasis on this aspect of education, he was not prepared to accept the view that Universities must convert themselves and that general culture and the study of the humanities had no place in a modern University. With all the importance of Science, some at least of the Universities must preserve the cultural heritage of man and foster the study of the classics of literature, Art and History and Philosophy.

#### TAMIL STUDIES

At the time that the Annamalai University was established, the speaker continued, great hopes were entertained that the Annamalai University would henceforth be the centre of the ancient culture of the Tamil people and that special attention would be devoted there to the study of and research in the civilisation and literature of the Tamil country. "I may be pardoned for stating frankly," he said, "that this expectation has not materialised in sufficient degree. In my opinion, this University has succumbed to the temptation to fall in line with the stereotyped pattern. No University in the world can hope to deal in all branches of learning. Great Universities have each established a reputation in some chosen field of knowledge. Is it too much to expect that a University established in the Tamil country founded by the munificence of an eminent Tamilian should be looked upon as the repository of Tamil culture?" *Sir Shanmukham* added that it was only a few years ago that he had seriously attempted to study some of the Tamil Classics. He found that they were fit to rank among the immortal works of the world and he bitterly regretted his earlier neglect of the treasures of his own land. And in this connection, he also explained that he did not for a moment belittle the value of the study of English. English was likely to become the language of international contacts. He wished them to keep up the position that they had given to the English language in our educational system. But his point was that the study of the mother tongue need not and ought not to be relegated to a minor place.

#### EVILS OF THE CASTE SYSTEM

"Of late there has been a revival of interest in the study of the vernacular languages and there is a spirit of renaissance in the different cultures of India," *Sir Shanmukham* said in conclusion: "I am not one of those who look upon this as a dissipated tendency threatening the unity of India. In fact I consider that those who oppose this spirit are the enemies of Indian nationalism. For, they forget that Indian culture and Indian nationalism are the synthesis of different cultures and multi-national forces, each with great traditions and a strong individuality. The lamentable feeling of discord and bitterness which is so much in evidence to-day in our country is the direct consequence of the attempts of powerfully entrenched communities and groups to impose their own ideas and cultures on all the peoples of India. In the name of Nationalism they aim at suppressing others and perpetuating their own power and influence. Every country in the world has had at one time or another its own ruling class which was finally eliminated by the advent of Democracy. In India the caste system has moulded the pattern of our ruling classes and has perpetuated their power and monopoly. How soon India will attain Freedom and Democracy will depend not on the promises or good faith of the foreign rulers, but upon the speed with which our own powerfully entrenched communities and classes give up their greed and monopoly or are annihilated by the irresistible forces of Democracy."

# The Andhra University Convocation

Delivering the Convocation address of the Andhra University at Guntur on the 11th December 1943, Mr. S. V. Ramamurthi, Adviser to H. E. the Governor of Madras, said that in the adventure into the realm of spirit, India leads all nations. He appealed to young men and women of India to keep alive the quest of the Absolute on which India started some 3,000 years ago.

Mr. Ramamurthi also referred as the "gravest problem in India now" the way by which agricultural and industrial development on a large and quick scale might be achieved and drew attention to India's natural resources and her mature man-power. It would be the privilege of Andhra young men and women, he said, not only to keep burning the torch of their ancient culture but also to light new torches of economic life.

Mr. S. V. Ramamurthi, after congratulating those who had received degrees and diplomas that day and wishing them all success in life, said: "The University is an ancient institution in India. The Buddhist Universities of Nalanda and Taxila were of the type of the Mediaeval Universities in Europe. But earlier than the Buddhist model was the forest Ashram of India where individual teachers pursued the search for knowledge and initiated younger men in the search. In the Upanishadic times, thinkers sought to realise the spirit behind mind and matter. In the Buddhist times, they sought to understand mind and matter. In modern Universities, mind sought to control matter. The University then had always used mind as the instrument but its jurisdiction has changed from spirit to mind and then to matter.

"The Andhra University, like its fellow-universities in India, has both an inherited and an acquired tradition. India is to-day the meeting place of the cultures of India and of Europe. A Cambridge don, who visited India, China and Japan to study their cultures, said that the contrast in civilisation was not between the East and the West but between India and the rest of the world. Dr. Whitehead, a well known Mathematical Philosopher told me some twenty years ago, that the future of the world seemed lie in the hands of India and China and that Japan and Turkey would probably follow but not lead. Recently, an American observer said that Japan was quick but shallow, that China was profound but slow and that India was both profound and quick. I think it reasonable to hold that in the coming world synthesis to which the war is paving the way, India, in spite of her economic poverty, social disintegration and political distress, yet, by virtue of her mature spiritual realisation, will be as much at least as China, the protagonist of Asia *vis-a-vis* Europe and America. At the same time, by virtue of her connection with Britain, India is the one country in Asia which has had the most intimate contact with Europe. India is thus amphibian in its culture, functioning both in the manner of Asia and of Europe. This position gives the Indian Universities unusual opportunities and responsibilities."

## "KEEP ALIVE THE QUEST FOR THE ABSOLUTE"

The subject that interested the ancient Indian thinkers, Mr. Ramamurthi continued, was the unseen world of spirit. The formula for the relation of the seen and the unseen which India enunciated in the words, *Atman is Brahman*, is the highest summit of knowledge which man has reached. Mind, the perceiver, sees not only its counterpart, matter, the perceived, but also, That which is behind both mind and matter. In this adventure into the realm of spirit, India leaves China behind. If India were lost, the world would be maimed. Even China could not make up on behalf of Asia. Therefore, he would ask the young men and women of India and of Andhra to keep alive the quest for the Absolute on which India started some three thousand years ago.

For thirty years, Mr. Ramamurthi went on to say, he had been a follower of this quest. The method he had followed was the method of Mathematics. Mathematics is the bridge between philosophy and commonsense, between the abstruse and the simple, between the transcendent and the immanent. India discovered the Zero, the decimal system and the negative number—which are the essentials of arithmetic. Europe discovered the complex number which is at the basis of the dimensions of geometry. There was now a welding of Indian and European knowledge. The Relativists led by Eddington and Jeans had recognised that the unseen is as real as the seen, that the experience of a mystic is as valid

as that of a scientist and that the method of science may be adapted also to the examination of one's inner vision. Eddington had suggested that mystics might build images through which their vision might be crystallised.

#### TIME IS TWO-DIMENSIONAL

Mr. *Ramamurthi*, continuing, said that he believed that it was possible to build bridges between the inner and the outer experience of man. He was not content with differentiation of the world into time, space and matter but regarded mind as an additional fundamental entity of the Universe. The world of mind as well as time, space and matter had been to him for many years a great forest where he was lonely and yet enjoyed his loneliness. Recently he had found in it a new plant which he took this opportunity of mentioning. They had for ages contemplated on the nature of time. They have never yet thought of it except as an undifferentiated stream, a one dimensional entity. "Man perceives", Mr. *Ramamurthi* said, "the rhythm of time. He has not realised that he cannot perceive time if he has not within himself not the same but an answering rhythm of time, as length answers breadth on the floor of a room. The discovery I venture to present to you is that time is two dimensional, even as space is three dimensional. I see this as a fact. I present it to you as a theory. It is a theory which is of value not merely to philosophers, mathematicians and saints but to common men. How long have we been groping in India for a bank to the stream of time in which we are born and die and yet are born again, ever floating down the stream? If only we could reach the bank, this endless stream of *samsara* could be transcended. The bank does exist because time is two dimensional. The two dimensions are the time within and the time without. Nature has a time rhythm within itself which is universal. It is the rhythm of a clock. If time changes in one clock, it changes in all clocks. But not so in the passage of man's consciousness. The duration of the world and the duration of man's consciousness are different. The pattern of life is set to two different rhythms—the rhythm of nature and the rhythm of man, the rhythm of matter and the rhythm of mind. Nature makes the woof. Man makes weft. Time, the rhythm of life, is, therefore, two dimensional."

Passing on to the world without, Mr. *Ramamurthi* said that the knowledge they had inherited through science had during the last century or more revolutionised man's manner of living in the world. It had done this by a deeper and fuller understanding of nature than ever before. This understanding had been continuously put to practical use. Many of the amenities of civilised life which they had learnt to enjoy but could not get during the war were the products of Science. They had even ceased to be self-sufficient in some of their vital needs. "We import food and oil for lighting. We depend on large machinery for our clothing. We cannot build without imported or machine made steel and cement. Locally grown drugs have been replaced by synthetic and imported drugs. Our production from our own resources has not kept pace with our growing needs. The result had been shown by the economic stress of the present war. The margin of production over our needs has been so thin that it has given way. There is further a growing population. The gravest problem in India now is how to achieve agricultural development on a large and quick scale. This is the post-war reconstruction which has begun to occupy urgent attention. The war has shown our deficits in various economic directions. The tempo of development has to change. The content and direction of education need also to be recast." Mr. *Ramamurthi* then drew their attention to the natural resources of India and her mature manpower and remarked that it would be the privilege of the young men and women of Andhra not only to keep the torch burning of their ancient culture but also to light new torches of economic life.

#### SCHEMES OF ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION

Mr. *Ramamurthi* proceeding said :

"Let me mention to you some significant directions in which the Government of Madras are making new economic paths in the area which this University serves. The Agency tract has rich soil and good climate. The one evil genius which has kept this tract underdeveloped is the malarial mosquito. From experimental work done by this Government in Vizagapatam and in Malabar, we are now confident that malaria can be controlled at a small cost on the scale of one rupee a person a year. Here there is a new colony for the surplus population of the Andhra Districts which will do away with the need to send coolies to Burma—a process which is not only a mark of our economic inefficiency but has also led to the branding of all Indians as coolies. We should reclaim then the waste land in the

Agency tract. Then again we have great rivers, the Godavary and the Krishna. It is to the credit of a great British Engineer, Cotton, that these rivers are used for irrigation. But as yet, only 5 per cent of the water that reaches the auncuts at Dowlaiswaram and Bezvada is used and the remaining 95 per cent is wasted into the sea. Hence Government are investigating a scheme to impound water in a reservoir at Polavaram. There are high water-falls in the Agency tract of which one is on the Machkund river and is nearly 600 feet high. Government propose to harness this water-fall and develop hydro-electricity by a scheme which may be ultimately bigger than the Pykbara Scheme. On this the industrial regeneration of the Andhra area may be built. We need fertilisers for new land as well as old cultivated land. There is room to start a fertiliser factory by fixing nitrogen from the air. The use of sun power stored in plants for lighting has been brought into vogue.

"I have spoken to you a little while ago of the vertical division of the universe into mind, time, space and matter. Our ancient seers have also made a horizontal division of the universe in the form of the five elements—*prithivyapasthejovayurakash*—namely, land, water, sun, air and ether. The five schemes of economic reconstruction that I have mentioned amount to a reclamation of the five elements, the *panchabhutas*. This horizontal division of the world is as relevant in economics as the vertical division is in science. May the Andhra University build its thought and action on both these analyses and develop both Science and Economics!

