

355



# Indian Round Table Conference

7th September—1st December 1931

Statement made by the Prime Minister to the  
Conference at the conclusion of its Second  
Session on 1st December 1931

*Presented by the Secretary of  
State for India to Parliament  
by Command of His Majesty,  
December 1931*



LONDON:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE  
To be purchased directly from H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE at the following addresses:  
Astrakhan House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2; 120, George Street, Edinburgh;  
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1931

Price 2d, Net

Cmd. 3972

Ref 954035

In 39i

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STOCK TAKING - 2011

1. We have now had two sessions of the Round Table Conference, and the time has come to survey the important work which has been done, first of all, in setting out the problems which in the task of Indian constitution-building we have to surmount, and then in trying to find how to surmount them. The reports presented to us now bring our co-operation to the end of another stage, and we must pause and study what has been done and the obstacles which we have encountered, and the best ways and means of bringing our work to a successful end as rapidly as possible. I regard our discussions and our personal contacts here as of the highest value, and make bold to say that they have raised the problem of Indian constitutional reform far above the mere technicalities of constitution-making; for we have won that confidence in, and respect for, each other which has made the task one of helpful political co-operation. That, I am confident, will continue to the end. By co-operation alone can we succeed.

2. At the beginning of the year I made a declaration of the policy of the then Government, and I am authorised by the present one to give you and India a specific assurance that it remains their policy. I shall repeat the salient sentences of that declaration:—

“The view of His Majesty’s Government is that responsibility for the government of India should be placed upon Legislatures, Central and Provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee, during a period of transition, the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances, and also with such guarantees as are required by minorities to protect their political liberties and rights.”

“In such statutory safeguards as may be made for meeting the needs of the transitional period, it will be a primary concern of His Majesty’s Government to see that the reserved powers are so framed and exercised as not to prejudice the advance of India through the new constitution to full responsibility for her own government.”

3. With regard to the Central Government, I made it plain that, subject to defined conditions, His Majesty’s late Government were prepared to recognise the principle of the responsibility

But the 24646 of slate say India, Sir Samuel Hoare, in introducing the Government of India Bill, 1935 said: "This constitution is a rigid constitution and it can only be amended by future Acts of Parliament."

of the Executive to the Legislature, if both were constituted on an all-India federal basis. The principle of responsibility was to be subject to the qualification that, in existing circumstances, Defence and External Affairs must be reserved to the Governor-General, and that, in regard to finance such conditions must apply as would ensure the fulfilment of the obligations incurred under the authority of the Secretary of State, and the maintenance unimpaired of the financial stability and credit of India.

4. Finally, it was our view that the Governor-General must be granted the necessary powers to enable him to fulfil his responsibility for securing the observance of the constitutional rights of Minorities, and for ultimately maintaining the tranquillity of the State.

5. These were, in broad outline, the features of the new constitution for India as contemplated by His Majesty's Government at the end of the last Conference.

6. As I say, my colleagues in His Majesty's present Government fully accept that statement of January last as representing their own policy. In particular, they desire to reaffirm their belief in an all-India Federation as offering the only hopeful solution of India's constitutional problem. They intend to pursue this plan unswervingly and to do their utmost to surmount the difficulties which now stand in the way of its realisation. In order to give this declaration the fullest authority, the statement which I am now making to you will be circulated to-day as a White Paper to both Houses of Parliament, and the Government will ask Parliament to approve it this week.

7. The discussions which have been proceeding during the past two months have been of value in showing us more precisely the problems we have to solve, and have advanced us towards the solution of some of them. But they have also made it plain that others still require further examination and co-operative consideration. There is still difference of opinion, for instance, as to the composition and powers of the Federal Legislature, and I regret that owing to the absence of a settlement of the key question of how to safeguard the Minorities under a responsible Central Government, the Conference has been unable to discuss effectively the nature of the Federal Executive and its relationship with the Legislature. Again, it has not yet been possible for the States to settle amongst themselves their place in the Federation and their mutual relationships within it. Our common purpose will not be advanced by ignoring these facts, nor by assuming that the difficulties they present will somehow solve themselves. Further thought, discussion and reconciliation of different interests and

points of view are still required before we can translate broad general aims into the detailed machinery of a workable constitution. I am not saying this to indicate impossibility, nor to foreshadow any pause in our work. I only wish to remind you that we have put our hands to a task which demands alike from His Majesty's Government and from the leaders of Indian opinion care, courage and time, lest when the work is done it may bring confusion and disappointment, and instead of opening the way to political progress may effectively bar it. We must build like good craftsmen, well and truly; our duty to India demands that from all of us.

8. What then is the general position in which we find ourselves as regards a practical programme for the advancement of our common aims? I want no more general declarations which carry us no further in our work. The declarations already made and repeated to-day are enough to give confidence in the purpose of the Government and to provide work for the Committees to which I shall refer. I want to keep to business. The great idea of All-India Federation still holds the field. The principle of a responsible Federal Government, subject to certain reservations and safeguards through a transition period, remains unchanged. And we are all agreed that the Governors' Provinces of the future are to be responsibly governed units, enjoying the greatest possible measure of freedom from outside interference and dictation in carrying out their own policies in their own sphere.

9. I should explain at once in connection with that last point that we contemplate as one feature of the new order that the North-West Frontier Province should be constituted a Governor's Province, of the same status as other Governors' Provinces, but with due regard to the necessary requirements of the Frontier, and that, as in all other Governors' Provinces, the powers entrusted to the Governor to safeguard the safety and tranquillity of the Province shall be real and effective.

10. His Majesty's Government also accept in principle the proposition which was endorsed at the last Conference that Sind should be constituted a separate Province, if satisfactory means of financing it can be found. We therefore intend to ask the Government of India to arrange for a Conference with representatives of Sind for the purpose of trying to overcome the difficulties disclosed by the report of the expert financial investigation which has just been completed.

11. But I have digressed from the question of a programme in the light of the accepted factors—Federation as the aim and self-governing Provinces and the Indian States as its basis. As I have said, our discussions have made it clear to all of us that

Federation cannot be achieved in a month or two. There is a mass of difficult constructive work still to be done, and there are important agreements to be sought by which the structure must be shaped and cemented. It is equally plain that the framing of a scheme of responsible government for the Provinces would be a simpler task which could be more speedily accomplished. The adjustments and modifications of the powers now exercised by the Central Government which would obviously have to be made in order to give real self-government to the Provinces should raise no insuperable difficulties. It has, therefore, been pressed upon the Government that the surest and speediest route to Federation would be to get these measures in train forthwith, and not to delay the assumption of full responsibility by the Provinces a day longer than is necessary. But it is clear that a partial advance does not commend itself to you. You have indicated your desire that no change should be made in the Constitution which is not effected by one all-embracing Statute covering the whole field, and His Majesty's Government have no intention of urging a responsibility which, for whatever reasons, is considered at the moment premature or ill-advised. It may be that opinion and circumstances will change, and it is not necessary here and now to take any irrevocable decision. We intend, and have always intended, to press on with all possible despatch with the federal plan. It would clearly be indefensible, however, to allow the present decision to stand in the way of the earliest possible constitutional advance in the North-West Frontier Province. We intend, therefore, to take the necessary steps as soon as may be to apply to the North-West Frontier Province, until the new constitutions are established, the provisions of the present Act relating to Governors' Provinces.

12. We must all, however, realise that there stands in the way of progress, whether for the Provinces or the Centre, that formidable obstacle, the communal deadlock. I have never concealed from you my conviction that this is above all others a problem for you to settle by agreement amongst yourselves. The first of the privileges and the burdens of a self-governing people is to agree how the democratic principle of representation is to be applied—or, in other words, who are to be represented and how it is to be done. This Conference has twice essayed this task: twice it has failed. I cannot believe that you will demand that we shall accept these failures as final and conclusive.

13. But time presses. We shall soon find that our endeavours to proceed with our plans are held up (indeed they have been held up already) if you cannot present us with a settlement acceptable to all parties as the foundations upon which to build. In that event His Majesty's Government would be

compelled to apply a provisional scheme, for they are determined that even this disability shall not be permitted to be a bar to progress. This would mean that His Majesty's Government would have to settle for you, not only your problems of representation, but also to decide as wisely and justly as possible what checks and balances the Constitution is to contain to protect minorities from an unrestricted and tyrannical use of the democratic principle expressing itself solely through majority power. I desire to warn you that if the Government have to supply even temporarily this part of your Constitution which you are unable to supply for yourselves, and though it will be our care to provide the most ample safeguards for minorities so that none of them need feel that they have been neglected, it will not be a satisfactory way of dealing with this problem. Let me also warn you that if you cannot come to an agreement on this amongst yourselves, it will add considerably to the difficulties of any Government here which shares our views of an Indian Constitution, and it will detract from the place which that Constitution will occupy amongst those of other nations. I therefore beg of you once more to take further opportunities to meet together and present us with an agreement.

14. We intend to go ahead. We have now brought our business down to specific problems which require close and intimate consideration, first of all by bodies which are really committees and not unwieldy conferences, and we must now set up machinery to do this kind of work. As that is being done and conclusions presented, we must be able to continue consultations with you. I propose, therefore, with your consent, to nominate in due course a small representative Committee—a working Committee—of this Conference which will remain in being in India, with which, through the Viceroy, we can keep in effective touch. I cannot here and now specify precisely how this Committee can best be employed. This is a matter which must be worked out and must to some extent depend on the reports of the Committees we propose to set up. But in the end, we shall have to meet again for a final review of the whole scheme.

15. It is our intention to set up at once the Committees whose appointment the Conference has recommended: (a) to investigate and advise on the revision of the Franchise and constituencies; (b) to put to the test of detailed budgetary facts and figures the recommendations of the Federal Finance Sub-Committee; and (c) to explore more fully the specific financial problems arising in connection with certain individual States. We intend that these Committees shall be at work in India under the chairmanship of distinguished public men from this country as

early in the New Year as possible. The views expressed by you here on the other outstanding Federal problems will be taken into consideration at once, and the necessary steps taken to get better understanding and agreement upon them.

16. His Majesty's Government have also taken note of the suggestion made in para. 26 of the Federal Structure Committee's Third Report, with the object of facilitating an early decision on the distribution among the States of whatever quota may be agreed upon for their representation in the Legislature. It follows from what I have already said that they share the general desire for an early agreement on this question among the States, and His Majesty's Government intend to afford the Princes all possible assistance by way of advice in this matter. If it appears to the Government that there is likely to be undue delay in their reaching agreement amongst themselves, the Government will take such steps as seem helpful to obtain a working settlement.

17. I have already alluded to another matter to which you have given ample evidence that you attach great importance, and to which you will expect me to refer. A decision of the communal problem which provides only for representation of the communities in the Legislatures is not enough to secure what I may call "natural rights." When such provisions have been made, minorities will still remain minorities, and the Constitution must therefore contain provisions which will give all creeds and classes a due sense of security that the principle of majority government is not to be employed to their moral or material disadvantage in the body politic. The Government cannot undertake here and now to specify in detail what those provisions should be. Their form and scope will need the most anxious and careful consideration with a view to ensuring on the one hand that they are reasonably adequate for their purpose, and on the other that they do not encroach, to an extent which amounts to stultification, upon the principles of representative responsible government. In this matter the Committee of Consultation should play an important part, for, here also, just as in regard to the method and proportions of electoral representation, it is vital to the success of the new Constitution that it should be framed on a basis of mutual agreement.