"A little while ago, I made a pilgrimage to Bhadrachalam, and there saw, enacted as in a vision, a new chapter of the Ramayana. Once more in the Dandakaranya, Lakshmi is held captive by the demons, headed by Masikasura, the Demon Mosquito. Rama stands on the banks of the Godavary and sees Lakshmi wasted in the sleep of Andhra hill, wasted in the purposeless downpour of Andhra waterfalls, wasted in the untapped fertility of the air, wasted in the unused light of the Sun. To rescue her, Rama raises a new army of administrators and teachers, engineers and doctors. Doctors trample on Masikasura and hold him firmly down. Engineers impound rivers, harness water-falls and bend to their will and purpose the giants of the forest. Teachers teach new learning, new agriculture and new industry. Administrators help to build prosperous villages and famous towns. Lakshmi rises and stands in the centre of the vision, clad in the garb of a homely matron, with a brass pot in the crook of her left arm, with a brass lamp held by her right arm, giving food and light to her children. By her side stands Rama smiling—He from whom all shall merge. Towards such a consummation, Andhra graduates, leaders of the coming decades. I ask you to dedicate your vision, will and vigour!"

सत्यमेव जयते

## The Dacca University Convocation

Dr. M. Hassan, Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca University, made the following observation addressing the Convocation of the University at Dacca on the 6th. December 1943 :—

"The wastage in our educational institutions is appalling and it is high time for a thorough examination of the whole problem from an entirely different angle. A complete change in our attitude towards high education in this country is essential.

"No ideals, no systems imported from abroad however successful and valuable they might have proved in the other countries, will suit India to-day; she must evolve her own system and method of education which will combine the finest and most valuable traditions of the East and the West."

"The University of Dacca," Dr. Hassan observed, "has passed through many and varied difficulties during the past twelve months, and its difficulties are by no means over. Communal differences which had been an ugly and discreditable feature of the life of Dacca during last two years found their way among students of the University this year and there were free fights between two sections of students in Curzon Hall and the Central buildings which resulted in injuries to a number of students one of which proved fatal. The University has no excuse or explanation to offer for this outrageous behaviour of its students who, in their excitement, forgot all the noble principles which should differentiate an educated man from an illiterate and uncultured boor.

"The incidents of this year will always remain shameful blots on the fair name of this institution and the source of sorrow and shame to every one of its members. We can only hope that our students have fully realised the enormity of their transgression and they will do their best to re-establish the honour and prestige and the good name of their 'alma mater' by their laudable conduct in future. I am happy to say that the present feelings and relations between the students of the University are very cordial and encourage us to believe that troubles of this kind will never again heap shame and sorrow upon the University.

#### TRUE FUNCTION

"The true function of the University," Dr. Hassan continued, "is to develop the mind, to free it from the shackles of narrow prejudice, ignorance and false conceits; to eradicate from the human mind those animal impulses which motivate the actions of savages either in wild jungles or in the moral wilderness of so-called civilised countries.

"In India," Dr. Hassan regretted, "our students do not come to the Universities even for the purpose of acquiring knowledge. The result is a tragic wastage of money, energy and opportunity. Our fundamentally wrong educational outlook is responsible for the failure of our Universities. The difference between an Indian University and Oxford, for example, does not lie in the intellectual capacity of the students or the superiority of formal academic instruction: from my own personal experience I can say that many of the lectures in Oxford were definitely inferior to some of the lectures which I had attended in India. The real difference lies elsewhere. But the dreamers and idealists which Oxford produces give very creditable account of themselves when they leave the sheltered cloisters and the pleasant nooks of their 'Alma Mater' because when they come to grips with the realities of the world they find themselves to be interpreters of a much wider and more valuable experience of life than that which they were supposed to possess. The dreamer becomes the man of action with an unflinching belief in the divinity and nobility of human nature and an abiding faith in the eternal truth of the principles which were unconsciously inculcated in him at the University and from which he never departs in the most trying and dangerous situations.

"I have mentioned Oxford only as an example because I know it intimately. This conception of education is very old and is not confined to England or Greece; in the East, particularly in India, all our education had been imparted and received in this spirit. Even to-day we can find in our indigenous educational institutions some scholars whose cyclopaedic knowledge and breadth of vision, whose insight into the subtleties of human nature and the working of the human mind will astonish those who are brought up in that system of education which is prevalent in our colleges and Universities. Those of our friends who are dissatisfied with University education in India and who point out to us incontrovertible proof of the failure of the Universities to impart really valuable and useful education forget that Indian Universities have not been given a fair chance. Our Universities, as I said before, were created for a very definite and utilitarian purpose in the early years of the British rule in India, and they have more than fulfilled that purpose, and now our public services cannot absorb all the clerks which our Universities produce.

"University education has been progressively degenerating during the last two or three decades because pupils come to Universities with an object which they and their parents know is not going to be fulfilled in most cases, namely the securing of a post in Government service. Thus there is a sense of frustration and helplessness and a growing feeling of apathy in our students at the very start of their University careers. They do not come to the University to receive education, they come to it because they have nothing else to do.

## The Agra University Convocation

The following are extracts from the Convocation Address delivered by Pandit Amarunatha Jha at Agra on November 20, 1943:—

In addressing a gathering composed mostly of those engaged in the bringing up of youth and of young persons on the threshold of their career in life, I may without apology spend some time in considering whether centres of education have any contribution to make which may help in the restoration of ultimate values, in

the return of sanity, in the realisation of peace and joy.—peace which knows no fear, joy which feeds the sacred flame of love. That educational institutions are capable of making this contribution is amply proved by the attempts made last year from more than one quarter to disturb and dislocate their work and prevent them from functioning. Whoever is reactionary, whoever stands for the privileges of the few, whoever is opposed to light and freedom is naturally the foe of those centres which encourage liberty of thought and liberty of faith and which are equally hospitable to all shades of belief. A University must be such a centre, a clearing-house of ideas a haven to which repair all who voyage on the restless seas of thought and adventure and action and return for the invigoration of their faith, the renewal of their spiritual strength. A University will cease to be true to itself if it allows either a party or a group or even the state to dominate its life, colour its ideas, influence its beliefs. It cannot be indifferent to the currents and cross-currents of contemporary life, but it should be detached; it cannot be cold towards the happenings of the day, but it should remain cool; it cannot be distant and aloof from the present, but it should retain its wisdom. In the dull and endless strife of every day, under its ferment and agitation, it should be a place of strength and peace, of thought and certainty of faith rather than a twilight of opinion. Unfortunately even centres of education have been threatened by barbarous dissonance and the canker of sectarian and communal bitterness. What are grandiloquently called ideological differences are allowed to break up the unity, peace and concord that should characterise these centres of light and liberty. These reasons persuade me to ask whether in the reconstruction of society and the planning of a new order, the Universities have not a contribution to make. It is without significance that in the many committees which have been set up in this country to suggest plans for the planning of the future, educationists have been studiously excluded, as though any scheme has the slightest chance of success unless the bringing up of youth is made one of the cardinal subjects for discussion and decision.

How is youth to be brought up? What ideals ought to be placed before the rising generation? The sanctity of life, of all life but specially of human life; a sense of reverence for the superhuman Energy or Spirit or Divinity that orders creation and ensures its continuity; love of virtuous conduct; a spirit of sacrifice for the larger good; faith in man's high destiny; discipline, self-control, balance; the feeling that while they are architects of the future, they are also inheritors of the past; the aspiration to be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect—this and nothing less than this should be the spirit animating those who train young men and women who are to shine above the light of the morning star. That evil will continue to exist, that treachery, deceit, falsehood, and all the other items in the catalogue of the earthly, sensual, and devilish, will not be completely destroyed, that there will always be war and bloodshed, that men cannot become angels—all this may be recognised, and yet one need not desist from ensuring that the youths' thoughts are fed on what is beautiful and good, manly and exalted. The emphasis placed, during the period since the industrial Revolution and the rise of science, on utilitarian education has tended to throw into the background what used to be the most significant part of training, the teaching of the humanities. Indeed, so dominant is the position of science that even history, philosophy, and literature have been forced to don a pseudo-scientific garb, and the study of these subjects is now accompanied with the due ritual of laboratory, graphs, and statistics. I am far from devaluing the value of scientific studies. But I do maintain that the most important subjects of study are not things, but rather man, human thoughts, human ideas, the universe within first and only afterwards the universe without. We must know ourselves to begin with and then we may try to know other things. We must learn to be men, and only then can we truly be scientists, priests, or politicians. I plead for humane studies, which include not merely pure literature, philosophy, and history, but also archaeology, anthropology, numismatics, epigraphy, psychology, and geography; I wish the classics to regain their lost position; I hope that the classics will once more enable us to draw out of them elevated thoughts, noble emotions, and the strength that comes from contact with the highest achievements of the human soul. From them we shall develop our historical and cultural background, and derive "the understanding of human nature, the broadening of human interests, and the better appreciation of the purpose of human life." From them, too, we shall call back the spirit and the courage, the faith and the power with which brave men and women in ancient days faced perils similar to those that surround us. In them we shall discover examples of fortitude, of calm, patient, uncomplaining suffering, of noble rage, of resistance against tyranny, of

dignity, of humility, of the soul on its knees, of the self ever-expanding and not contracting, of the eternal youthfulness and freshness of beauty—all expressed in words that call to us and find a response within us across the wide stretch of centuries. From them we realise that where our forbears greatly dared we can dare too, what they nobly suffered we too can suffer, what ills they survived we also can survive. Above all, from them we learn how to conduct ourselves, how to live and die in the high ancient fashion.

To the questions, what is the right life for man, what is good for man, how to throw off the brute inheritance, what are his obligations to the 'inner law' of the heart, what is his portion in the physical universe, how can he attain a higher degree of perfection, what is the eternal purpose,—to these vital questions the classics provide an answer, whether in precept or tale or myth, with powerful confidence that comforts and convinces us. We go to the classics for wisdom. We need not all be interested in Tully, or Ulpian at the best; nor puzzle over the doctrine of the *erotic*. Da; nor seek inspiration from *dukrin kirane*. The specialist may derive what comfort he can from such subtle niceties of grammar and rhetoric. Indeed, the grammarian and the rhetorician are in the main responsible for making the classics formidable, unattractive, dry as dust, dull as ditchwater, lifeless as cinders and ashes, when they are in fact bright and effulgent, pure and pellucid as streams full of stars. It is not grammar or language or text or even the political or economic aspects of classical scholarship that are of main importance; they have their uses, even as the dissecting of a corpse is of use; but one values the classics chiefly because even after the lapse of centuries it is still as true now as it was in the time of Cicero who wrote in his letter to his son; "You are going to visit men who are supremely men." In the classics we are brought into touch with men who were supremely men. Whether we spend our time in the company of the poets and dramatists or thinkers who lived lives of peace and content on the heights of the Himalayas or on the banks of the Ganges; whether we listen to the discussion at the momentous Supper in the house of Agathon or walk along the studious walks and shades of the olive grove of Academe; whether in the high and palmy state of Rome we hear the Virgilian muse or Ovid the soft philosopher of love; love whether we lose ourselves in the words of Hafiz, half rapture half meditation and all a wondrous exaltation, or derive wisdom from the writings of the other 'nightingale of the groves of Shiraz,' the leaves of whose rose-garden cannot be touched by the tyranny of autumnal blasts—wherever our taste or fancy may take us and in whichever classic we steep ourselves, rigorous teachers, in Matthew Arnold's vivid phrase, will purge our faith and trim our fire, show us the high, white star of Truth, and there bid us gaze, and there aspire.

The classics of India tell us of the Avalokiteshwara who refuse Nirvana for themselves till all have passed into bliss. We hear of Yudhishthira, declining to enter into heaven unless his faithful dog was permitted also to get in and preferring to descend into hell if his wife and brothers were to remain in hell. "I cannot tarry," he said, "where I have them not."

Bliss is not blissful, just and mighty Ones,  
Save if I rest beside them. Heaven is there  
Where Love and Faith make heaven.

There is the scene of Rama, on the eve of his coronation, willingly renouncing succession in favour of his younger brother so that his father's plighted word be kept.

"To Bharat's hand I gladly would resign  
My bride, my life, my gold, and all that's mine.  
Unaskt, most freely would I give him all:  
How much more gladly at my father's call!"

And the yet more touching scene of Bharata, following Rama into exile, begging him to return but begging in vain, and content ultimately to place Rama's sandals on the throne until his return from exile. Arjuna, valiant warrior, hero of many a battlefield, shrinking from fighting against near relations and dear friends, laying down his arms on the first day of battle, being recalled to his sense of public duty and recognition of the claims of the greater good; Bhishma, giving loving advice even to those who fought against him; Harishchandra sacrificing everything in order that his word of honour might be kept; Rama saying in his last years, "Affection, compassion, happiness, yea, even Sita herself—in renouncing all these I have not the slightest pain, if thereby I can secure the satisfaction of my subjects;" these scenes, and inspiring passages like these;

"The person who acquires *temperance*, has control over the mind, and is pure in thought and deed, and attains that stage whence he is not born again."

"What is great is bliss. The great is itself bliss. Understanding, thought, faith, conduct, volition, all lead to the ultimate truth."

"Lead me from the unreal to the Real; from darkness take me to Light; from death lead me to Immortality."

"Death, that must come, comes nobly when we give  
Our wealth, life, and all, to make men live."

"In good fortune not elated, in ill-fortune not dismayed,

Ever eloquent in council, never in the fight afraid,

Proudly emulous of honour, steadfastly on wisdom set; These six virtues in the nature of a noble soul are met."

"Unable to see others suffering; helpful and forgiving to all beings; one whose strength is truth; without reproach; ever unperturbed; one who has controlled his desires, is mild and pure; one who desires no honours, willing to honour others; one who is friendly to everyone and is moved by compassion; one whose vision is noble—he is indeed the greatest of men."

"Discarding all sense of pride and notion of prestige and idea of physical differences, one should bend before all created beings, down to the dog and the ass."

—And numerous others which can be easily recalled by those who have been nurtured on the Indian classics, episodes, maxims, lyric pieces, produces in one a sense of tranquillity; of incessant and beneficent activity; of oneness not only with fellow-men, but beasts and birds and flowers, rivers and mountains; of purity and compassion; of balance; and of willing surrender to the will of God.

If we turn to the Greek classics or those of Rome, the final impression is not different from this. Milton's account of the grave tragedians who teach

"Of moral prudence, with delight received,

In brief sententious precepts, while they treat

Of fate, and chance, and change in human life;

High actions and high passions best describing"—

Or Shelley's reference to the Athenian records and fragments stamped so vividly with the image of the divinity in man; or Mill's conviction that the ancient writers provide an admirable foundation for ethical and philosophical culture, or Gilbert Murray's remark that they enshrine moments of living that are too beautiful to be allowed to pass; or another scholar's view that they engender disinterested curiosity which is the real root as it is the real flower of the intellectual life—all these express only a part of the contribution which the Greek and Roman classics have made, only a part of the debt which the civilisation of Europe owes to them. For the chastening of our soul, for its comfort, for its elevation, we have noble words that still stand us in good stead, words that are both memorable in themselves and for the emotions they arouse and the spiritual exaltation that they provide. "No Greek was ever an old man", it was said, and age does not wither their words either. The saying of Archimedes:

"Give me a place to stand and I will move the earth;"  
the words of Epictetus:

"He is free who lives as he chooses;"  
the statement in Sophocles:

"Wonders are many, and none is more wonderful than man;"  
the epigram in Pindar:

"Man's life is a day. What is he?

What is he not? A shadow in a dream

Is man: but when God sheds a brightness,

Shining light is on earth

And life is sweet as honey;"

Cicero's words:

"A short life is given us by nature, but the memory of a well-spent life is eternal;"

the lines in Virgil:

"Everyone has his allotted day; short and irrecoverable is the lifetime of all; but to extend our fame by deeds—this is the task of greatness"—

These cheer us on our tedious way and lift us if we totter down. The value of moderation is constantly stressed in these classics—the need for temperance, the value of evenness and balance and sophrosyne. "Nothing in the affairs of man is

worthy of great anxiety" (Plato); "Remember to preserve an even mind in adverse circumstances, and equally in good fortune a mind free from insolent joy" (Horace); "An undisturbed mind is the best sauce for affliction" (Plautus); "The passions of the mind should be neither overelated nor abjectly depressed" (Cicero); "It is great riches to a man to live sparingly with an open mind" (Lucretius); "Whatever you love, desire that it may not please you too much" (Martial); "Things that are moderate last a long while" (Seneca); "To keep to moderation, to hold the end in view, to follow the rules of nature" (Lucanus)—do these not also echo the cardinal truth enunciated in the Bhagwadgita:

"In sorrow not dejected, and in joys  
Not overjoyed; dwelling outside the stress  
Of passion, fear, and anger"

or in Fariduddin Attar:

"Whoever knows how to control his passions will be among those who have secured freedom in this world."

These classics set up before us ideals and suggest heights to which we may aspire. "Barbarism" has been well defined as the absence of standards to which appeal can be made.

And in the classics of Persia too, we find similar sustaining and elevating power. In the odes, elegies, moral maxims, narrative poems, discourses, and anecdotes, there is food for thought, advice clothed in attractive garb, deep philosophy underlying the symbolism of love and wine, mystic vision in the writings of the budge doctors of the Sufistic fur, useful and noble sentiments. These there are in plenty, even though on the surface the writers may seem to have lost themselves completely in wine and flowers, the running stream and the face beloved. The superficial reader will take delight in the rapturous nightingale wooing the rose, the cup that holds the drink divine, the golden sunshine of the human face, a book of rose-leaves smelling all of wine, Samarcand and Bokhara gifted away in exchange for the mole upon the cheek. But one can find wisdom too: how the personal self can be merged in the consciousness of the Divine; how by abandoning yourself to become one of the poor you can be admitted into the palace of Eternity; how the poor are the treasures of this world and the keys of the other; how "generation goeth and generation cometh, while for ever the earth abideth. The sun riseth also and the sun goeth down and cometh panting back to his place where he riseth."

With an authority which I cannot attain, Matthew Arnold says: "Commerce with the ancients appears to me to produce, in those who constantly practise it, a steady and composing effect upon their judgment, not in literary works only, but of men and events in general. They are like persons who have had a very weighty and impressive experience; they are more truly than others under the empire of facts, and more independent of the language current among those with whom they live. They wish neither to applaud nor to revile their age; they wish to know what it is, what it can give them, and whether this is what they want." My message is:—Back to the classics—Treasure up the best part of the past. It enshrines that which shapes our inner life, contributes to our emotion, imagination, and thought, is the content of national consciousness, and endows us with charity and freedom from bitterness.

## Benares Hindu University Convocation

The following are extracts from the Convocation Address delivered by the Hon'ble Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru, LL. D. at Benares on November 28, 1943:—

We are living in stirring times. The world is calling for men of action and daring. Change is in the air. We do not know what will come out of the present titanic struggle, but it has made people in all countries eager for a radical transformation of the existing order, which seems to have had its day. The old order has not yet yielded place to the new anywhere, but one hopes that the struggles and sacrifices of the last four years are the birth-throes of the new world for which we are longing. It is natural that we should ask, at a time like this, what will be our place in the new order and what will be our contribution to it. The problem of India cannot be isolated from that of the rest of the world. Indeed, it is part of the world problem. The political and social ills that we complain

of have cast their blight on the lives of millions in other countries. The longing for bold advance and experimentation in the hearts of us all reflects the expectant mood of the entire world. The denial of human freedom, and the existence of poverty side by side with enormous potential wealth are the fundamental problems facing the entire world. The existing social system is being hotly questioned everywhere, and men are asking themselves why they should stand by silently while the things to satisfy them are within easy reach. And any solution which is based on the application of social values to human problems will be as applicable to India as to any other country. It depends on those in authority today whether peace and plenty should reign throughout the world in future, or the unrest and denial of equality and brotherhood, which are responsible for the present holocaust, will continue. "The test in the world today," as Mr. Wendell Willkie has said, "is as to whether political leadership, business leadership and labour leadership have the quality and the capacity and the character to measure up to these critical times." The temper of the people shows that they will not allow the *status quo* to exist.

The universities and centres of learning have an important part to play in bringing about the transformation, which we all ardently desire. They can afford valuable guidance in the shaping of new policies and the formulation of schemes to implement them. In view of the great service which the universities can render in the years to come, it will be appropriate if I refer first to the problem of educational reconstruction, which has been completely and persistently ignored by those who had the power and responsibility to solve it.

It may seem unreal to discuss educational questions while we are in the midst of a world war, but, in reality, the importance of making far-reaching changes in the existing educational system to increase the vigour and efficiency of the people has been thrown into sharp relief in all free countries by the events of the last four years. The knowledge that the ability of a country to preserve its national life and to maintain its position in relation to other countries depends on the intelligence and capacity of its individual citizens has stimulated interest in educational problems both in England and America and educational expenditure is regarded by these countries as a part of the national war effort. They are not merely preparing plans for the further development of their educational system after the war, but are already incurring additional expenditure to improve it in all directions. England, in spite of the burden which it has to bear on account of the war, has raised its educational budget from £105 millions to £172 millions in the current financial year, in order to enable it to hold its own in the post-war world : it has increased its educational expenditure by 70% since the outbreak of the war. Turkey, I understand, spends more on education than it does on armaments or its standing army. Even China, which has been engaged in a life and death struggle with Japan for more than six years, has found it possible to give education the highest place in its national budget next to war expenditure. Realizing that their future position will depend more largely than ever before on their understanding of the forces that will shape the new world, the Chinese are taking comprehensive measures to enhance the capacity of their people to adjust themselves intelligently to their environment. In these circumstances, we can postpone the consideration of our educational future only at our peril. We have a heavy task before us. We have not merely to introduce the light of education into every home, but also to enable our people to occupy a position of intellectual equality with other nations. We have to take steps at one and the same time to cover the country with a network of educational institutions and to raise them to a standard comparable with that of similar institutions in the more advanced countries.