18. Now, once again we must bid each other good-bye. Great strides have been made, greater, I am sure you will find, than the most optimistic think. I was glad to hear in the course of these debates speaker after speaker taking that view. It is the true view. We have met with obstacles, but one of those optimists to whom humanity owes most of its progress said that "obstacles were made to be overcome." In that buoyancy of spirit and the goodwill which comes from it, let us go on

with our task. My fairly wide experience of Conferences like this is that the road to agreements is very broken and littered with obstructions to begin with, and the first stages often fill one with despair. But quite suddenly, and generally unexpectedly, the way smoothes itself out and the end is happily reached. I not only pray that such may be our experience, but I assure you that the Government will strive unceasingly to secure such a successful termination to our mutual labours.



## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Wednesday, 2nd December, 1931.

## [OFFICIAL REPORT.]

*The House met at a Quarter before Three of the Clock, Mr. SPEAKER in the Chair*

## PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Clydebank Burgh Order Confirmation Bill,

Read the Third time, and passed.

Ministry of Health Provisional Order (Maidstone Extension) Bill,

Ministry of Health Provisional Order (Sittingbourne and Milton) Bill,

Read a Second time, and committed.

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

## PALESTINE.

## AGRICULTURAL LOAN.

5. **Mr. JANNER** asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Government proposes to proceed with the guarantee of a loan to the Palestine administration for the purpose of the development scheme in connection with agriculture?

**The SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister):** I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the former hon. Member for Leyton East on the 23rd September, of which I am sending him a copy.

**Colonel WEDGWOOD:** May we take it that there will be no definite commitment under this heading without the House being first informed?

**Sir P. CUNLIFFE-LISTER:** I think the position is that Parliamentary sanction would be required before there was any commitment at all. If that is so, obviously, the matter will come under the consideration of the House before any commitment is made.

**Colonel WEDGWOOD:** Then we are not committed by the act passed in the last Parliament?

**Sir P. CUNLIFFE-LISTER:** I should like the right hon. and gallant Member to put that question on the Order Paper. I think a special Bill would be required.

**Mr. JANNER:** When dealing with this question, will the right hon. Gentleman see that the contents of the letter sent to the Prime Minister by Dr. Weitzman is kept under consideration?

**Sir P. CUNLIFFE-LISTER:** Certainly.

## ATTORNEY-GENERAL.

3. **Mr. SMITHERS** asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies what is the reason for the appointment of Mr. H. H. Trusted in the place of Mr. Bentwich as Attorney-General in Palestine; whether Mr. Bentwich will continue in the employment of His Majesty's Government; and, if so, in what capacity?

**Sir P. CUNLIFFE-LISTER:** I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my predecessor to the hon. and gallant Member for Newcastle-under-Lyme (Colonel Wedgwood) on the 23rd September last.

**Mr. SMITHERS:** Is it a fact that Mr. Bentwich was relieved of the appointment because of his too close association with the subversive propaganda of the Soviet Government?

**Sir P. CUNLIFFE-LISTER:** No. It was a decision taken previous to my time, but there is no sort of foundation for that statement.

**Mr. SMITHERS:** Will my right hon. Friend make further inquiries into this subject, with a view to Mr. Bentwich's future appointment?

**Sir P. CUNLIFFE-LISTER:** When the question was put on the Order Paper, I did make inquiries as to all that had happened in the past, and there has never been any sort of suggestion of that kind.

**Colonel WEDGWOOD:** Surely the right hon. Gentleman is aware that Mr. Norman Bentwich is the man the revolutionaries actually shot and tried to assassinate?

## ROYAL AIR FORCE.

### AIRSHIP R.100.

8. **Lord SCONE** asked the Under-Secretary of State for Air if he will give an estimate of the annual cost of preserving the framework of R.100 on a care and maintenance basis had this course been preferred to selling the framework as scrap?

**The UNDER-SECRETARY of STATE for AIR (Sir Philip Sassoon)**: It is estimated that the cost of material and labour necessary for preserving the framework of R.100 on a care and maintenance basis would have been approximately £1,000 per annum in direct charges. This figure, however, makes no allowance for the occupation of the airship shed and for other overhead charges of the Royal Airship Works.

### CARDINGTON BASE.

9. **Lord SCONE** asked the Under-Secretary of State for Air what use it is proposed to make of the houses, offices, hangars, workshops and hydrogen-producing plant at Cardington; and what annual outlay their maintenance is likely to involve?

**Sir P. SASSOON**: Some of the houses will be occupied by the care and maintenance party and the remainder will be let to suitable applicants for housing accommodation. The hydrogen-producing plant will be closed down, the use to be made of the offices, hangars and workshops no longer required for airship purposes or for the care and maintenance party, is still under consideration. The annual cost of maintenance cannot therefore be exactly stated at present; it will probably be in the neighbourhood of £4,000.

**Captain Sir WILLIAM BRASS**: Can the right hon. Member say whether the hydrogen plant will be kept or sold?

**Sir P. SASSOON**: It is being kept. The cost of maintaining the hydrogen plant in its present condition is included in the figure of £4,000.

## AVIATION.

### INSURANCE RATES.

11. **Lord APSLEY** asked the Under-Secretary of State for Air whether he is

aware of the high premiums charged by insurance companies for the insurance of private aircraft and the conditions they insist on which make it almost prohibitive for the private owner to insure; and whether, in view of the check it has caused in the development of the aircraft industry in the United Kingdom owing to the falling off of the demand for private aircraft, he will take any action, by means either of a subsidy or a national insurance scheme, which would ensure easier terms to private owners?

**Sir P. SASSOON**: I can assure the Noble Lord that the number of private aircraft is not declining, but steadily increasing: this suggests that his misgivings as to the effect of insurance rates are unfounded. In any case my Noble Friend regrets he cannot see his way to adopt either of the suggestions made: apart from any question of increased cost to public funds, aircraft insurance should, in view, be left to develop along normal commercial lines.

**Lord APSLEY**: Is the right hon. Member aware that, though there may have been some increase in the number of private owners, there would have been a greater increase if it were not for the high rate of insurance charged?

**Sir P. SASSOON**: That may be so, but there has been in the last year an increase of 117 in the number of private aircraft owned, which the Noble Lord will agree is a very considerable increase. I do not see that the Air Ministry can in any way interfere with the insurance companies, or anything of that kind.

### IMPERIAL AIRWAYS (GOVERNMENT DIRECTORS).

13. **Captain HAROLD BALFOUR** asked the Under-Secretary of State for Air if he will state the terms and provisions for remuneration of the two Government directors appointed by the Air Ministry on the board of Imperial Airways, Limited, as settled between the company and the Department; and if such remuneration is taken into account when payment of retired pay or pension from public funds is received by such directors?

**Sir P. SASSOON**: As regards the first part of the question, the remuneration of the two Government

directors on the board of Imperial Airways, Limited, is not payable from public funds. It is governed by the Articles of Association of the company under which the directors as a body receive £6,500 per annum, which is divided among them in proportions which they themselves determine. The answer to the second part of the question is in the negative.

**Captain BALFOUR:** In view of the fact that this company is in receipt, as part of its income, of money from public funds, can the right hon. Member say that the proportion of the receipts of the company which comes from public funds shall not be taken into account in the remuneration received by the directors?

**Sir P. SASSOON:** It is true that this company is in receipt of a subsidy, but it is a commercial company, and the remuneration paid to the directors must, of course, go in the revenue fund.

**Captain BALFOUR:** Will the right hon. Member answer my question? Is not some of the money received by the directors paid out of funds received by the company from the public, and can he say that such payment shall not be taken into consideration in assessing the amount of retired pay or pensions which these Government-appointed directors are to receive?

**Sir P. SASSOON:** Obviously, if a company has been in receipt of a subsidy, that subsidy must go into the revenue of the company.

**Captain BALFOUR:** May I give notice that, in view of the very unsatisfactory nature of the reply, I shall raise this matter on the Adjournment on an early date?

#### NATIONAL FLYING SERVICES (AERODROMES).

14. **Mr. PERKINS** asked the Under-Secretary of State for Air the number of aerodromes that have been supplied by National Flying Services and the number that this company contracted to supply under their agreement with the Air Ministry?

**Sir P. SASSOON:** National Flying Services, Ltd., have so far provided or arranged for the provision of seven aerodromes. As regards the second part of the question I would refer my hon.

Friend to Command Paper No. 3264 of 1929, which contains full particulars of this and other features of the agreement.

#### FLYING CLUBS (SUBSIDY).

15. **Mr. PERKINS** asked the Under-Secretary of State for Air whether he is aware that a large number of flying clubs in this country have carried out their agreements with the Air Ministry; and whether he will differentiate next year, when considering the subsidy, between the clubs that have carried out their agreements and the companies that have failed to carry out their agreements?

**Sir P. SASSOON:** I am aware of the fact to which my hon. Friend draws attention and I can assure him that this and all other relevant considerations will be borne in mind in arriving at a decision as to future policy in regard to financial assistance to flying clubs after the end of July next.

#### TRANSPORT.

##### ROAD TRAFFIC ACT (ADMINISTRATION).

16. **Vice-Admiral TAYLOR** asked the Minister of Transport whether he has yet decided to receive a deputation from the Motor Hirers and Coach Service Association, Limited, with regard to the administration of the Road Traffic Act, 1930?

**The MINISTER of TRANSPORT (Mr. Pybus):** I have been giving consideration to some of the points which the association wish to raise, and I am arranging to receive a deputation from them at an early date.

**Vice-Admiral TAYLOR:** I am much obliged.

##### PUBLIC SERVICE VEHICLES (CHILD PASSENGERS).

17. **Vice-Admiral TAYLOR** asked the Minister of Transport whether he will consider amending Regulation No. 14 of the Equipment and Use Regulations (No. 2), of 4th July, 1931, under the Road Traffic Act, so as to enable public service vehicles of all classes to carry three children in the seating accommodation for two adults, as was the custom prior to this Act and was accepted by local authorities and insurance companies?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I have this point in mind for consideration in connection with any general revision or consolidation of the recent regulations.

**Vice-Admiral TAYLOR:** May I have an assurance that this matter will be very seriously considered, as it puts a great hardship upon the trade?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I can assure the hon. and gallant Member that we are seriously considering it.

**Lieut. - Colonel Sir FREDERICK HALL:** Is it necessary to keep a matter like this in abeyance until the general regulations are changed? Could not the hon. Member consider the expediency of a matter such as this?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I will consider it.