Every one of us, I am sure, realizes the need for equipping the people with the weapon of knowledge to ensure their survival in the keen struggle for existence that will arise after the war ; but our educational system cannot be easily adapted to our requirements. Education has scarcely ever been viewed as a whole in this country. It has developed haphazardly under the pressure of events. It is soulless in the sense that it is inspired by no ideal. Its aim is neither the individual good in the highest sense of the term, nor rational greatness. There is no dynamic purpose behind it. It is designed to maintain the *status quo*. Its hall-mark is, therefore, conformity to the existing political order, which requires subservience to authority and places a premium on the production of men qualified to fill subordinate roles. We have, therefore, to view our educational problem from a new standpoint, and to devise a system which will provide for the rearing up of a race of free men.

In examining our educational structure, let us first consider University education, which will interest us most on the present occasion. The number of students in the universities has often been regarded as excessive. It came in for a great deal of criticism during the years of depression. Relatively to the total population, the number is not too large. Before the war, the proportion of students in the universities to the entire population was 1 to 837 in Great Britain, 1 to 690 in Germany and 1 to 225 in the United States, but in India it is only 1 to 2,430. The number of University students cannot, therefore, be regarded as excessive, but the poor quality of University education and the inability of the graduates to support themselves require serious consideration. Both the standard of education and the methods of teaching require revision.

A high educational authority thinks that "only 30 per cent. of the University products can be said to have secured employment of a type which is in keeping with their attainments or commensurate with the time and money which have been spent on their education." This tragic misdirection of energy can be remedied only by a reorganization of the entire educational system, so that its various parts will be properly adjusted to one another and more account will be taken of the different aptitudes of the students and the practical needs of the community. The vocational side of education which has been largely neglected will have to receive much greater attention than it has unfortunately received so far. It is only then that the pressure on institutions which make provision for general education will be relieved. If our universities are to be comparable to the universities of the more advanced countries, an essential feature of university reform must be the extension of the degree course to three years. Steps must be taken at the same time to improve the quality of the material that the universities get from the high schools by the addition of a year to the high school course. This will naturally lead to the elimination of the intermediate classes, which are an anomalous feature of our educational system at the present time. Education will thus be divided into two well-marked stages, each of which will be a complete whole. Simultaneously with the attempts to improve education, generous provision must be made for scholarships which will be sufficient to support those whose means do not allow them to prolong their education. The scholarships at present given are unfortunately too small to enable those who receive them to maintain themselves and to take part on a footing of equality with other students in the social life of their colleges and universities. This means that, in the case of a fairly large proportion of the students, maintenance grants should take the place of scholarships. The reports of the University Grant Commission in England show that nearly half the University students are able to carry on their education only because of the financial help which they receive from public or private funds. In order to raise the standard of secondary education adequately—and make it a suitable foundation for higher studies, the importance of the mother tongue must be recognized much more fully than is the case at present.

"The mother-tongue," observed the Calcutta University Commission, "is the true vehicle of mother-wit. Another medium of speech may bring with it, as English brings with it, a current of new ideas. But the mother-tongue is one with the air in which a man is born... It is the mother-tongue which gives to the adult mind the relief and illumination of utterance, as it clutches after the aid of words when new ideas or judgments spring from the wordless recesses of thought or feeling under the stimulus of physical experience or of emotion. Hence, in all education, the primary place should be given to training in the exact and free use of the mother-tongue." In many provinces, subjects other than English can be taught through the mother-tongue, but training in the use of the mother-tongue does not still occupy, as the Commission desired, "a fundamental and unique place" in our educational system.

The developments suggested above must be accompanied by a wide expansion of primary education, which has hitherto been woefully neglected. Our future will depend, not on the selected few who have enjoyed the advantages of higher education, but on the ability of the common man to understand the world he lives in and the position which he occupies in it. Free and compulsory education is, therefore, as necessary here as it is elsewhere. Had the efforts made by Mr. Gokhale thirty years ago to make a beginning in the direction of free and compulsory education succeeded, and the authorities realized that it was their primary duty to spread education not merely in urban, but also in rural areas, we would have gone much further on the road to universal education than we have unfortunately done so far. Our backwardness requires that we should make strenuous endeavours to

achieve as rapid a progress as is practicable, so that we may not be left behind in the race of life.

I have here attempted only a brief indication of some of the points on which reform is called for; the Education Adviser to the Government of India has recently put forward a comprehensive scheme which deserves the immediate attention of the country. The reforms here advocated will undoubtedly be costly. He has calculated that it would cost about 277 crôres to provide India with a system of education comparable to that prevailing in the West *before* the war. The figure may stagger even the most ardent advocate of education reform in this country, but the examples of other countries should inspire us with a determination to do all that lies in our power to wipe out the ignorance which has long been a reproach to the country. I have already stated what Turkey and China are doing to educate their people. The example of Russia which has won the admiration of the whole world by its heroism in defending its freedom should be an even greater inspiration. It is poor and has a large population, 90 per cent of which was illiterate before the Revolution of 1917, but it has abolished illiteracy. In our own country, money has been found for the War to an extent which would have seemed impossible only four years ago. If we realize that national education is as necessary to our existence as victory in the war, we would consider no sacrifice too great in order to develop our human capital which is of far greater importance than silver and gold. We can neither industrialize the country nor banish poverty and ill-health which are the results of ignorance and illiteracy unless our people are equipped with the knowledge which modern conditions require. Educational progress is an essential preliminary to progress in other directions. Our future is indissolubly bound up with it. The spread of education and its development in all its branches must be the first reform that we should insist on after the war. Nothing is worth having without it. The main responsibility for carrying out this reform must rest on the Government of India. In the present circumstances its achievement will be impossible if it is left entirely to the provinces.

I have dwelt at length on the urgent need for the diffusion of education throughout the country, because the successful working of democracy depends on an educated electorate. The political responsibilities which a democratic system of government places on their shoulders can be discharged by the people only when they can arrive at an intelligent decision with regard to the important issues that arise from time to time. Nor can the economic condition of the country be improved to the full extent possible while the masses are stupid in ignorance. Both the industrialization of the country and the efficiency of agriculture require educated cultivators and workers who will be able to understand the significance of the results achieved by science to human life and be able to apply them in practice.

Education is thus the indispensable basis of all schemes for improving the general conditions under which the people live, but the extension of the social services cannot be postponed till education has been placed within reach of every boy and girl. A great deal can be done even now to mitigate poverty and disease. The poverty of the country is too well-known to require emphasis. Millions live on the verge of starvation and millions more never know what it is to have a full meal. Inadequate nourishment inevitably leads to ill-health and premature death. The incidence of disease is higher in India than in any country with which we would like to compare ourselves, and the low expectation of life here is in startling contrast with that in England, the United States and other advanced countries. While the average age is 59.12 years in the U.S.A., 58.74 in England and Wales and 44.82 in Japan, in India it is only 26.91. The catastrophe which has overwhelmed Bengal points to the urgent need for taking vigorous steps to deal with problems of social reconstruction. The shortage of food and the epidemics of malaria, dysentery, cholera, etc., and the terrible increase in mortality which have followed in its wake are now the results of a temporary dislocation of the economic machinery. They point to a serious deficiency in our social system and the lessons which they teach should be taken to heart both by the Government and the public. They show that the standard of living in the country is dangerously low. As I have already stated, there is a chronic shortage of food in the country. Want of bodily vigour characterizes the large majority of the population, and agricultural and industrial production compares very unfavourably with that in the countries to which I have already referred. We have become used to starvation, inefficiency and disease, and have regarded them as the inevitable features of life in a country with so large a population. We have become callous to human suffering and have taken hardly any steps to plan an economy which would give a chance of leading a

happy, healthy and prosperous life to those who are living under sub-human conditions. The famine that is raging in Bengal and other parts of India draws forcible attention to the urgent need for adopting measures to bring about social security. We need a Beveridge Plan which would lay down a national minimum which we must strive to achieve as early as possible. The tragedy of Bengal should serve as a clarion call to our educated countrymen to work for the welfare of the masses. A Persian poet has said : "The more I studied logic and philosophy, the more I felt that their meaning was only love." The education which we have received should teach us the duty of service and sacrifice. In a recent speech defining the duty of the British Government to its own people, Mr. Churchill said : "Now I regard it as a definite part of the duty and responsibility of this National Government to have to set about a vast and practical scheme to make sure that, in the years immediately following the war, there will be food, work and home for all. No erudition, no party doctrines or party prejudices or vested interests shall stand in the way of the simple duty of providing before the end of the war for food, work and home. Each plan must be prepared now, during the war, and they must come into action as soon as victory is won." Our objective must be the same. We have no government which we can call national, yet our duty to spend ourselves in the service of the country and to fight for conditions in which there will be "food, work and home for all" is imperative.

The times in which we live are difficult. We are faced with baffling problems. In spite of the sacrifices we have made in this war for the cause of human freedom, we have yet been given no share in the freedom for which we are fighting. Though the promise of freedom is still held out to us, a new slogan has been raised by our opponents to delay its achievement. We are now told that democracy is unsuitable to India. Our special differences are held to militate against the establishment of a democratic government. We are expected to follow England in every respect except its system of government. When it is discovered that democracy cannot be worked in India, we do not know. But the new obstacle placed in our way should only serve as a further challenge to the spirit of youth. The present situation may try their patience, but patriotism requires that they should bend every particle of their energy to the task of welding their country into a united whole. With faith in themselves, they should work for the elimination of all those distinctions of caste and creed which have brought about discord among us and divided those who should love one another as brothers. The impediments in their way are formidable. But they must remember that we are not the only people who have to contend against heavy odds. China is passing through a severe ordeal. The war has brought untold sufferings on its people, and it has been ravished by a ruthless enemy, who has tried every means in his power to destroy its national life, but the spirit of the youth of China is still unbroken. They have answered the call of their country with magnificent courage and enthusiasm. Till a few years ago, China was torn by internecine divisions. There was not even a semblance of unity in the country. Practically every province regarded itself as more or less independent and had its own war lord, but China enjoys a moral unity today which would have been regarded as impossible a few years ago. This achievement is in no small measure due to the unconquerable patriotism and self-sacrificing labours of the young men and women of China. To the young men and women of India I would say : "You have no government of your own as China had to help you in going forward, but you have within you the same spirit which has actuated the Chinese youth to work and suffer for the country.

If you do not lose heart, the vigorous struggle in which we are engaged will have but one end. But be true to yourselves, and the battle of freedom, though at times it may seem lost, can only end in our Victory. Yours is now the great opportunity to work and perhaps to suffer for the achievement of this supreme end !"

## The Nagpur University Convocation

The following are extracts from the Convocation Address delivered by *Sir Homi Modu* at Nagpur on Monday, the 13th. December 1943 :—

Slowly but with gathering force, the armed might of the Democracies is asserting itself, and even before the smoke of battle has cleared away, men's thoughts

are turning to the building of a better world from which injustice, oppression and cruelty may for ever be banished. You have the good fortune to be the standard bearers of this New Age and what more inspiring call can you have than that you equip yourself adequately for the great tasks which await you? In the forefront, you must have a clear appreciation of the fundamentals of the issue over which the present conflict is raging. *Lord Halifax*, in a memorable address delivered at Oxford some three years ago, pointed out that real conflict today was not between age and youth, but between youth and youth. He thought it was a terrifying challenge to the very foundations of human thought and action that the growing generations in different countries should accept standards of conduct in sharp contradiction to an another. The devastating perversion of the youth of Germany and her satellites had brought about a moral retrogression, and it was a question of fighting for the very existence of modern civilization. *Lord Halifax* pleaded for a repudiation of the crudely materialistic philosophy of *Hitler's Germany*, and the return to social, moral and religious standards.