#### TRAFFIC FACILITIES, DURHAM.

18. **Mr. JENNINGS** asked the Minister of Transport if he will ask the Traffic Commissioners to review the transport facilities of the villages of Wynyard, Butterwick, Elwick Hall, Oldacres, Embleton, Hurwithburn and the area east of Trimdon, and Fishburn, county Durham, in view of the fact that the London and North Eastern Railway Company have withdrawn their passenger service, causing hardship to the residents of these areas, where now no railway service or omnibus service is in existence?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I have no doubt that in dealing with any applications for road services that may come before them the Traffic Commissioners will have regard to any absence or diminution of railway services in the district. I have, however, sent them a copy of my hon. Friend's question and of this reply.

**Mr. JENNINGS:** Will the hon. Gentleman also send a letter impressing upon the Commissioners that unremunerative services must be considered as well as remunerative services in a public utility service of this nature?

#### ROAD SERVICE LICENCES.

19. **Captain PETER MACDONALD** asked the Minister of Transport whether his attention has been called to the number of ex-service men who had invested their money in small motor-coach undertakings who are being deprived of a livelihood by the refusal of Traffic Com-

missioners to grant them licences; and whether he proposes to issue any instructions to the Commissioners with regard to this matter?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I have received a certain number of representations of this nature, but while it would not be proper for me to direct the Commissioners to discriminate between different types of operators, I have every reason to believe that the claims of the small operator are sympathetically considered by the Traffic Commissioners, and I can assure the hon. Member that they receive the most careful and anxious consideration in every case that comes before me on appeal.

24. **Mr. DENVILLE** asked the Minister of Transport whether he is aware of the hardship inflicted upon a Newcastle firm of omnibus proprietors whose operations have been restricted by the area traffic commissioner, regarding the firm's operations between Newcastle, York and Hull; and if he can state the reason for these restrictions of service in these areas?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I presume that this question refers to the case of Mr. George Galley on which I have already been in communication with my hon. Friend. As I have informed him it is open to Mr. Galley to appeal to me in accordance with the provisions of the Road Traffic Act, 1930, if he is aggrieved by the decision of the Traffic Commissioners on his application for a road service licence in respect of this route.

**Sir NICHOLAS GRATTAN-DOYLE:** Is the Minister aware of the growing dissatisfaction regarding the decisions of the Traffic Commissioners and will he in this and other cases undertake to receive a deputation?

**Lieut.-Colonel MOORE:** May I ask whose interests are considered by the commissioners in coming to their decisions?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I am quite prepared to consider carefully any questions that are raised by hon. Members.

**Sir N. GRATTAN-DOYLE:** Will the right hon. Gentleman undertake to receive a deputation?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I shall of course be always glad to receive a deputation of hon. Members of this House.

**Lieut.-Colonel ACLAND - TROYTE:** Would it not be more satisfactory if this matter was dealt with by an independent body?

**Mr. PYBUS:** That is surely another matter. If the hon. and gallant Member will put a question down, I shall be pleased to answer it.

**Mr. DENVILLE:** Is it not the case that under the pretence of safeguarding the interests of the small operators the policy pursued by the commissioners is driving the small operators off the road?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I can only say that the facts do not bear this out, for out of 24,000 licences granted only 500 cases have come up on appeal.

25. **Mr. MACQUISTEN** asked the Minister of Transport (1) if he is aware of the irregularities in connection with the consideration by the traffic commissioners of the application for a renewal of the omnibus service licence of Messrs. McConnachie, of Campbeltown, in respect that the note of objections to the application was not communicated to the applicants within the time prescribed by the Ministry of Transport regulations and that no evidence was laid either by the applicants or objectors before the commissioners; and whether, in these circumstances, he will direct that Messrs. McConnachie's application be reconsidered;

(2) if he is aware that the decision of the Ministry to discontinue the omnibus service licence of Messrs. McConnachie, of Campbeltown, on the Machrihanish route has resulted in inconvenience to all the inhabitants in the area; and whether, in view of the desire of the inhabitants for the former service, he will restore Messrs. McConnachie's licence?

**Mr. PYBUS:** Messrs. McConnachie appealed against the decision of the Traffic Commissioners and I caused an inquiry to be held at which all the objections lodged by the Campbeltown and Machrihanish Light Railway Company were fully argued. My decision to uphold the findings of the Commissioners, which was communicated to the parties on 19th November, was only reached after most careful consideration of the report of my representative upon the proceedings at the inquiry, and of all

the relevant facts and circumstances of the case, including the adequacy of the facilities on the route.

**Mr. MACQUISTEN:** Is the Minister aware that all the statements in his answer are contrary to the facts. Is he aware that no evidence was given when the case was first heard and that evidence was refused when it was remitted; consequently, that there were no facts on which to decide? Is the hon. Gentleman also aware that the railway company service has broken down and that in addition, no omnibuses are running?

**Mr. PYBUS** indicated dissent.

**Mr. MACQUISTEN:** Owing to the unsatisfactory answer, I beg to give notice that I shall raise this matter on the Adjournment.

30. **Brigadier - General CLIFTON BROWN** asked the Minister of Transport how many cases of appeals against decisions of the Southern Traffic Commissioners have there been which he has had to decide; and in how many of those cases has he decided in favour of the appellant?

**Mr. PYBUS:** Leaving out of account those which have been withdrawn, appeals have been lodged with me in 106 cases against the decisions of the Traffic Commissioners for the Southern Area. Decisions have so far been announced in 44 cases in nine of which orders have been made on the commissioners either reversing or modifying their decisions. Of the remaining cases I may point out that 34 are appeals against the grant, not the refusal, of licences by the commissioners.

**Brigadier-General BROWN:** Is the hon. Member aware of the great dissatisfaction which exists in the southern area of England as well as in the northern area with regard to the methods of the commissioners, and will he look into this matter more closely than he has done?

**Vice - Admiral TAYLOR:** Will the Minister consider the advisability of setting up a special court of appeal to hear these cases?

**Mr. PYBUS:** My duty is to appoint the commissioners. After they are

[Mr. Pybus.]

appointed, I have no control whatever over their decisions unless the matter is brought before me on appeal.

**Vice-Admiral TAYLOR:** Is it not the fact that any appeal comes before the Minister and that therefore they are adjudicating on their own case? In the interests of fairness, will not the hon. Member consider the advisability of setting up a special court?

**Mr. PYBUS:** The hon. and gallant Member does not appreciate the difference between the position of the Minister and that of the commissioners. They are separate and independent tribunals. The permanent commissioner is appointed by the Minister of Transport and two others from panels appointed by the local authorities. I cannot hear these cases until they come up on appeal and then I decide in the light of the evidence before me.

**Mr.<sup>9</sup> KIRKWOOD:** Owing to trouble that has arisen as a result of this Act, will the Minister consider the advisability of repealing it?

**Mr. MAXTON:** And abolish the Ministry.

31. **Major DESPENCER-ROBERTSON** asked the Minister of Transport why the application of Mr. S. C. Shergold to run his omnibus on a certain route at Tidworth was refused on appeal; what were the grounds for allowing an omnibus belonging to a company to run on the same route; and how many companies in the last six months have received permission to run their omnibuses on routes which have been hitherto used by omnibuses belonging to individual owners?

**Mr. PYBUS:** My hon. and gallant Friend is under a misapprehension. I understand that the decision of the Traffic Commissioners in this case was given on the 20th November. Mr. Shergold has a right of appeal to me from that decision within a period of one month from the date when it was given, but no appeal has in fact been lodged. I have no information on the point raised in the last part of the question as I am only made acquainted with the details of the cases which come before me on appeal.

**Major DESPENCER - ROBERTSON:** Can the hon. Gentleman say in how many cases that have come under his personal notice the individual owners have won their cases?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I must ask for notice of that question.

**Mr. HARRIS:** Does the Minister himself hear personally all these cases, and, if so, does it not take up a great deal of his time?

**Mr. PYBUS:** The Minister does not personally hear any case. He deals with the reports put before him.

#### MOTOR LICENCES (RENEWAL DATE).

20. **Mr. ALD ROBERTS** asked the Minister of Transport whether his attention has been drawn to the hardship which may be caused to motor coaches and private car owners owing to the fact that the commencing day for the summer licensing period next year will fall on Good Friday, 25th March; and will he consider using his powers to fix the commencing day for that period on Thursday, 24th March, 1932?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I would refer my hon. Friend to the answer which I gave on 25th November to a similar question by the hon. Member for Blackpool (Captain Erskine-Bolst) of which I am sending him a copy.

#### MOTOR CAR INSURANCE.

23. **Lord APSLEY** asked the Minister of Transport if he is aware of the high premiums charged by insurance companies for the insurance of motor vehicles and the high rate of depreciation, without corresponding reduction of premium, which they charge in cases of payment of claims in the event of total destruction of the vehicle; and whether, in view of the profits insurance companies are making since the passing of the Road Transport Act owing to third-party risks being made compulsory, he is prepared to take any action amending the Road Transport Act so as to secure easier insurance facilities for motorists?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I am not aware that there has been any general increase in the premium rates for the insurance of motor vehicles since the passing of the

Road Traffic Act. The Act deals only with insurance against claims in respect of injuries to third parties, and obviously this element in an insurance policy can have no relation to the total destruction of a vehicle or to any claim based thereon. I should be glad to receive any evidence in the Noble Lord's possession supporting his suggestion of a general increase in the profits of insurance companies from this class of business since the passing of the Road Traffic Act.

**Lord APSLEY:** Is the hon. Member aware that the legislation introduced by his predecessor has given what is virtually a monopoly to the compulsory insurance of all these companies, and that in regard to other insurance policies with respect to damage of vehicles they do not care what policy they give you?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I am sure that the Noble Lord's remarks are based on evidence which I shall be very glad to have.

ROAD AND BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION,  
SCOTLAND.

27. **Mr. TRAIN** asked the Minister of Transport if he will give a list showing the details of the savings, amounting to £700,000, in the total estimated expenditure on bridge construction and road improvement work in Scotland?

**Mr. PYBUS:** Similar savings are being made in all parts of the country and the preparation of details of the character asked for involves considerable additional clerical work which I am anxious to avoid under existing conditions. The information is of course in the possession of every highway authority in so far as schemes in its own area are concerned. If, however, my hon. Friend has in mind any particular scheme in which he is interested, I shall be happy to supply him with any information in my possession.

HEAVY MOTOR VEHICLES (SPEED LIMIT).

28. **Lieut. - Colonel Sir MERVYN MANNINGHAM-BULLER** asked the Minister of Transport whether it is his intention to revise in the near future the Regulations issued under the Road Traffic Act, 1930, governing the speed limits of heavy motor vehicles; and whether he will take into account the necessity for imposing special limits on such vehicles proceeding through urban areas, in view

of the damage caused to buildings through vibration set up by their passing at high speeds?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I have under consideration the question whether the First Schedule to the Road Traffic Act should be amended with the view mainly of reducing the number of different speed limits which it imposes. I have no power, however, to make a Regulation imposing special speed limits on heavy motor vehicles when passing through urban areas in general.

HUMBER BRIDGE BILL.

29. **Captain SOTHERON-ESTCOURT** asked the Minister of Transport if his attention has been called to the fact that costs and expenses in connection with the promotion of the Humber Bridge Bill are still being incurred and that further additional outlay on a considerable scale will be necessary if the Measure is to be taken in its subsequent stages; and whether, in the circumstances, he can state definitely, for the general guidance of both the promoters and opposers of the Measure, if a grant out of public funds towards the further cost of promoting the Bill in the House of Lords is or is not to be made?