The task which faces humanity of evolving a better social and political order is one of infinite complexity, and requires us all to shed some of our most cherished convictions and unlearn some of the dogmas on which we have been reared. The cry of Freedom is on every one's lips but is it not clear that the concept of Freedom needs to be revised and given a new and deeper meaning? For us in India, the problem is complicated by the special conditions of our political life. Our entire concentration on the attainment of Self-Government has necessarily created a somewhat narrow national outlook, and to the extent that Freedom must be our first objective, there is no reason to quarrel with it. If, however, the two world wars have taught us any lesson, it is that there is no hope for mankind in a world divided up into sovereign states, pursuing their own ends, and refusing to think in terms of an international Order, capable of guaranteeing a collective political and economic security. The practical recognition of this truth must obviously be the first task of the statesmen of the United Nations. In the present evolution of India, the problem may appear to be one of academic interest, but however distant or near the attainment of our goal may be, the leaders of political thought in the country cannot afford to mark time while the rest of the world is engaged in working out a solution. One of these days, India is bound to take her rightful place in the Councils of the world, and it is essential that those who are moulding her destinies should have their minds attuned in time to the revolutionary changes that are taking place in the ideology of freedom-loving peoples all over the earth.

Another lesson which this War has taught us is that Democracy, however much we may prize it, is not necessarily the last word in political wisdom, and that human progress can be achieved under widely different systems. Soldier and civilian are fighting in Russia with a heroism and resourcefulness which have compelled the admiration of the world, and it cannot but be admitted that Russian resistance has given a rude shock to the almost universal conception of the Soviet System of Government. To-day it is heresy to talk of an international Order without Russian collaboration. Incidentally, the course of history would have been different, if the realization of Russia's place in world polity had dawned on the Great Democracies a few years earlier. Putting the idea in another way, the war has taught us that peace-loving nations can collaborate with one another under widely different systems of Government, and that man does not need a political system any more than he needs a universal religion.

It is a remarkable circumstance that almost from the very beginning of our struggle for emancipation, we have owned allegiance to the ideal of Parliamentary Democracy. Since it has become an article of faith with us, it is useful to remember that the British Constitution has only been made possible by the peculiar genius of the British people, developed over a course of centuries and has not been found capable of adoption by any other nation. However that may be, we must have clear understanding of the essentials of Democracy. It is a commonplace that under a democratic form of Government, the individual enjoys the largest measure of freedom compatible with the existence of an ordered Society functioning for the common good. It is a condition of the system that the will of the individual, collectively expressed, largely determines the character and composition of the Government in power. The subordination of the citizen to the State, and the rigid regimentation which follows from it under a dictatorship whether of the individual or the Proletariat, is abhorrent to the ideals of Democracy. This concept of the place of the individual has elevated humanity, but it is be-

coming increasingly clear that it is no longer adequate, and by itself cannot satisfy man in his craving for a larger and fuller existence. Economic freedom must form an equally essential part of the common heritage; the new life which man wants must offer security as well as freedom. This may mean the abandonment of the extreme forms of the *laissez-faire* doctrine which the Nineteenth Century elevated to the position of a gospel. There are many who might interpret this as the beginning of the process of dissolution of Capitalism. I have no such fears. I believe our economic life can and will adjust itself to the needs of the times and the demands of a more enlightened humanity. It should be quite possible to remodel the capitalist organization of Industry without destroying individual initiative and the profit motive. Here again clear thinking is required, and the solution must be along the lines of a compromise between two extreme sets of ideas. The relations between Capital and Labour will also need to be adjusted, if the disastrous antagonism between them is to be prevented from developing into a threat to the fabric of Society. I do not see why it should not be possible to develop a synthesis of interests in which an adequate and honourable place is found for both Capital and Labour. When our economic system has thus shed some of its old clothes and put on new habiliments, we may expect political freedom and freedom from want to be knit together in close alliance in the common interests of all.

There is another Freedom, of which we have heard very little at any of the Conferences which the statesmen and strategists of the United Nations have been holding from time to time. I mean the freedom of the Coloured People. If, as the Big Three have very recently stated at Teheran, the peace which they envisage will be one "which will command the goodwill of the overwhelming masses of the peoples of the world and banish the scourge of the terror of war for many generations," there can be no place in it for the Colour Bar. There cannot be a world divided up into four different compartments labelled, White, Brown, Yellow and Black. Global peace cannot rest on the insecure foundations of racial inequality.

Apart from this wider conception of freedom, if India's political evolution is to be on the lines of a Parliamentary democracy, we have to try and appreciate the conditions which make for success. Tolerance and discipline are the very foundations of the system, and as I have indicated above, it is their continual exercise that has accounted for the strength of British institutions. India will need to cultivate these special attributes, and that leads me on to the consideration of an unpleasant feature in the corporate life of our schools and colleges. No man interested in the development of the character of the rising generation can remain indifferent to the growing manifestations of indiscipline in our institutions of learning. It is a problem which has to be handled with tact and understanding, and in so far as your system of education or upbringing may be held to be responsible, all who have in their hands the moulding of the character of the youth of the country in their hands must seriously concern themselves with eradicating the root causes of the trouble. I have no desire to moralize; my only purpose is to point out that if discipline is not implanted early in life, the younger generation which will have enormous responsibilities laid on its shoulders, will find itself faced with difficulties threatening the orderly development of free institutions in this country.

Allied to this is the old, old question whether it is right for students to engage themselves in political controversy. If I was seeking for perfection in an imperfect world, I would positively deprecate their active participation in politics, particularly as it must mean, under present-day conditions, concentration on the single issue of political freedom. I recognize, however, the impossibility of altogether weaning away the young mind from issues which fill such an important place in the lives of all, and I shall forbear from advice which has often been tendered, and as often rejected. Only one thing I would emphasise, and it is that there is only one period in which you can cultivate and enrich your minds, and it would be a thousand pities if at the most formative stage in your lives, you allowed yourselves to stray along the barren paths of politics, which to most of us mean only disappointment and frustration.

Before I leave the subject of political freedom with which I have dealt mainly in the abstract, I would like to say a few words about what is one of the most potent agencies for the efficient prosecution of the democratic way of life, I refer to the power of the Press. We all know there is no such thing as a free press in countries which are subject to the will of an individual or a group, but I wonder how many of us realize the tendencies which have been at work, even in liberty

loving countries, during the past generation or two. Time was when there were newspapers in Great Britain which made and unmade governments. They stood out as protagonists, not of this class or that, one special interest or another, but as champions of freedom and fair dealing between man and man. They influenced the policy of Government, moulded public opinion, and stood as buffers between the electorate and the party machine. Their fearless voices were heard with respect in the chancelleries of the world. The arrival of the Press Barons on the scene has changed all that, and has left the electorate at the mercy of the party machine. The sorry chapter of incompetence, indecision and expediency which characterized British policy during the disastrous years which preceded the rise to power of political gangsters would not have been written if a really free press had been functioning in Great Britain. With the growing power of the political machine, and with a press largely subservient to capitalist interests, the party in power was able to keep the nation in blinkers, and men like Mr. Churchill who were trying to rouse it to a consciousness of the humiliation of its position and the peril it was facing, could get no hearing. This has an object lesson for us all. The press has to be protected against party domination just as much as against control by the Government in power, and if conditions are ever created here which make it impossible for even a few fearless men to raise their voice against oppression, injustice or back-sliding, democracy in this country will lose one of its greatest safeguards.

I have dealt so far with problems which insistently call for a solution, if the world of tomorrow is to be a better and happier place to live in. I believe this may prove to be the last chance civilization has of retrieving itself; I cannot imagine its surviving another war. A heavy responsibility rests accordingly on the shoulders of those to whom is committed the task of putting the world back on its feet. Let us profoundly hope we shall be spared another Versailles, and that men of strong purpose and clear minds will guide humanity's footsteps. Is it not a tragedy that at such a decisive period of history, our country should find itself torn by dissensions and unable to reach the goal which all sections of the people have set before themselves? I do not think it appropriate to the occasion that I should dwell on controversial issues, and if I refer to the communal problem, it is only for the purpose of emphasising that there can be no future for the country unless the various races and communities within its borders learn to live together. The achievement of that objective will have to be the supreme responsibility of the young men and women who have received the impress of a University education, and who have learnt to value the virtues of toleration and a broad outlook on life. It is a task which calls for infinite patience and understanding. If it is true that the fragmentation of India would seriously jeopardize her prospects of emergence some day as one of the Great Powers, it is equally true that no political framework which was unacceptable to any large section of the population would have a chance of being set up or maintained. Harmony between the various races which inhabit this geographical unit, known for centuries as Hindustan, thus becomes the most compelling task before us all. I hope the youth of the country will apply themselves to it with evangelic fervour, conscious as they are of the injury done to the interests of the country by the eternal wrangles of the politicians of the day, and imbued as they must be with the lessons of the two ghastliest wars in all history. The road is long and difficult, there may be many wrong turnings and the goal may elude them, but success must crown the efforts of those who preserve their faith undimmed and refuse to own defeat.

## The Punjab University Convocation

The following are extracts from the address delivered by the right reverend G. D. Barnes, C.I.E., O.B.E., M.A., D.D., V.D., Bishop of Lahore at the Annual Convocation of the Punjab University held at Lahore on December 22nd, 1943:—

"A University aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles of popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power and refining the intercourse of private life."

Ladies and gentlemen graduates, there is much meat in this definition. I do not pretend it is complete or perfect, but it will be enough for us this morning.

May I invite your consideration of some thoughts which surge through my mind when I ponder this definition in the light of the days in which we live and with special reference to this great land of India in which I have spent more than half my life.

Towards the end of last century Matthew Arnold reminded us in England who read his poetry that we were "wandering between two worlds, one dead, one powerless to be born." The words are much more applicable now sixty years later than they were when they were written. The events of the last four years have completed the shattering of the old world which was beginning at the end of last century and was speeded up by the first Great War. Now the old world is indubitably dead. We stand on the threshold of a new era. We are not only spectators of a new birth but we are participators in it and this especially applies to you of the younger generation ; not to us who have nearly completed our course, but to you, representatives of the intelligentsia of all nations, you who represent millions of young men and women in the two hemispheres, many of whom to-day have been ruthlessly murdered in a diabolical attempt to stamp out individual personality and culture and degrade men and women by turning them into machines. You in India to-day can still say "my mind to me a kingdom is", but you do not share that privileged position with all your brothers and sisters. We have peace this morning in Lahore, a greater peace than Calcutta where enemy bombs have recently taken their toll of life. Elsewhere in many a University there has been no peace for four years. Murder and destruction reign supreme.