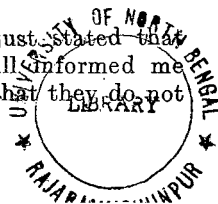
22. **Captain CROOKSHANK** asked the Minister of Transport what is the present position, so far as his Department is concerned, with regard to the Humber bridge?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I have discussed these matters with the promoters of the Bill who have informed me that they do not propose to ask the House to take this Bill before Easter and that it is their intention to give adequate notice to those opposing the Measure as to the date at which they may desire to proceed further. I appreciate my hon. and gallant Friend's desire that unnecessary expense to any of the parties should be avoided and the promoters' action appears reasonably to meet his point.

**Mr. HANNON:** May I ask whether any money whatever will come out of public funds for the further promotion of this scheme?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I have just stated that the promoters of the Bill informed me yesterday by deputation that they do not

24646  
29 AUG 1968



[Mr. Pybus.]  
propose to proceed with the Bill before Easter. That question, therefore, does not arise at the moment.

#### MOTOR DRIVERS' LICENCES (SUSPENSIONS).

63. Colonel CRUDDAS asked the Home Secretary if he will advise the immediate restoration of the licences of Mr. R. King, of Throckley, Northumberland, and of his motor car driver, which were suspended for 12 months in July last owing to a conviction under the Road Traffic Act for towing a broken-down motor-cycle, seeing that this risk is now accepted by insurance companies and that Mr. King is partly and his motor car driver totally unemployed?

Sir H. SAMUEL: I have no power to act as proposed; but it is open to the persons in question to apply to the Court after the expiration of six months from the date of conviction for removal of the disqualification, as provided by Section 7 (3) of the Road Traffic Act, 1930.

#### SEVERN BARRAGE SCHEME.

32. Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister of Transport whether he is in a position to make a statement about the Severn barrage scheme?

Mr. PYBUS: I understand that the Economic Advisory Council hope to receive the report of the Severn Barrage Committee on this subject early next year.

#### TRADE AND COMMERCE.

##### IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY.

33. Mr. LEWIS JONES, asked the President of the Board of Trade the proportion which the steel imports of all forms for October, 1931, bear to the total production of steel in the United Kingdom during the same month?

The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. Hore-Belisha): The imports into the United Kingdom registered during the month of October included, under the general description of "Iron and Steel and Manufactures thereof," 197,862 tons of goods specified as of steel, and 36,646 tons of goods in the case of which goods

of iron were not stated separately from those of steel. According to information compiled and published by the National Federation of Iron and Steel Manufacturers, the output in the United Kingdom of steel ingots and castings amounted during October, 1931, to 457,400 tons. The proportion borne to this total by the imports specified as of steel was somewhat over 43 per cent., and the further goods of iron or steel, the steel goods not being specified as such, amounted to 8 per cent. Imports of machinery, vehicles, etc., made partly of steel are not included in these aggregates.

Mr. JONES: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that, if these figures are brought down to an ingot basis, the percentage is 61 and not 43, and is not that figure different from the figure of 5 per cent. which the President of the Board of Trade gave recently?

Mr. HORE-BELISHA: My hon. Friend has asked me for the accurate information, and he has been given it. Now he is giving me some other information.

Mr. JONES: Will the hon. Gentleman be good enough to bring those imports down to an ingot basis, and then work out his percentage? It will be 61.

Mr. HORE-BELISHA: If the hon. Member will put on the Paper a question to that effect, I will get the answer required.

Major BEAUMONT THOMAS: This is a very important matter. Is it not essential that the hon. Gentleman should inform himself of the facts, and should it be necessary for us to supply him with the facts?

##### ABNORMAL IMPORTATIONS (CUSTOMS DUTIES).

34. Colonel GOODMAN asked the President of the Board of Trade whether, in connection with the operation of the abnormal importations duties, any special steps are being taken to prevent the free importation, in the guise of Empire products, of articles assembled within the British Empire but of which the component parts are made in foreign countries?

Mr. HORE-BELISHA: I would refer my hon. and gallant Friend to the reply given yesterday to my hon. Friend the



Member for Clayton (Mr. Flanagan) by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, of which I am sending him a copy.

68. **Mr. DOUGLAS HACKING** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the uncertainty among Customs officials as to what articles of wearing apparel are included under the headings overcoats and mantles, he will issue a clear definition without delay?

69. **Major MILNER** asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that doubt exists in the ladies' dress trades as to the meaning to be attached to the terms overcoats and mantles as used in the Order made under the Abnormal Importations (Customs Duties) Act; and will he take immediate steps to make the matter clear to those concerned?

The **FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Major Elliot)**: The expressions "overcoats" and "mantles" must be interpreted in the sense of the ordinary meaning of the words, and the question whether any particular garment is covered by them is a question of fact to be determined in each case. If the hon. Members will inform me of any particular articles which they have in mind, I will communicate with the Customs authorities in the matter.

**Mr. HACKING**: Will the hon. and gallant Gentleman tell me the ordinary meaning of the word "mantle"?

**Major ELLIOT**: As I have said, if my right hon. Friend will let me know any particular article which he has in mind, I will communicate with the Customs authorities.

**Major MILNER**: Who makes the determination?

**Miss CAZALET**: Will the hon. and gallant Gentleman make it clear that overcoats include ladies' two-piece and three-piece suits, seeing that they include overcoats in each suit?

**Major THOMAS**: Will the hon. and gallant Gentleman also include one-piece suits?

#### COTTON INDUSTRY.

35. **Sir NAIRNE STEWART SANDEMAN** asked the President of the Board of Trade the value of cotton goods imported into the country for the first fortnight in November?

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA**: I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply given on the 24th November to my hon. Friend the Member for Rotherham (Mr. Herbert) respecting statistics for shorter periods than one month. Particulars of the imports of cotton goods into the United Kingdom are published monthly in the "Accounts relating to Trade and Navigation of the United Kingdom," and the figures for the month of November will be published on the 11th December.

**Sir N. STEWART SANDEMAN**: In a case of urgency surely a little overtime might be worked to get out these figures?

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA**: My right hon. Friend is receiving a deputation this afternoon.

38. **Mr. KIRKPATRICK** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether any cotton goods, including yarns, in the grey, finished, dyed, or partly finished state have been imported into this country from Japan during the period ended 14th November, 1931, or the latest date for which figures are available; and, if so, what is the value of the imports of such cotton goods, including yarns, during the period in question?

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA**: The total declared value of the imports of cotton goods separately recorded in the trade returns registered as consigned from Japan (including Formosa and Japanese leased territories in China) during the first 10 months of 1931 was £533,000. No imports of cotton yarns from Japan were recorded during this period.

**Mr. KIRKPATRICK**: Is that pounds weight or pounds sterling?

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA**: Pounds sterling.

#### PONIES (IMPORTS).

36. **Mr. PATRICK** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he can give the numbers of ponies imported during the past year from Iceland, Russia, and elsewhere into this country for use in mines?

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA**: Separate particulars of the imports into the United Kingdom of ponies for use in mines are not available, as they are recorded under the general heading of "Horses (includ-

[Mr. Hore-Belisha.] ing ponies)." I will, however, circulate in the OFFICIAL REPORT a table showing the imports of horses (including ponies) into the United Kingdom during the 12 months ended the 31st October, 1931, dis-

tinguishing the countries specified. Full particulars as to the countries from which horses were imported in 1930 and the four preceding years will be found on pages 329 and 330 of Volume II of the Annual Statement of Trade, 1930.

*Following is the table:*

STATEMENT showing the number and declared value of horses (including ponies) imported into the United Kingdom during the 12 months ended the 31st October, 1931, distinguishing the imports consigned from Iceland and the Soviet Union.

	Stallions.		Mares.		Geldings.	
	Quantity.	Declared Value.	Quantity.	Declared Value.	Quantity.	Declared Value.
	No.	£	No.	£	No.	£
Total Imports ... ..	478	300,236	3,831	1,367,283	7,243	606,934
Of which consigned from:						
Iceland ... ..	50	350	—	—	185	2,210
Soviet Union ... ..	—	—	23	230	128	1,450

#### HEADWEAR (IMPORTS).

40. **Captain DOWER** asked the President of the Board of Trade if he is aware that there is an abnormal increase in the importation of felt hat hoods and hats during the last four weeks; whether this increase is due to any foreign Government giving a bounty or subsidy on the export of these articles to this country; and, seeing that this is causing increased unemployment in the hatting industry in this country, will he take steps to protect this industry?

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA:** The answer to the first part of the question is in the negative, and the third part consequently does not arise. I have no information that any foreign Government gives a bounty or subsidy on the exportation of felt hats or hoods to this country.

**Captain DOWER:** Does the hon. Gentleman know that a very considerable amount of imports of foreign felt hats and hoods comes into this country by parcels post, of which there is no record, and that, with regard to unemployment, there are over 10 per cent. of the hatters out of work?

#### RUSSO-ITALIAN TRADE AGREEMENT.

42. **Mr. KIRKWOOD** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he will publish, for the information of Members of Parliament, the credit terms

granted by the Italian Government to the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics in the Russo-Italian trade agreement, signed in the early months of the year?

**Major COLVILLE (Secretary, Overseas Trade Department):** The hon. Member will find the information for which he asks in the issue of the "Board of Trade Journal" of 7th May last, a copy of which I am sending to him. The details correspond with those given in the official text of the agreement which has been furnished since by His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome.

**Mr. KIRKWOOD:** Will the hon. and gallant Gentleman not convey the opinion of this House to the Government, that owing to tariffs trade is getting worse here, and that the Government might support the opening up of Russia on more friendly terms than hon. Members opposite have favoured during the past year?

#### TRADE AGREEMENTS (FOREIGN COUNTRIES).

43. **Brigadier-General Sir HENRY CROFT** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he will give an assurance to the House that no fiscal arrangements of any binding character will be made with any foreign country until decisions have been come to with the self-governing Dominions and other countries of the Empire as to the principles of economic union?

44. **Mr. CRAVEN-ELLIS** asked the President of the Board of Trade if he can assure the House that no new trade agreements will be entered into with foreign countries or the Empire under the Abnormal Importations (Customs Duties) Act; and, if any agreements whatsoever are to be negotiated, will they be deferred until scientific tariffs are put into operation?

**Major COLVILLE:** I can assure the House that His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom will enter into no engagements with foreign countries which would be likely to prejudice either the objects of the Abnormal Importations (Customs Duties) Act or any future arrangements with the rest of the Empire.

#### BALANCE OF TRADE.

50. **Sir H. CROFT** asked the Prime Minister whether the Cabinet have yet come to any decision as to the policy for correcting the adverse balance of trade; and, if so, whether he can indicate the broad lines of that policy?

**The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Ramsay MacDonald):** This is not a matter which can be dealt with by question and answer. I can, however, assure my hon. and gallant Friend that it is one of the main concerns of the Government. As he knows certain steps have already been taken.

**Sir H. CROFT:** Is it not a fact that the "certain steps" at present, only cover something like 4 per cent. of the imports into this country?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** But this Government has not yet lived 4 per cent. of its life.

**Mr. BUCHANAN:** In view of the continued fall of the pound and the need that the House should know exactly what is in the right hon. Gentleman's mind, would he not allow a day for the discussion of this subject?

**Mr. SMITHERS:** On a point of Order. The pound sterling is better to-day.

**Mr. MAXTON:** Are we not to have a reply to the last question? Is the Prime Minister not prepared to give a day before the Session closes for a full statement of Government policy, because serious things may happen during the

Christmas Recess and we want to know what the Government propose to do?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** It would be quite impossible for the Government to give a whole day to discuss a situation when my hon. Friend himself says he does not quite know what the situation is. He is asking for a discussion on something which may happen later when we are not here.

#### EGYPT (RUSSIAN GOODS).

39. **Mr. SMITHERS** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he will call for a report from His Majesty's commercial representatives in Egypt as to the methods adopted by the Egyptian Government of protection against Russian dumping, including cereals, flour, cheese, alcohol, spirits, timber, oleaginous seeds, cattle fodder, leather, leather goods, boots, shoes, furniture, bentwood furniture, sugar, cotton fabrics, pharmaceutical products and soap; and whether His Majesty's Government will consider the adoption of a similar policy?

**Major COLVILLE:** I have been asked to reply. I understand that the Egyptian Government have power under a law of 1930 to impose a surtax equal to the amount of the customs duty against the goods of countries which have no commercial agreement with Egypt. By a Ministerial Decree of 3rd November this power has been used against Russian produce and manufactures in cases where similar or competing articles are produced in Egypt. With regard to the second part of the question, I would again point out that the problem of trade with Russia is part of the larger trade problem which is under the examination of the Government.

**Mr. SMITHERS:** If the Egyptian Government have the pluck to take this action, why cannot the British Government? May I have an answer to that question?

#### FOOD PRICES.

37. **Lieut.-Colonel GAULT** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been drawn to the discrepancies prevailing in the matter of food between producers' and retailers' prices, sometimes amounting to as much as 50 per cent. to 75 per cent.; and if he

[Lieut.-Colonel Gault.]

will have inquiry made into such cases under the Foodstuffs (Prevention of Exploitation) Act passed during the last Session to protect the consumer from profiteering?

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA:** I am aware that there is frequently a wide margin between wholesale and retail prices. How far it is justified will depend on the nature of the commodity, the services rendered, and a number of other considerations. If my hon. and gallant Friend will inform me of any particular case in which he thinks that the margin has been unjustifiably increased I will look into the matter.

## INDIA.

### ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE.

45. **Captain P. MACDONALD** asked the Prime Minister if he can now make a statement as to the results achieved by the India Round Table Conference?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** I would refer my hon. and gallant Friend to the statement which I made at the India Round Table Conference, which was printed as a Command Paper and presented to Parliament yesterday.

### SALT MINES (LABOUR CONDITIONS).

56. **Mr. HICKS** asked the Secretary of State for India whether, in view of the criticisms in the Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India of the unhealthy and unsatisfactory conditions of labour in which the men and women employed in the Government salt mines at Khewra have to work, the Government of India have taken any steps, or contemplate taking any immediate steps, to improve the conditions in the Government salt mines?

**The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir Samuel Hoare):** It has been arranged that the Government of India will send my right hon. Friend annual reports showing the progress made in giving effect to the recommendations of the Commission. The first of these reports will be due in October next, and meanwhile my right hon. Friend does not propose to ask for detailed reports on particular recommendations.

## GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

### MINISTRY OF PENSIONS.

46. **Mr. LOUIS SMITH** asked the Prime Minister whether he will consider winding up the work of the Ministry of Pensions, and transferring such as is left to it to some other Department?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** I am not satisfied that the time has yet arrived when a separate Department for the administration of War pensions could be dispensed with. The work of the Ministry could not be reduced arbitrarily.

**Mr. SMITH:** If the right hon. Gentleman is not able to consider the winding up of the Ministry of Pensions will he give consideration to the question whether further economies can be made in the administration of the Ministry, seeing that the work is becoming gradually less from year to year?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** This Ministry was considered at the time when we asked the Departments to look into their expenses to see what we could save. If my hon. Friend has any specific point to put in connection with that matter, it will be considered.

**Sir JOSEPH NALL:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in the process of reducing this Department considerable hardship is being caused to senior members of the staff, who are not being given the opportunity to transfer to other Departments as in the case of officials of the Ministry of Labour?

**Lieut.-Colonel MOORE:** Is it not the opinion of all ex-service men that this Department should be maintained?

### WAR OFFICE.

55. **Brigadier-General SPEARS** asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office what is the military establishment at present employed at the War Office, what is the civilian establishment, and what were the corresponding figures for 1914, 1928 and 1st April, 1930; what was the cost of these establishments, respectively, for the same periods; and what are the comparative figures of these establishments for the grade of principals and the grades above principals for the same periods?

The **FINANCIAL SECRETARY** to the **WAR OFFICE** (Mr. Duff Cooper): As the answer contains a number of figures, I will, with my hon. and gallant Friend's permission, circulate it in the **OFFICIAL REPORT**.

*Following is the answer:*

As regards the first and second parts of the question, the following table gives the information required:

—	1914.	1928.	1930.	1931.
<b>Military Establishment—</b>				
Numbers ... ..	261	345	354	354
Cost ... ..	£146,200	£298,400	£300,000	£297,300
<b>Civilian establishment—</b>				
Numbers ... ..	1,617	1,976	1,947	1,934
Cost ... ..	£304,400	£620,500	£629,000	£584,030

The figures for civilians include War Office financial staff at out-stations at home and abroad. They also include retired officers, ex-soldier clerks and other civilians employed in military branches, and typists, messengers and cleaners who serve the office as a whole.

As regards the last part of the question, a direct comparison is not possible, owing to the fact that the Higher Division Staff of the War Office, in common

with that of the rest of the Civil Service, was reorganised in 1920 and a different nomenclature adopted. The Administrative class now consist of assistant principals, principals, assistant secretaries and above, as compared with Higher Division clerks, assistant principals, principals and above before 1920.

The numbers and cost of the several grades compare as follows:

—	Higher Division Clerks.	Assistant Principals.	Principals.	Posts above Principal.
1914.				
Numbers ... ..	16	16	11*	6
Cost ... ..	£4,170	£12,205	£11,000	£8,600

\* Includes for comparison one post of Comptroller of Lands, now filled by an Assistant Secretary.

—	Assistant Principals.	Principals.	Assistant Secretaries.	Posts above Assistant Secretary.
1928.				
Numbers ... ..	13	19	9	8
Cost ... ..	£7,059	£20,234	£12,314	£15,199
1930.				
Numbers ... ..	12	19	10	7
Cost ... ..	£7,100	£20,404	£13,824	£13,630
1931.				
Numbers ... ..	12	19	10	7
Cost ... ..	£6,880	£19,665	£13,416	£13,397

#### CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT.

68. **Mr. CRAVEN-ELLIS** asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury why, of the four established grades in the Customs and Excise Department serving in

every respect, except in regard to salary, under the same conditions of service, the clerical officer grade alone is to have applied to it the 10 per cent. cut known as provincial differentiation when serving outside London?

**Major ELLIOT:** I think my hon. Friend must be under some misapprehension. The conditions of service and salary scales of the Departmental Clerical Class in the Customs and Excise, including percentage differentiations of five and ten, according to locality, when serving in the provinces, were fixed in 1921, and there has been no alteration in the arrangements since that date.

**Mr. CRAVEN-ELLIS:** The fact that it was fixed in 1919 does not mean that it was justified.

DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE  
(BRITISH DELEGATION).

47. **Sir RENNELL RODD** asked the Prime Minister whether any decision has been taken with regard to the British representation at the Disarmament Conference at Geneva in February next?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** The full composition of the British delegation to the Disarmament Conference has not yet been completely settled, but the following members of the Cabinet will form part of the delegation, namely, myself, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, the Secretary of State for War, the Secretary of State for Air, and the First Lord of the Admiralty.

**Captain P. MACDONALD:** Will the right hon. Gentleman say who is going to preside at the Conference?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** That is not a matter for any one Government. It is a matter for the League of Nations responsible Committee, which appointed Mr. Henderson as chairman.

**Mr. MAXTON** *rose*—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** A very full answer has been given to this question.

**Mr. MAXTON:** I only wish to ask the Prime Minister whether the House will be sitting when all these Ministers are absent on the Continent?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** We hope, as the late Government hoped, that it will not be necessary for these Ministers to be away at the same time. The attendances will have to be arranged in accordance with the business before the Conference from time to time.

48. **Sir R. RODD** asked the Prime Minister whether, before the meeting of the Disarmament Conference at Geneva in February next, any statement will be made regarding the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards the conclusions adopted by the preparatory commission; and whether any opportunity will be afforded for discussing the subject?

51. **Mr. CRAVEN-ELLIS** asked the Prime Minister if he will assure the House that our representatives will be instructed, before attending the World Disarmament Conference next year, that we have already reduced our defence forces below the safety level and that we cannot undertake any further disarmament until all the nations of the world have made substantial reductions?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** Under the late Labour Government a committee composed of members of the three parties examined broadly the Draft Disarmament Convention. The present Government are continuing their examination of the whole question in the fullest detail, but it will hardly be possible for any statement to be made as to the Government's policy before the House rises. I can assure my hon. Friend the Member for Southampton that the point which he raises will not be overlooked.

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
(PROCEDURE).

49. **Mr. T. GRIFFITHS** asked the Prime Minister whether, in order that the labour shown in the report of the Proceedings of the Select Committee on Procedure may not be fruitless, he proposes to take steps to have the inquiry completed?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** The evidence taken before the Select Committee on Procedure has only just been published, and it would be as well to allow time for its perusal before considering whether another committee should be set up to complete the inquiry.

**Mr. GRIFFITHS:** Is the Prime Minister aware that this matter has already been considered by two committees on one of which I sat myself; that he gave evidence before a committee on this subject; that a committee has

already decided in favour of an alteration, and does he not think that something definite should be done? The Prime Minister is altering the procedure—

**HON. MEMBERS:** Speech!

**Colonel WEDGWOOD:** May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether before closing the business of this committee he will consider the question of the responsibility and the freedom allowed to private Members of this House under certain new conditions?

## POST OFFICE.

**FACILITIES, HUMBIE, EAST LOTHIAN.**

52. **Colonel CROOKSHANK** asked the Postmaster-General if he will take steps to improve the postal services to Humbie, in East Lothian, where, although only 17 miles from Edinburgh, letters from London by the usual country post are seldom received next morning by the only delivery, and though representations resulted in a despatch later in the day, this is for collection only and is unreliable?

**The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Sir Kingsley Wood):** I am having inquiry made, and I will write to the hon. and gallant Member.

**Colonel CROOKSHANK:** As the raising of this question has been necessitated by the non-delivery of a Government Whip, does not my right hon. Friend think that there is some justification for the demand for a brighter Post Office?