I have not the time to enlarge upon every phrase in the definition of a University which I have just quoted to you, though I commend it all to your notice. I must be content to take some of it only.

A University aims firstly at *cultivating the public mind and purifying the national taste.*

Secondly at *supplying true principles to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power.*

You will remember I am suggesting to you that, whatever profession you are going to follow, your University requires of you that, in return for her learning and culture, you have an unending duty to society, to those, the vast majority, who go through life without the support which letters after their name should secure.

#### PUBLIC MIND, NATIONAL TASTE

Firstly, you are expected to play your part at *cultivating the public mind and purifying the national taste.*

I cannot help acknowledging that this gigantic task you share with all countries of the present day. I am not thinking of India alone. I am not thinking only of the Punjab. Public minds and national tastes are, all the world over, at a pretty low level. It is true that they have of recent years been subjected to new influences which are capable of good and of evil on an unprecedented scale, never experienced by the world before. The most potent of these are the cinema and the radio ; and we must take account of the immense and growing influence of printed matter. University men and women all the world over carry the responsibility which learning and culture demands. The cinema in India is still in the earlier stages of its development. In some ways it has avoided the less reputable features of Hollywood ; in some ways it has been too slavish in following suit. Often it deals with great themes which are inspiring and uplifting ; sometimes it does not play so worthy a part. The cinema all the world over must cater for the public taste if it is adequately to fill its halls. Its influence is (to use one of its own hyperbolic adjectives) stupendous. Increasing numbers of people patronise the cinema. It is therefore all the more important that the public mind and national taste should be purified and not degraded. Here is a great influence waiting to be harnessed for good ends. University men and women should be interested in it. Their influence should be to keep it at a high level not only insisting on technical perfection but the presentation of stories and themes which, even in their excitements and developments, raise the national taste instead of degrading it. The same problem presents itself in the radio. Here the level is unquestionably higher but strenuous efforts must be made in all countries to see that the electric wave lengths which Marconi discovered and his successors have improved upon shall not be used for unworthy ends, especially to prostitute the truth. The use of the word propaganda shows as well as anything the most deliberate deception for unworthy ends. The word itself is an admirable word, free from ignoble associations. One of the

Christian societies with which I am connected uses it as a title for proclaiming what it holds to be truth. But nowadays distortion of the truth and lying on a gigantic scale have claimed the word and bound it in fetters from which I doubt if it will ever have the power to free itself. Propaganda is now an utterly sinister word : it carries a message which is suspect. Its name will be for ever connected with Goebbles and those in all countries who have been blind imitators of this apostle of lies. And propaganda is especially connected with the air. Caliban's description of Prospero's island is true of India as of every country in the world—"the isle is full of noises." It would be a good thing for the world if the rest of the description rang true also, "sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not." Truth was of Plato's three Absolutes with Beauty and Goodness. Two thousand five hundred years have done nothing to displace the claims of the great Greek philosopher in the minds of all thinking men everywhere, but all three Absolutes are in jeopardy to-day. Truth lies at the bottom of an abyss where the nations of the world have thrown her. It will be for thinking men and women, especially those who have been kissed by an *Alma Mater* of learning, to rescue her and restore her to her rightful place. 'Great is truth and she will prevail' is an estimate we have every right to accept but the debunking of lies and bad faith and the restoration of truth of her rightful place in the "windy ways of men" will require the active co-operation of all educated men. It will be a crusade. Every University in the world should flock to the colours and break a lance for truth.

Then there is the matter of public taste in literature, and all printed matter. There are more books and magazines printed nowadays than ever before. I think the East shares with the West the reflection that much of it is on a low level. In books there is low-brow and high-brow literature. I am not suggesting that University men and women should confine themselves only to high-brow literature. That would be too appalling a prospect. I myself should miss the detective novel very much. There is however good and bad low-brow literature, and middle-brow literature as well. We may be right in assuming that there is no bad high-brow literature. We are all of us consumers of literature. Some of you may be going to be writers. I don't know what you have been reading during your University days outside your subjects. Sir *David Livingstone* in a recent book entitled *Education for a World Adrift* deplotes the taste of present day undergraduates at Oxford but lays much of the blame on authorship. Standing up for Victorian literature against present day writers he suggests that Shaw, Huxley and Wells, cut a poor figure beside Carlyle, Ruskin, Stevenson, Fronde. There are many of you who would not agree with this estimate. Possibly your own Indian writers are of a better calibre than they were half a century or so ago. What a man reads in his leisure time, apart from what he has to read for examinations, is really the touchstone of taste. I feel University men or women are to a greater extent than they some time appreciate trustees of public taste and can help and influence others in what they read or in what they submit to from the writers of leaders in the papers.

The second phrase I would take from the definition of a University which I have chosen is—a University aims at supplying true principles to popular aspirations, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power.

#### PRINCIPLES, IDEAS, POLITICAL POWER.

Surely there is enough in these words to engage the thoughts of those who, in their University days apart from their studies, have devoted no small attention to political issues and felt with all the fire and enthusiasm of youth the urge at playing their part in working for the full and unrestricted freedom of their country. I have often heard it said that the main hobby of Indian University students is politics. If the description is true it would not be surprising because the political issues of this great sub-continent contain some of the most interesting and challenging problems in the world. It would be as surprising as it would be disappointing if the students of Indian Universities were not interested in them. One of the main functions of a University is to provide a forum for exchange of thoughts : a series of cells where opinions are germinated and discussed. India has not yet realised sufficiently this most vital facet of University life. Too often Universities are examining bodies, degree-giving institutions. Many an undergraduate passes through them without the rapier thrust and parry of intellectual discussion and stimulating thought. A University is a half-way house for one who is later going

to contribute to the life and development of his country. The Principal of Hertford College, Oxford expressed this well a few years ago. 'A University, if it is worthy of the name, should be a melting pot of opinions, a great dialectical workshop of character, in which the young are eagerly testing every spirit, without having reached for the most part conclusions which an older man can sum up categorically, without grave risk of interpretation.' Well, ladies and gentlemen, you have been through your testing time. You are about to start on that journey which should land you eventually among the elders for whose judgment the Principal of Hertford obviously entertains a high opinion, in spite of the strictures which the younger generation pass so easily—and perhaps justifiably (let us ancients accept our medicine) on those who are old. I think you of the younger generation are fortunate in the time you have struck the wheel of history. It is a difficult but challenging time. I hope many of you share Wordsworth's reflection when he contemplated the French Revolution some one hundred and fifty years ago, "Bliss was it in that day to be alive, but to be young was very heaven." But youth, because of its enthusiasms, does need the strengthening of discipline in thought and action. I hope you can look back over your University days and on to your future career with something of the poet's estimate of past and future.

"I am a part of all that I have met,  
Yet all experience is an arch where thro'  
Gleams that untravelled road whose margin fades  
For ever and for ever when I move."

The future is ever elusive. Enlargement and sobriety, dull sounding companions, will be yours as time recedes. I think you will find that they will improve on better acquaintance, though it will be a sign that you too are growing old.

Our definition refers to *true principles of popular aspiration*. I do not think that these principles are any different really in India than elsewhere. One thing is certain, the world is in a ferment. Popular aspiration all the world over is subject to changing moods. It is something like Vergil's *mutabile semper femina*, though the Roman poet's criticism on the weatherecock of womanhood would find less supporters to-day. Some points in popular aspiration however seem fixed and almost ineluctable, for instance the general tendency of mankind towards freedom and democratic ideals. That degrading theory of autocratic and arbitrary authority which we connect with Hitler's Germany is not the way the wind of human life is blowing. *Homo sapiens* is demanding more and more freedom, pure and unsullied, which will make possible the full development of personality and individual character which will guarantee the progress of nations towards the fullest life. In India the wind of freedom blows strong. During a long residence in this country I have noticed how a breeze has developed into a strong wind and a strong wind into a gale. It will be for you University men and women to take a hand in piloting your ship of state through the waves which this gale has itself produced. You know your own seas infinitely better than any mariners from the West know them, though sometimes, with a longer experience in oceans and currents, some pilots from the West have made charts and built light-houses which it would be unwise to refuse to notice. I am sure all those I address to-day are good nationalists. No one of the rising generation in India to-day would be worth his salt unless he was. Our definition of a University includes the words *facilitating the exercise of political power*. It presupposes that university men and women will do their best to make the political engine run smoothly and even increase the mileage of the track, the metallised lines on which the train is constantly moving. It presupposes also, I suggest, that the best way for a train to reach its destination, is to keep on the lines. Even if we are not railway engineers we know that leaving the lines for fields or woods means disaster, not progress. It presupposes that doctors, teachers, and the rest, will be active and sleeping partners, not soulless cogs in the machine of life. There are national and civic duties not only for you yourself individually, but the position to which your education has brought you should make you concerned about millions more, the poor and outcaste people, who should be showing signs of progress as well.

# The Delhi University Convocation

The following are extract from the Address delivered by *Sir Maurice Gwyer*, K.C.B., K.C.S.I., D.C.L., LL.D., Vice-Chancellor at the twenty-first Convocation held at Delhi on December 22nd 1948 :—

With your leave, therefore, I do not propose this afternoon to say much about education in general, though I must say something about the particular aspect of it with which the University of Delhi is concerned. But first and foremost it is my agreeable duty to congratulate all those young men who have degrees conferred on them today and to express on behalf of the University our apologies that some of them should have had to wait so long for it. That particular delay will not, I hope, occur again; and now that this period of transition and reorganization is coming to an end it is our intention to hold the University Convocation each year in or about the month of November, which seems to be generally accepted as the most convenient time; and in that case those whose examination results are declared in May and June will not have to wait as hitherto before the crowning of their labours. These new graduates of the University are going out into the world at a very critical time in the history of their country and, if I may compare small with great, in the history of their University itself. The training which they have received here will perhaps have fitted them to play their part more effectively on wider stage of public life; and they may reflect later on, if they are of a philosophic turn of mind, that the path from the old to the new which their country is now treading has not been without its counter-part in the lesser world of the University during their period of residence here. They will have seen that a fruitful co-operation is not inconsistent with autonomy, and that central guidance produces greater results through persuasion than through force; and above all, that it is the vital spark within that animates any institution which is the work of men's hands, no matter how elaborate and ingenious is the construction of its frame-work and external fabric.

Wise men have long discussed the question whether there is such a thing as the corporate will of any body of men as distinct from the individual wills of those of whom the body is composed. I think that it would have been difficult not so very long ago to discern any corporate will in this University. The Colleges no doubt had their independent life and corporate existence; but the University was no more than the sum of the Colleges and lacked any corporate will or indeed any existence of its own. I hope and believe that the rebirth of the University, for so I think with justice it may be described, has been beneficial to all concerned. The Colleges are stronger because they are now an integral and essential element in a wider unity; and they not only possess their own inner strength but are able to draw strength also from their sister Colleges and from the University itself. The University in its turn has developed a corporate life of its own, but it shares it with them.