**Sir K. WOOD:** Perhaps my hon. and gallant Friend will allow me time to make some inquiries, and I shall communicate with him.

**Colonel CROOKSHANK:** May I send my right hon. Friend particulars of the case in question?

**Sir K. WOOD** indicated assent.

**NEW BUILDINGS, COUNTY LONDONDERRY.**

54. **Mr. ROSS** asked the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that the last Postmaster-General but two undertook that a public telephone should be installed at New Buildings, County Londonderry; and whether any steps have been taken in the matter?

**Sir K. WOOD:** The public telephone call office at New Buildings was opened for service on the 6th November.

## BROADCASTING (WALES).

53. **Mr. LLEWELLYN-JONES** asked the Postmaster-General whether he is aware that a number of county councils and other local authorities in North Wales have made representations to the British Broadcasting Corporation urging the establishment of a central broadcasting station for Wales, and the provision of better facilities for the broadcasting of Welsh programmes; and whether he will use such powers as he possesses with a view to securing compliance with these requests?

**Sir K. WOOD:** I am aware of these representations. So far as the selection of sites for the new regional services is concerned the corporation are, I am satisfied, doing their best to ensure that satisfactory broadcasting facilities shall be provided for the greatest possible number of listeners, though as my hon. Friend is no doubt aware, owing to the mountainous character of Wales there are serious difficulties in relation to transmission.

**Mr. LLEWELLYN-JONES:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that for several years representations have been made in regard to this matter and that there is a considerable amount of feeling in this locality that the promise made of one station for the Principality will not be carried out?

**Sir K. WOOD:** I am aware that various representations have been made from time to time and, in fact, I received a deputation only yesterday, but there are various difficulties in the way. I believe that the Corporation are doing their best in the matter.

## AGRICULTURE (STATISTICS).

57. **Mr. DAGGAR** asked the Minister of Agriculture what percentage of the population depend for their livelihood on pasture and agriculture in Great Britain, the Colonies, India, and the European countries?

Sir VICTOR WARRENDER (Lord of the Treasury): I have been asked to reply. The answer to the hon. Member's question is in the form of a table

of statistics and I propose, therefore, with his permission, to circulate it in the OFFICIAL REPORT.

*Following is the answer:*

The following statement shows the number of persons and the proportion of the total occupied population engaged in agriculture in each of the undermentioned countries in the latest year for which information is available. I have no information with regard to the various colonies.

Country.	Persons occupied in agriculture.			Proportion of Total Occupied Population.
	Males.	Females.	Total.	
	Thousands.	Thousands.	Thousands.	Per cent.
Great Britain ... ..	1,341	107	1,448	7
Irish Free State ... ..	556	122	678	52
Canada ... ..	1,092	18	1,110	35
Australia... ..	514	10	524	23
Union of South Africa... ..	164	4	168	31
New Zealand ... ..	133	9	142	28
India ... ..	68,865	32,390	101,255	70
Germany ... ..	4,635	4,910	9,545	30
Austria ... ..	—	—	1,438	42
Belgium ... ..	481	130	611	20
Bulgaria ... ..	1,034	1,107	2,141	82
Denmark ... ..	392	69	461	35
Estonia ... ..	192	212	404	65
Finland ... ..	598	426	1,024	70
France ... ..	4,993	3,958	8,951	41
Hungary ... ..	—	—	2,127	59
Italy ... ..	7,085	3,117	10,202	55
Lithuania... ..	512	576	1,088	79
Norway ... ..	279	57	336	31
Netherlands ... ..	533	90	623	23
Sweden ... ..	792	248	1,040	40
Switzerland ... ..	385	97	482	26
Czechoslovakia ... ..	1,665	759	2,424	40
Russia ... ..	—	—	59,846	83

NOTES:—(a) Owing to differences in classification in the relative censuses the above figures may not be altogether comparable, particularly in regard to female employment.

(b) The figures have been extracted mainly from the 1929-30 Year Book of Agricultural Statistics published by the International Institute of Agriculture.

## UNEMPLOYMENT

MEETING, LONDON (POLICE ACTION).

59. Mr. McENTEE asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he is aware that the police authorities are breaking up meetings of the unemployed held near Employment Exchanges in the London area, especially in North-West London, and that such meetings have been held at these pitches during past years without disturbance and are addressed by clergymen and other law-abiding citizens; and will he, in order to allow the unemployed freedom of speech, give instructions that at places where traffic is not interfered with and where the proceed-

ings are conducted in an orderly manner such meetings shall not be dispersed by the police?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir Herbert Samuel): The Commissioner of Police has considered it necessary to take steps to prevent the holding of meetings in the streets near Employment Exchanges since recent experience has shown that meetings held in such circumstances are liable to lead to breaches of the peace. There has been in the past, and there still is, ample opportunity for holding meetings elsewhere.

Mr. McENTEE: Is it the policy of the Government to deny freedom of speech to unemployed men and women?



**Sir H. SAMUEL:** Certainly not.

**Mr. LANSBURY:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a very large number of open-air meetings have been held all over London; and will the police authorities assist the unemployed in finding pitches for these meetings where they will not be interfered with; and is it not much better to allow people to ventilate their grievances than to try to suppress them?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** I concur and the police are considerate to those who desire to organise these meetings and certainly interpose no difficulties, if the meetings are not held in close proximity to Employment Exchanges, if they are held in places where there is no obstruction to public traffic, and if there is an assurance that disorder will not take place.

**Mr. McENTEE:** Is it not a fact that the people holding these meetings, after the meetings were broken up, transferred to other places and were followed by the police, and that their meetings, wherever they were held, were broken up?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** Not unless there was disorder.

**Mr. KIRKWOOD:** Did the disturbances occur before the police interfered or after?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** The disturbances came first. There was interruption of the work at the Employment Exchanges, with disorder, and it was in consequence of that having occurred on several occasions that the Commissioner of Police, in the performance of his usual duties, thought it necessary that, at all events for the time being, meetings should not be held in the proximity of Employment Exchanges.

**Mr. KIRKWOOD:** Owing to the unsatisfactory reply, we are going to raise the question on the first available opportunity, because it is not all the Employment Exchanges—

**HON. MEMBERS:** Speech!

#### WORK SCHEMES.

70. **Mr. SMEDLEY CROOKE** asked the Minister of Labour whether the Unemployment Grants Committee is still functioning; if so, what schemes have been approved during the last three

months; the expenditure involved in those schemes; and how much of this expenditure will fall on the local authorities concerned and how much on the Exchequer, whether by way of loan or otherwise; and whether it is the intention of the Government to discourage local authorities from embarking on costly schemes, in view of the financial situation?

**The PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY to the MINISTRY of LABOUR (Mr. R. S. HUDSON):** The answer to the first part of this question is in the affirmative. Since 1st September last the committee has approved 179 schemes, estimated to cost £3,500,000. Approximately 22.5 per cent. of the total cost of these schemes will be borne by the Exchequer and the balance by the local authorities concerned. With regard to the last part of the question, I would refer my hon. Friend to a circular letter issued by the Ministry of Health, of which I am sending him a copy.

**Lieut.-Colonel AGLAND-TROYTE:** Can the hon. Gentleman say whether it is still the rule, in making these grants, that 75 per cent. of those who are employed should be ex-service men?

**Mr. HUDSON:** I should like to have notice of that question.

#### TRANSITIONAL BENEFIT (ASSESSMENT OF MEANS).

71. **Mr. McENTEE (for Mr. THORNE)** asked the Minister of Labour the number of extra supervisory clerical assistants and the number of temporary assistants engaged by public assistance committees which has been rendered necessary owing to the increased number of applicants arising from the alteration of the Unemployment Insurance Act applying to the means test and transitional benefit?

**Mr. HUDSON:** I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 12th November on this subject to the hon. Member for Chester-le-Street (Mr. Lawson).

#### ROYAL NAVY.

EVELYN HUTCHINGS.

60. **Sir F. HALL** asked the Home Secretary whether the whereabouts are known of Evelyn Hutchings, a member of

[Sir F. Hall.]

the Moscow International, who was concerned with two men named Allison and Shepherd in a recent attempt to foment mutiny in His Majesty's Navy; and whether steps will be taken to prosecute this person?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** I understand that the man in question has not yet been traced. The question of proceedings must necessarily stand over until he is.

**Sir F. HALL:** In view of the fact that these people, although unsuccessfully, have endeavoured to interfere with the loyalty of the men of the Navy, will the right hon. Gentleman take the most drastic steps to trace this man and see that he is properly dealt with?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** Yes. Every effort is being made to do so.

GEORGE ALLISON.

61. **Sir F. HALL** asked the Home Secretary when George Allison, who was deported from India after serving a sentence of 18 months' imprisonment for using a false passport and counterfeiting the seal and stamp of the Foreign Office, landed in this country; and whether his Indian record was known to the police when he was allowed to enter England?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** This man's record was known, but as he is a British subject there was no power to refuse him leave to land. I am informed that he arrived in this country on return from India on the 14th June, 1928.

**Mr. KIRKWOOD:** Is it not the case that if all the antecedents of hundreds of Members of this House were carefully examined, they would never be in this country at all?

GYROSCOPES.

1. **Mr. COCKS** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether any foreign-made gyroscopes are used in the Navy; and whether he will arrange that only British-made gyroscopes shall be provided in future?

**The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Sir Bolton Eyres Monsell):** A number of foreign-made gyro-compasses which were purchased during the War are still in use in the Navy. All purchases of gyro-compasses for His Majesty's ships

made in recent years have been of British manufacture with one exception where a foreign compass was installed in His Majesty's Ship "Nelson" for a particular trial. All other gyroscopes used in the Fleet for gunnery and torpedo purposes are British made.

ADMIRALS OF THE FLEET.

2. **Mr. COCKS** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty how many Admirals of the Fleet on the active list were employed and how many were unemployed on 1st January, 1921, and on the same date in each succeeding year down to 1st January, 1931?

**Sir B. EYRES MONSELL:** One Admiral of the Fleet was employed on each of the dates named. The number of Admirals of the Fleet was six up to January, 1924, five up to January, 1930, and four on 1st January, 1931.

## NATIONAL FINANCE.

INCOME TAX.

64. **Mr. POTTER** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that there are complaints at the delay in settling claims for repayments of Income Tax; and whether he will give instructions to the Department concerned with a view to expediting the settlement of such claims?

**Major ELLIOT:** If my hon. Friend will give me particulars of any case in which there has been undue delay in refunding tax under a repayment claim, I will certainly cause inquiry to be made and will communicate the result to him in due course.

TREASURY BILLS.

65. **Mr. McENTEE (for Mr. THORNE)** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what additional expenditure has been incurred by the Government in consequence of the rate of interest being increased for Treasury bills for the period 21st September to 28th November, 1931?

**Major ELLIOT:** If the rate of interest for the period 21st September to 28th November had continued at the rate current on 21st September, this expenditure would have been about £1,000,000 less.

STRAITS SETTLEMENTS  
(GOVERNOR'S BUNGALOW).