No one, I think, now believes that there has been any desire to exalt the University at the expense of the Colleges. As an Oxford man myself, I should repudiate any policy which affected the status of the Colleges or detracted from their rightful position in the University. But an appreciation of the part which the Colleges must play in the development of the University must not close our eyes to the necessity of improving also the status of the University itself. The University has its own special functions, just as the colleges have theirs. There is room for both, and by union and co-operation they will be able to achieve things out of the power of either working independently and apart. This, I think, is now generally recognized; and I can myself detect at the present moment not even a latent antagonism between the different elements of which the University is composed. The first complete experiment in co-operative teaching, in the post-graduate teaching of Economics, has been by general consent a great success; and I hope that it will soon be followed by others. Co-operation in this sphere will greatly add to the teaching strength of the Colleges as a whole, and is likely to promote both efficiency and economy.

I am happy to record the assistance which the University is now receiving from the re-organized Governing Bodies of the Colleges. I am told that the University representatives on the Governing Bodies, whose introduction it was thought at one time might be prejudicial to College autonomy, have proved their value; and I may perhaps describe them not inaccurately as constituting both an

official and an unofficial link between the University and the Colleges, the unofficial aspect of their work being by no means the less important of the two. College constitutional problems are not yet solved in one or two cases, but discussions are proceeding in an amicable atmosphere and I hope a genuine desire to arrive at a sound solution, I think that if it is once realised that the University desires to assist and not to dominate many difficulties will disappear.

The Bill to amend the University Act, an innocuous administrative measure, in the course of its passage through the Legislature assumed suddenly and unexpectedly a political aspect, the reasons for which must be left to the politicians to explain, for I am myself unable to do so. But though the passage of the Bill was long and sometimes stormy, it reached port at last; and on the whole the alterations which it made in our constitutional arrangements have been welcome. To make the Executive Council and not the court the judge whether a college should be recognised or have its recognition taken away, did no more than correct a misinterpretation of the language of the original act, since clearly recognition or derecognition is an executive and not a legislative function though the conditions in which the function is to be exercised may properly be defined by the legislative body. The addition of two women members to the Executive Council as well as of a Professor, to represent the professorial body, will strengthen the Council; and I think the same may be said of the additions of the Academic Council. The power taken to appoint a whole-time and salaried Vice-Chancellor excited at first some criticism; but it has become clear that the growth of University business, to which I can myself testify must soon make it impossible to the duties of the post to be performed during the scanty leisure of a professional or business man. These provisions, however, will only apply to those who come after me; and I am happy that my release from judicial duties has given me more time and greater opportunities for serving the University.

The Three-Year Degree Course is launched, for good or ill; and re-organisation of Higher Secondary Education in Delhi under the Higher Secondary Board proceeds apace. That the three-year degree course will become the norm one day in Indian Universities I cannot doubt; but whether it will be sooner or later I will not prophesy. It is a satisfaction to see that Mr. *John Sargent's* great scheme for the post-war re-construction of education assumes the general acceptance of a three-year course; and it refers also in one passage to the "interesting experiment" which has been undertaken at Delhi University. We acknowledge with gratitude the help which we have received from the Educational Adviser and we hope to justify the encouragement which he has constantly given us. His scheme contains far reaching proposals with regard to Indian Universities, none of which, if adopted, will be found inconsistent with the development policy which we in Delhi are now seeking to put into effect.

The three Principalships which were so long vacant have now been filled, one from within the University, two from outside. Mr. *Gurmukh Nihal Singh* and Miss *Ranga Rao* have neither of them undertaken an easy task but the high reputation which they have brought to Delhi is a guarantee of successful results. Apart from this, College history has been without any very striking incidents during the year. Ramjas College has made a second move since its eviction by *force majeure* from its original home and is now a sojourner (though we hope only a temporary one) in Daryaganj, not far from the Commercial College. It has not yet, I understand, lost hope of recovering the compensation due to it for its eviction. One notable event must be recorded: Mr. *Nirmal Mukarji*, a student of St. Stephen's and a son of the Principal of the College, was placed first this year in the I.C.S. Examination; a success which has given no less pleasure to the University than it must have done to his College, his parents and himself.

So much for the past and the present; what of the future? The plans of the University have been greatly affected by the War; but that is a misfortune which we share with most institutions, though in India places of education have not suffered at all in comparison with those in Europe, where Nazi barbarism has done its best to extinguish the lamps of learning altogether. In Delhi we lament buildings still unbuilt rather than buildings destroyed; for I cannot doubt that but for the war the other four Colleges of the University would by this time had followed the example of St. Stephen's and transplanted themselves to the University site. The Hindu College has indeed made an attempt to do so, but a series of disastrous accidents has stood in the way of further progress. It requires no great effort of imagination to picture the immense change which the building of this group of Colleges in the immediate neighbourhood of the University would have wrought,

The University of our dreams would begin to take shape ; a true University life would become possible for all its students ; and the moral and intellectual force which the University as a whole might exercise and which is now dissipated by the dispersion of its constituent elements would be augmented tenfold. This prospect is of course postponed and not lost to us for ever, but it is hard to lose even for the time being something which we had so ardently desired. And here I should like to say that only within the last few weeks the Government of India have approved the new and wider boundaries of the University enclave, proposals for which we submitted to them a year or more ago. Much of the land within the new enclave is and will remain in military occupation for the duration of the War ; but we shall now have ample room for future expansion one day. New and more generous sites are also available for the Colleges ; and there is provision for new Colleges too. And perhaps I might be permitted to make this suggestion : if a College cannot during the War build on its new site, owing to difficulties in obtaining labour or materials, why cannot it at least proceed to level and lay out the ground and plant its trees and shrubberies against the day of human occupation ? Then when the time comes to build, teachers and students will find the trees already growing which are to surround and shelter their College and add still further to the beauty of the University area. I believe that the authorities of one or two Colleges have such an idea in mind ; and I hope that they will translate it into reality.

If however building must temporarily come to an end, with it must go hopes of a new Medical School for men to be the counterpart of our latest-joined College, the Lady Hardinge Medical College for Women which has just paid us the compliment of seeking affiliation with the University ; hopes of a Training School for teachers, one of the greatest needs of this part of India hopes of new Science Laboratories for biology and its kindred sciences ; hope indeed of every kind which requires buildings for its fulfilment. But, if we had the means, we could increase our professorial Chairs, war or no war ; though perhaps I should add this qualification, that they must be Chairs on the Arts side, where professors do not require the space and apparatus which their scientific brethren demand. Perhaps some beneficent spirit, appreciating what we have done and seeking to encourage us to further effort, may make these things possible, like the Jinns of the Thousand and One Nights ; or perhaps the beneficent spirit may assume a more human shape and desire to put some part of a superfluity of wealth to useful purposes ; we shall welcome either.

I hope however, that whether the time be difficult or prosperous we shall never abandon the principles which underlie the whole of our reorganisation and development schemes. Let me remind you one of them. We do not seek to rival or compete with other and more ancient Universities, but rather to develop an atmosphere, a habit of mind, a tradition—call it what you will—of our own. We would like to aim at quality rather than quantity ; to make perfect within a narrower range, so far as human frailty permits, rather than to be content with lower standards over a wider field. We are conscious of our youth, perhaps also of our want of experience ; but we shall grow up and we are willing to learn, and we hope that as we have neither provincial nor communal affiliations we may be able to serve India as a whole. Above all, we shall strive to live up to the ideals and standards which we have set before ourselves and to give of our best. This may not be a programme in the ordinary sense ; but it will serve as a guide. Nevertheless, since it is necessary to mark out the path some way ahead in order to be able to see clearly where we are going, the Executive and Academic Councils have recently appointed two Committees, one for Science and one for Arts, which have been asked to advise what, if anything, still remains to be done in order to round off, as it were, that stage of development which the University has now reached ; and secondly, to suggest a development policy for the next ten or twelve years. The extent to which the advice and suggestions of these Committees can be acted upon must naturally depend upon the financial resources which will be at our disposal ; but it is one thing to ask for a blank cheque to be expended none can at the moment say how, and quite another to ask for money to carry out a complete and well-designed plan, the merits of which an intending donor can examine at his leisure and satisfy himself of its feasibility and value.

We can however already look back with satisfaction on certain things accomplished ; the Three-Years Degree Course, standard conditions of service and security of tenure for College teachers, model constitutions for Governing Bodies, with

University and staff representation, a beginning made with co-operative teaching, a completely re-organized Science school, new Chairs of Physics and Economics and a new Chair, shortly to be filled, of Law. All these things were worth doing; but we shall do well to remember the words used by the poet of that Roman statesman who 'thought nothing done while aught remained to do'. There is no finality in the history of a University, and the achievement of one generation does no more than lay the foundation on which the next may build. Let us then try so to serve our own generation that we may increase true knowledge and learning, and that we may teach the young men committed to our care in this University wisdom and understanding and the love of God.

## The Aligarh Muslim University Convocation

The following are extracts from the Convocation Address delivered by *Sir M. Azizul Huque, D. Litt., C.I.E.* at Aligarh on the 22nd December 1943 :—

### POLITICAL CHOICE OF THE MUSLIMS

I do not wish to enter into the arena of politics this morning. But speaking only as a student of politics, no one can fail to recognize the fact that the Muslims of India are today united in their demands of their political self-determination, in free choice of their own future. The Muslims of India have made their choice with no mental reservation or diplomatic ambiguity in their declarations. And every student of politics or history must frankly admit that the political choice of the Mussalmans of India today is the inevitable logic of the past years. Right from the days of December, 1906, when the League was organized, the Muslim community made it clear over and over again and in quite unequivocal manner that they were prepared for any agreed and reasonable settlement of India's political problems. From 1907 to 1943 is not a short span of human history. Any student of politics will easily find out that all efforts at conciliation, compromise, and settlement have failed during these years. The genuine views of the Muslims were far too often represented as anti-national, parochial or communal; the principle of "the Government of the People and for the People" was far too often denied in fact to the Muslims on pleas of text-book maxims or of political doctrines of the western democracy. Rarely was there a frank recognition of the realities of India's political, social or economic life; political issues and problems were discussed more on political mysticism than on an analysis of the political realities. The inexorable logic of facts has therefore been just as it was expected to be in such circumstances, viz, that the Muslim community lost its faith in more adjustments or on safe-guards and has evolved a plan for the political reconstruction of India. It is not for me to discuss the issues of this reconstruction. My purpose is only to place before you the fact that you, the coming generation, who will tomorrow have to shape the political future of the community will find your task much harder than we have had in our own times.

### MODERN EDUCATION

And here let me leave the political field and look to the domain of education and on purely academic back-ground. For near about a century the present system of education has been in vogue in this country. Schools and colleges have been started all over India ever since the days when Macaulay wrote his famous minute and the universities were established in India. The range of studies became gradually wider and wider and teaching more expensive and extensive. A large educated community grew up which supplied India for generations in increasing numbers with the personnel for its administration, its learned and humble professions, its business and industry and social and political leadership. With men have come forward women to participate in the benefits and advantages of higher education; with classes have come the masses flocking in larger and larger numbers to join educational institutions. In fact, education even as it is, has for long been considered a matter of paramount importance by all classes and communities in India.