4. **Captain P. MACDONALD** asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been called to the proposal to build for the Governor of the Straits Settlements a new bungalow on Penang Hill at a cost of 80,000 dollars; and whether, in view of the economic position of the Colony, he will suggest a postponement of this outlay?

**Sir P. CUNLIFFE-LISTER:** Provision for rebuilding the bungalow has been removed from the Estimates for 1932.

EAST AFRICA (JOINT COMMITTEE'S  
REPORT).

6. **Mr. DAVID GRENFELL** asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies what steps are being taken to give effect to the various recommendations of the Joint Committee on East Africa; and, in particular, when it is proposed to set up the committees of inquiry into questions relating to finance and land, as recommended in paragraph 105 of the report?

**Sir P. CUNLIFFE-LISTER:** The report is receiving my careful consideration. The report and the memoranda and evidence, as soon as they are available, will be forwarded to the Governors of the Dependencies concerned, in order that I may receive their considered opinions as soon as possible. There will be no avoidable delay in taking decisions on all the questions dealt with in the report. But the subjects dealt with therein are so inter-related that the report must be considered as a whole, and the decisions taken must cover the whole field. I should like to take this opportunity of expressing to the Members of both Houses who served on the Joint Committee my keen appreciation (which I am sure the whole House will share) for the very thorough way in which they conducted their long inquiry and the completeness of their report.

KENYA (KIKUYU CENTRAL  
ASSOCIATION).

7. **Mr. D. GRENFELL** asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies how far the Government of Kenya has relaxed such measures as have had the effect of restricting or preventing the collection

of funds among members of the Kikuyu Central Association for the ordinary activities of that association; whether any official restrictions now exist; and, if so, of what nature?

**Sir P. CUNLIFFE-LISTER:** A copy of the Kenya Standing Orders relating to the collection of money from natives is being placed in the Library of the House. The hon. Member will see from these orders that, while permits for the collection of funds are required, it is the intention of the Colonial Government that whenever application is made for a permit it should in normal circumstances be granted.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES  
(WAYLEAVES).

21. **Sir M. MANNINGHAM-BULLER** (*for Sir DOUGLAS NEWTON*) asked the Minister of Transport if he is aware of the high charges in connection with wayleaves made against electricity undertakings due to the complication and duplication of procedure by the solicitors representing the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, which in certain simple cases amount to as much as 10 guineas for an annual wayleave of 2s.; and whether he is prepared to inquire into the matter in the interests of consumers of electricity?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I have no jurisdiction over the terms and conditions in voluntary wayleave agreements.

COAL MINES (SAFETY  
REGULATIONS).

58. **Major MILNER** (*for Mr. T. WILLIAMS*) asked the Secretary for Mines whether sub-committees have yet been appointed by the Mining Association, Managers' Association, Deputies' Association, and the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, to deal with lamps in coal mines and gas alarms; and whether he has met any of these bodies to discuss the question?

**Major COLVILLE:** I have been asked to reply. My hon. Friend had word yesterday that the Miners' Federation has appointed a committee, and a meeting has since been arranged for the 11th December. The other three associations have not yet replied definitely.

### SEA FISHERIES PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Reported, with Amendments [Provisional Order confirmed]; Report to lie upon the Table.

Bill, as amended, to be considered Tomorrow.

## WRITTEN ANSWERS.

### DANGEROUS DRUGS (LEGISLATION).

**Lieut.-Colonel FREMANTLE** asked the Home Secretary whether British ratification of the 1931 Convention for the limitation of the manufacture of narcotic drugs has yet been decided upon; and, if not, when is a decision regarding ratification likely to be made?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** Before His Majesty's Government can ratify this Convention, the Dangerous Drugs Acts will require amendment in certain minor respects. A Bill for this purpose is now in preparation.

### TRINIDAD (DIVORCE BILL).

**Dr. O'DONOVAN** asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will publish correspondence to and from the Governor of Trinidad concerning the Divorce Bill now under consideration?

**Sir P. CUNLIFFE-LISTER:** A Divorce Bill has been introduced in the Legislative Council of Trinidad by the Government in accordance with a resolution passed by a free vote of the Legislative Council on 7th March, 1931. The introduction of the Bill has been approved subject to the insertion of a Clause suspending the operation of the law, if and when passed, until His Majesty's pleasure is known. There is no prospect, therefore, of its being brought into force forthwith. A copy of the Bill will be placed in the Library of the House. I do not think this is an occasion on which I should publish correspondence between the Colonial Office and the Governor.

### FIGHTING SERVICES (BANDS, CIVIL ENGAGEMENTS).

**Mr. McENTEE** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, in view of the

fact that there are at present approximately 75 per cent. of civilian professional musicians unemployed, many of whom are unable to obtain unemployment benefit, he will arrange for the discontinuance of the practice of permitting the employment by outside persons and authorities of bands and musicians of the Navy?

**Sir B. EYRES MONSELL:** Naval and Royal Marine bands are permitted to accept civil engagements because there is a public demand for their services, and they are not permitted to do so on terms which are lower than those which would be offered in the same circumstances to a civilian band. I see no reason for altering the present policy in this matter.

**Mr. RHYS DAVIES** asked the Under-Secretary of State for Air whether, in view of the fact that there are at present approximately 75 per cent. of civilian professional musicians unemployed, many of whom are unable to obtain unemployment benefit, he will arrange for the discontinuance of the practice of permitting the employment by outside persons and authorities of bands and musicians of the Royal Air Force?

**Sir P. SASSOON:** My Noble Friend regrets that, though he has every sympathy for the civil musicians, he is unable to modify, in the case of the Royal Air Force, the long-standing policy of the Services in this matter. I should add that these bands are not allowed to seek employment through the Press or musical agencies.

### AIRSHIP R.100.

**Mr. WELLS** asked the Under-Secretary of State for Air if the airship R.100 was offered for sale to any Government overseas before the decision was taken to sell this ship for scrap?

**Sir P. SASSOON:** The answer is in the affirmative.

## TRADE AND COMMERCE.

### ABNORMAL IMPORTATIONS (CUSTOMS DUTIES) ACT.

**Sir A. STEEL-MAITLAND** asked the President of the Board of Trade if he will give a table showing the average monthly values for each of the first three

quarters of the present year, and for the month of October, of each of the groups of Articles of Class III on which import duties have been proposed under the Abnormal Importations (Customs Duties) Act, 1931?

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA:** The value of the imports during October last of the articles covered by the two Orders made under the Abnormal Importations (Customs Duties) Act is given in the White Papers presented to Parliament, together with full information as to the monthly imports by quantity. Particulars of the imports by value respecting the first three quarters of this year have not been compiled.

**SUEZ CANAL COMPANY (TRANSIT DUES).**

**Lieut.-Colonel MOORE - BRABAZON** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the fact that the tolls charged by the Suez Canal Company are causing the closing down or restriction of output of British and other industries in Egyptian territory south of the Suez Canal; and whether, in view of the dividend paid by this company, His Majesty's Government will now agree to use the power conferred on it by its holding and by its representatives on the board of the canal company to bring about such a reduction of canal dues as will assist the world recovery of industry, and, in particular, assist all industries located in Egyptian territory south of the canal.

**Major ELLIOT:** His Majesty's Government are fully alive to the considerations referred to in the first part of the question, and I am glad to be able to state that the company has felt able to reduce the transit dues temporarily by about 10 per cent. as from 15th November of this year.

#### PLUMAGE (ILLEGAL IMPORTATIONS).

**Mr. K. GRIFFITH** asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury if he will give details of the species of bird plumage illegally imported and confiscated under the Importation of Plumage Act, 1921, during the year 1931 to 30th September, together with the approximate quantity of plumage involved in each case?

**Major ELLIOT:** The following is a list of birds, the plumage of which was illegally imported and was confiscated by the Customs Authorities under the Importation of Plumage (Prohibition) Act, 1921, during the period 1st January, 1931, to 30th September, 1931, together with the approximate quantity of plumage involved in each case.

Name of Bird and Approximate amount of Plumage.

- Amandavat—2 millinery mounts.
- Bird of Paradise—284 millinery mounts, 3 skins, 1 tail, 2 wings.
- Chaffinch—1 skin.
- Crowned Crane—1 head.
- Egret—15 single feathers, 1 small bundle of feathers, 116 millinery mounts.
- Emu—2 skins, 1 millinery mount.
- Finch—5 millinery mounts.
- Gull, black-headed—1 millinery mount.
- Heron—1 ornamental feather spray, 14 millinery mounts.
- Indian Roller—2 wings.
- Kingfisher—6 millinery mounts, 110 ornaments each with a small amount of this plumage.
- Lyre Bird—1 tail.
- Owl—2 wings.
- Parrot—2 skins, 3 ornaments.
- Peacock—106 single feathers, 24 fans, 1 skin, 3 breasts, 1 tail, 1 millinery mount.
- Pheasants:
  - Argus—2 millinery mounts.
  - Copper—5 millinery mounts.
  - Lady Amherst—7 millinery mounts.
  - Reeves—2 millinery mounts.
  - Silver—1 millinery mount.
- Sparrow, common—27 millinery mounts.
- Stork (*Leptoptilus*)—1 fan.
- Teal, Falcated—19 millinery mounts.
- Teal, Formosan—12 millinery mounts.
- Thrush, Song—1 millinery mount.
- Vulturine Guinea Fowl—1 piece of skin with neck feathers.
- Widow Bird—2 tail feathers.

Two parcels containing plumage not identified, but clearly within the prohibition, were also seized.

#### NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE.

**Mr. RHYS DAVIES** asked the Minister of Health the total amount of the State grant towards approved societies' expenditure in Great Britain; and the

amount of the grant calculated at the rate in force before the passing of the Economy Act, 1926, for each of the five years ended 30th September, including the year 1931?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** As the accounts of approved societies are made up on the basis of the calendar year, figures are not available for the years ended 30th September. The amounts for the last five calendar years, together with the estimated amount for the nine months to 30th September, 1931, are as follow:

		Amount of State Grant at the actual rates in force.	Amount calcu- lated at the rate in force before 1926.
		£	£
1926	...	6,170,000	8,480,000
1927	...	6,490,000	8,920,000
1928	...	6,040,000	8,310,000
1929	...	6,430,000	8,840,000
1930	...	6,160,000	8,470,000
1931 (to 30th Sept.)		4,300,000	5,900,000

## INDIAN POLICY.

The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Ramsay MacDonald): I beg to move,

"That this House approves the Indian Policy of His Majesty's Government as set out in Command Paper, No. 3972 (Indian Round Table Conference), presented to Parliament on 1st December, 1931."

In answer to a question put by my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill), I indicated the course the Government proposed to take regarding their policy with reference to India, and I rise now to fulfil the pledge that I then gave. The statement which I made to the Round Table Conference yesterday had the full authority of the Cabinet, and we now wish, having communicated that statement to the House, to ask the House by its vote to associate itself with that policy. Perhaps, as this is the first time that an Indian Debate has taken place in this Parliament, it will be convenient for hon. Members, especially those who come to us for the first time, that I should give them a slight reminder of how the present situation has arisen.