### ITS DISINTEGRATING INFLUENCE

But it has to be frankly admitted that the present system of education with all its value and contributions to the economic, political and social life of India,

has a disintegrating influence on the culture and social order of the Mussalmans. I do not wish to convey for a moment that this was in any way deliberately designed or planned, or that the measures that were sponsored for the spread of education in this country were not taken with the best of intentions. But such is human history that our best intentions go wrong, our fondest wishes are scarce fulfilled, our calculated plans are often frustrated by the freaks and frowns that come in their train and in course of events we have to pay some penalty for some gain. This disintegrating influence on the culture and social order of the Mussalmans will be realised when one looks into the history and development of the Indian languages during the last hundred years. I am not here referring to the deliberate attempts that were made from time to time to create a new language or to the passionate zeal of those who had been attempting for some years past to transform the Urdu language. I refer to the entire pattern and form of Indian languages as evolved in the last hundred years. A critical study of the curriculum of educational institutions, the text-books and themes, their subjects and syllabuses, will also bear out my contention. I do not certainly wish to mean that this has been so in subjects like science or medicine or engineering or mathematics. I mainly refer to subjects like history, literature, philosophy etc.

#### HISTORY AS TAUGHT

A student in a Secondary School reads history. He reads ancient India in a picture of its inspiration and its ideals. Even within the short compass of a school text-book he knows India's civilization in the Vedic age, the evolution of ancient Indian civilization, the days of Maghaden imperialism and Maurya Empire. He studies or knows at least an outline of ancient society and social organization, art, architecture and literature, economic principles, and philosophy of ancient India.

Coming to the medieval period he falls immediately into a narration of wars and conquests, of slaughter and carnage, of destruction and demolition of India's past. Let me place here a summary of this medieval perspective from a book prescribed for the Matriculation examination of an Indian University. It has been taken almost word for word except for the verb, mood, tense and voice changed here and there.

"The teaching of Muhammad centered round the dictum, 'there is no god but God and Muhammad is his Prophet'; before he died practically the whole of Arabia was brought under his control due to his considerable military and administrative ability. The success of the army of Islam is one of the miracles of world's history, but this success was less striking when it came into conflict with the people of India who lived under simpler and healthier conditions of society, religion and administration. *Sultan Mahmood* organised the Turkish bands, and pillaged, burned and devastated the rich plains, cities and temples of the Indus and the Ganges Valleys. *Sultan Balban* was a terrible tyrant. *Jalaluddin Feroz Khilji* was always averse to the slaughter of fellow Muslims for religious reasons, but had lenity towards Thugs, organised bands of criminals whose religion was robbery and murder. *Alauddin* dreamt of surpassing Alexander by conquering the whole habitable world; his treachery, cruelty and vanity, treatment of the Hindus with great severity reducing them to a state of abject poverty mixed with his considerable ability and capacity for civil administration. *Muhammed Bin Tughlak* is an enigma in Indian history, with vanity, lack of judgment, revolting cruelty, traces of incipient lunacy and yet a military leader. *Feroz Shah Tughlak* was a kind and merciful ruler, but his connivance at corruption and his culpable leniency destroyed the effects of his own acts; his benevolence extended only to his own coreligionists and his fanaticism resulted in persecution of the Hindus with a ruthless hand. *Sikander Lodi* was a man of military talents, but his character was sullied by relentless bigotry with his policy of wholesale destruction of Hindu temples. *Humayun* was incapable of a sustaining and continued policy, probably due to his excessive use of opium. *Jahangir* had a strange compound of tenderness and cruelty, justice and caprice, refinement and brutality, good sense and childishness; *Shahjahan* made a lavish display of gold and colours amidst agricultural and industrial classes groaning under heavy taxation." Then follows the story of *Aurangzeb*, the breaker and destroyer of everything in India—empire, art, music and temples. The picture concludes with a narration of the decaying Moghal court. No doubt all these are interspersed with mention of a few good deeds here and there; but the other brush is so deep-coloured in general outlook and perspective that nothing else catches the eye.

Let it be remembered that this is what a student in the most formative period of his life has to read in a school textbook, and this is not history.

#### WE MISS WHAT WE VALUE MOST

I have all along felt that in spite of the growth of higher education in this country, the Muslim students miss something which he values most. While the Muslim student of a university today may be very well grounded in general, scientific or technical subjects, he has little or no opportunity of acquainting himself with the culture of Islam, its traditions, its place in Indian history and its significance in the texture of Indian life. A blunder was made almost everywhere that a Muslim student has his only special interest in higher linguistic studies. In the organization of the university studies in India it has often been forgotten that a Muslim has also a fascinating heritage of achievements. For him also there is an empire of knowledge vast in extent and in variety, suited to his special aptitude, requiring years of devoted study and research for its full exploration.

#### RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY

Let us look round to the research activities in the universities within the last thirty years. There have been extensive contributions to the study of the Vedic, epic and Puranic periods of Indian culture. There have been critical studies—literary, philosophical, religious and social—studies in the history and geography of ancient India, in architecture and fine arts, in the political, social and economic life of religious and philosophical thought in ancient India, in ancient astronomy, mathematics, philosophy and literature, in history, epigraphy, and travels, in art and iconography.

#### MUSLIM HISTORICAL RESEARCHES

But it cannot be said that much has been done as regards the enduring contributions of Islam to the history of India, to its civilization and culture, and to the social, political and economic life of the country. How little has been done and how much more ought to have been done? We still hear from learned scholars the reiteration of the myth that Islam came to propagate with sword. Who has told the full tales of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chisty settling in the foothills of the Aravalli ranges amidst the warrior tribes of Rajputana with no strength of the kings and monarchs behind him, or of Hazrat Shah Jalal similarly settling in the forests of Assam or of hundreds of other saints and savants with no earthly possession, with no symbol of military authority or power, scattered over the hills, mountains and forests of India? How much research has been done to show the nature of the grants made by Muslim rulers, to benefit non-Muslims and non-Muslim institutions? I am aware of the great contributions made in this respect by some distinguished scholars and historians. But even the studies that have been made so far, invaluable as they are, have not yet touched the fringe of the problem.

#### ISLAM IN WORLD HISTORY

Ladies and gentlemen, can we for a moment try to know the place of Islam in world history. Near about fourteen hundred years ago a man was born in the land of Arabia, a country renowned since the dawn of creation for its rugged hills and ridges, with fearful sand dunes amidst tractless deserts stretching out without break or interruption, except little patches of oases and the illusive mirage as the only relief to human eyes. Losing his father almost at his birth and his mother at the age of six, unable to read and write, the Prophet of Islam came out of the rugged cave of Mount Hira and gave a message of hope and faith to mankind.

Nearly fourteen hundred years have rolled by; men and minds, countries, races and cultures have changed, rechanged and reoriented in this long span of human history. Yet, the fundamental frame-work of the faith he preached and the code of conduct he promulgated, remain the same living force today as it was these many centuries past. At a time when every country in the world looked upon others as barbarians, he raised the ideal of the commonwealth of humanity and brotherhood of men. He condemned in unequivocal terms usury in any form as a great curse to human society. He devised marriage laws suiting all stages of social development, and inheritance laws, the most equitable ever promulgated in human society. He desired every Mussalman to meet at least once in the world congregation of the Haj, testifying to the value and need of world congresses and conferences. From its very inception Islam has been a great democratising process. Centuries back when it was unknown to contemporary world thought, Islam proclaimed to the world the overwhelming sanctity of the principles of equality. Dignity of manual labour was recognised and serfdom broken in all countries to

which Islam came. Human rights as such were recognised, and the status of women received the first modern recognition. And all these were effected without the authority of the State or the intervention of any legal sanction.

#### CULTURE OF ISLAM

Within the shortest period known in human history, a new social order was brought into the world. Isolated countries, peoples of multiple stocks and languages were not merely linked to a common faith, but were welded together in an ideal of a commonwealth with common social conduct, ethical outlook and intellectual tendencies. Islam introduced all to one common brotherhood and reduced the internal structures of warring communities. Races with varying character and outlook were brought into a uniform pattern with no survival of pre-existing usages. Under Islam the separate strata disappeared and even the characteristic fossils were crushed out of recognition giving place to a solid mass of law and traditions. The best in the past was mobilised. Aristotle, Socrates and Patanjali, Lilavati and Euclid, were brought out before the world from their hidden places. One of the characteristic influences of Islam has been that it invariably fertilised the land through which it passed and conveyed the rich treasures of one to the other along its course. Almost everywhere the indigenous cultures of the countries received a new life. A new synthesis was evolved from which arose modern arts and philosophy, mathematics, astronomy and mechanics, medicine and science. The faith which brightened the face of the earth in a dark period of human history from the banks of the Tagus and Guadalquivir to the shores of the Pacific, reflected the light of its glory on the water of the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates and spread out its treasures in the plains of the Ganges and the Hoang Ho, is the faith of Islam. The outlook, attitude and tendencies, moral and intellectual, which animated the followers of that faith had their concrete expressions in many spheres of human activities, political, social and economic and is known as the culture of Islam.

#### ISLAMIC STUDIES

For nearly fourteen hundred years the motif of that culture has centered round the faith of Islam. While it has vitalised, revived and renovated other cultures, the culture of Islam has never lost its individuality nor allowed itself to be submerged at any time. Modern civilisation has not yet succeeded in bringing any fresh humanistic outlook, while behind the history of the modern world and its evolution lie the rich contributions of Islam. Bringing about a harmony between the cravings of the inner soul and the needs of the outer life, its outlook has always been eminently practical and its ideal humanly attainable; never exclusive in character, it broke up the barriers of isolation, and brought together the East and West in a new conception of commonwealth. The Islam has thus been one of the greatest movements in world history; with multiple influences on political, economic and social life of vast territories. Its evolution and progress, its growth and expansion, its influence on the countries and cultures of Asia, Europe and Africa, are subjects of enthralling interest to the student of humanity and are undoubtedly of great value in appraising world history and world tendencies.

#### PRE-ISLAMIC INDIA

Let us visualise the condition of India prior to the advent of the Mussalmans. Human rights were determined through accident of birth and parentage; study of religious books was banned except to the privileged classes, with severe laws forged to support the disabilities of others. For a time Buddhism stemmed the tide; but soon began the bitter struggle for supremacy between Buddhism and Hinduism. For a short period Buddhism carried everything before it but soon had to take shelter beyond the confines of India, while in the wake of this struggle for supremacy came the further rigours of the social laws.

#### MUSLIMS IN INDIAN HISTORY

In the welter of many small states, divided against the other, with people more hopelessly divided among themselves, came the Mussalmans with their teachings of brotherhood and fellowship. By a divine coincidence in history, the first dynasty of Muslims that ruled was the slave dynasty, and the first king of Delhi was a slave himself, to underline that in the commonwealth of Islam, even a slave has the fullest rights of a man and can be a king. Thereafter the most important branch of a race which had spread devastating destruction through a large part of Asia and Europe embraced Islam and came to rule in India; and the same rude nomad, brutal race through the softening and civilising influence of Islam became the greatest administrators, and the greatest patrons of arts