From time to time declarations, which did not amount to specific pledges, have been made by the representatives of this country; sometimes the monarch, as in the case of Queen Victoria, sometimes the Government representatives, and sometimes the House of Commons have made it perfectly clear that the intention of this country is to lead India up to a position when it can make itself responsible for its own government. These statements did not always amount to pledges; they did not go beyond a statement of intention. No Member of this House, as a representative, can throw off from his shoulders the responsibility of carrying them into effect when opportunity arises, and from time to time as the opportunity widens; he cannot throw off the responsibility to fulfil those declarations, intentions and pledges.

I do not go further back than 1919, when this House passed the India Act. There was a Preamble to that Act which defined the policy of Parliament, not of a Parliament, but the continuing policy of whatever may be the governing authority of this country. That Preamble was a pledge that Parliament's intention in

passing the 1919 Act was to make a decisive and distinctive step in the gradual development of self-governing institutions in India. Parliament was so well aware of what it was doing that it provided by the same Act that at the termination of 10 years from the passing of the Act, Parliament should set up a Statutory Commission to review the situation in India and to make observations and recommendations regarding its future. That was the origin of what is known as the Simon Commission. I wish to emphasise that the expression "gradual development" must not be interpreted by this House as something that it can fulfil at its own leisure. Those words must be interpreted to mean that this House, vigilantly and carefully watching the progress of affairs in India, is prepared, when that progress reaches a certain stage, to take advantage of it to increase the amount of self-government that India enjoys.

There is another thing that I should like to observe. The political capacity in India is solid and widespread, and has enormously increased within recent years. No one who sat at the Round Table Conference since November last year and listened to the debates can doubt that. I wish to emphasise that those debates were not conducted, so far as the Indians were concerned, by people who had, as is too frequently alleged, a veneer of western education. They were conducted by leaders of all communities, by men who were there in a representative capacity, and who could speak for every class and every community in India from the princes down to the untouchables. It was representative, and it was remarkable in its representative character. Every time that I had the pleasure of sitting in the Chair, the debates would have done honour, so far as grasp of subject and of the intricacy of solution were concerned, to any assembly of specialists who belong to this country and who were regarded as specialists of their subject in this country.

The Act of 1919 was admittedly temporary as were the Morley-Minto reforms that went before it. I remember being in Simla on the day when the last meeting of the old Council was held, and when Lord Minto bade farewell to

[The Prime Minister.]  
 the colleagues with whom he had been working up to then. After the Council had dispersed an Indian who was present turned to me and said with a smile, "Lord Morley, I see, has been delivering speeches which declare that so far as he is concerned this is going to be the last word in the evolution of Indian self-government." He added: "I hope you are making no mistake about that; this is the first word, not the last word." The Indian was right. We have gone from stage to stage. Every step we have taken has had its critics, and quite rightly so.

This is a tremendous experiment in self-government—a tremendous experiment; and yet those of us who have been sitting to deal with this subject from day to day, trying to get enlightenment from something of the same kind that has been done before, have found on important problem after important problem that the hand of no draftsman and the brain of no draftsman has hitherto pioneered a way for us in the work we are doing. I say that not for the purpose of impressing you, and not for the purpose of supporting what I really must feel is the over caution and the super-criticism of my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping. I say that to brace you up to face a problem which you must face. Face it with courage and with resource, and I feel perfectly certain that with the human material with which we have been working for over a year, and with our own capacity to adapt institutions to political ends, we shall succeed in our task, and our success will be hailed as one of the great contributions this nation has made to democratic institutions and to human liberty.

When the Simon Commission was set up the intention of the Government, when it received the report, was to proceed to draft a constitution upon that report, to bring it before this House, and to send it to a Joint Committee of both Houses, and that when that Joint Committee was examining the details of the constitution as drafted Indians should be invited to come over here practically in the position of witnesses. They would not be co-operators in consultation. They could express their views as a witness expresses his views, but that would be, roughly, the position they would hold. The Com-

mission went on with its work. It appreciated the great problems with which it had to deal. On 16th October, 1929, practically two years after the Commission had been appointed, I received a letter from the Chairman in which he said that in view, particularly, of the close connection between the problem of British India and that of the Indian States, and the importance of consultation with the States before reaching final decisions, he urged upon me the desirability of setting up—these are his words:

"Setting up some sort of conference after the reports of the Statutory Commission and the Indian Central Committee had been made, considered and published, and their work had been completed."

I should explain that the Indian Central Committee was set up to work concurrently with the statutory Commission, and it did good work too. In this Conference His Majesty's Government would meet both representatives of British India and representatives of the States, not necessarily always together, for the purpose of seeking the greatest possible measure of agreement on the final proposals which it would later be the duty of His Majesty's Government to present to Parliament. I considered at the time that that was a very important departure. We had had enough information to know before that time that such a departure might smooth the way to an agreement between Indian public opinion and our own, and I certainly was not at all averse to responding favourably to the request which the Chairman of the Commission made to me. But I took the precaution of consulting the leaders of the other political parties before replying—the Conservatives and the Liberals, consulting them generally, for I never asked them to commit themselves to anything, that would not have been fair. I just wished to know if there was anything in the proposal to which essentially they would object. As the result of the interviews I was encouraged to write this reply. I said that we were deeply sensible of the importance of:

"Bringing the whole problem under comprehensive review and under conditions which may promise to secure as great a degree of unanimity as may be practicable."

I went on:

"When your Commission has submitted its report and His Majesty's Government



have been able, in consultation with the Government of India, to consider these matters in the light of all the material there available, they will propose to invite representatives of different parties and interests in British India and representatives of the Indian States to meet them separately or together, as circumstances may demand, for the purpose of conference and discussion in regard both to the British-Indian and all-Indian problems. It will be their earnest hope that by these means it may subsequently prove possible on these grave issues to submit definite proposals to Parliament which may command a wide measure of general assent."

That is the origin of the Round Table Conference. When the preparations were being made for the meeting of the Round Table Conference I was exceedingly anxious, as I still am to-day, to drag India out of the field of party politics in this country. Our then predecessors, the late Conservative Government, were good enough to consult both the Liberals and ourselves on the appointment of the Simon Commission, and they having set me that very good example I thought I could not do better than follow it. Consequently, in the preparations for the Round Table Conference, when we were discussing some of the important points, I again resorted to consultation with the leaders of the Conservative and Liberal parties. The result was that it was agreed that the Parliamentary

4.0 p.m. delegates who went to the Round Table Conference should be a three party delegation. The separate parties were not bound by the decisions of the others, but they were bound to do their best to co-operate, and whenever it was possible to speak with the same voice, that that form of address should be adopted. Again, I must report to this new House that none of us who then represented the Government of the day have had any reason to regret our decision or to quarrel with our part in it. [Interruption.] I hope that the one Government is as successful as the united Parliamentary representation was at the Round Table Conference. We shall have a great deal to hope for, and a long period of office.

When the invitations to the Round Table Conference were sent out, we wished that every section of Indian opinion should be represented, including the States. We were fortunate in getting a very full representation of every section and party with the exception of Con-

gress, which refused to come, and the Round Table Conference assembled on 12th November, 1930. One of the biggest problems that faced us straight away was the question of authority and responsibility at the centre. The Simon Commission had reported in favour of provincial autonomy, and stopped there; but it had a vision beyond that, and it did foreshadow a federated centre. Everybody felt that a federated centre of British India alone was a somewhat risky experiment. Fortunately, on the very first day when the Round Table Conference got to business, the representatives of the Princes informed us that they were prepared to come into the Federation. That at once gave us a prospect of others coming in. The Princes declared that they were willing to sit at the Round Table Conference to discuss all the political problems raised at the Round Table Conference, and to discuss them not merely as interested parties who were to remain as spectators, but to discuss them as rulers who were prepared to come in as part and parcel of the Federation of India, and take their place in the central authorities that might be created if the Government desired that that should be so. That changed the whole outlook, and put the question of a central federated Government with executive and legislative responsibility and authority on to a completely new foundation.

Then we examined a great many questions, one after another. I will not take up the time of the House in going over the ground, because it is only a question of how many Houses there should be, of how many parts the Legislature should consist, how many States should come in, the question of safeguards, the question of defence, the question of security for our civil servants, the question of commercial discrimination—question after question was part and parcel of the problem examined. Difficulties were stated, points of view recorded and a very considerable mass of detailed examination made by one of the committees which has been of special value to us—the Federal Structure Committee, over which my right hon. and learned Friend the Lord Chancellor presided with so much distinction and with so much success. The Con-

[The Prime Minister.]

ference then adjourned, and it was decided that it should meet again in September this year.

I am perfectly willing to confess, had I foreseen in January and February this year the political issues which this House and the Government would have to face, the very critical political issues, the very absorbing political issues which he had to face in August and September last, I should not have consented to the Round Table Conference meeting in September, because the problems of the Round Table Conference really demand the undivided and undistracted attention of whoever is going to preside over the Conference as a whole, or whoever is going to preside over one of its important committees. But the meeting was held. We have added very considerably to the discussion of the subject that must be discussed and settled before a constitution can be granted, and yesterday I made a declaration, which was published in the form of a White Paper, regarding which the Resolution I am now moving has been drafted.

Very briefly—because there are two days for Debate, and plenty of opportunity to get more details—I will try to put before the House the general situation as it is at the present moment. The Round Table Conference itself never was a body which as a whole could deal with intricate details. If I may repeat what I said yesterday morning in the very early hours, the Round Table Conference was an assembly where the temptation to make speeches was absolutely irresistible, and when a body of men have to settle down to discuss such subjects as the relations between an executive and a legislature in a centralised India, the relations between one community and another, from the point of view of representative democracy, a body of 80 or 90 men and women making long speeches, so long that when they were confined to half an hour the chairman always rejoiced that brevity was established—that is not the body to deal with these problems, but that is the body to make the nature of the problem clear. That is the only body which, speaking on behalf of every interested section in India, could put the problem in its full and larger sectionalised detail before the representatives of this Parliament.

The great value of the Round Table Conference was that it enabled every one of us who attended that body to understand (1) what is the Indian mind; (2) to try to translate that mind into a working constitution. What are the big problems that must be successfully solved by whatever authority of this House of Parliament is charged with the responsibility, first of all, of producing a draft constitution. That piece of work was magnificently done by the Round Table Conference. What is the next stage? It is quite obvious that the next stage is the detailed examination—constructive examination, not destructive examination—of small bodies approaching more to the size of an executive, without executive powers mainly on the spot. Therefore, the contributions made by the Round Table Conference are now coming into the stage of close examination, and we hope from the Conference yesterday that several committees should go out to India to deal with those subjects.

There are three points which the Round Table Conference itself has asked should be specially examined. The most important one is that of franchise. What is to be the enfranchisement? Is it to be the same in every province, for instance? I am not suggesting by putting a question? Please make no mistake about that. Because I put a question I must not be supposed to be doing more than that. But that is one of the questions. For the purpose of election should the village Panchayat be used? Is the system of Proportional Representation specially fitted for Indian conditions? Is a common register possible? And so on. These questions of detail, questions which relate to Indian conditions which must be fitted into a scheme of Government, ought to be dealt with by men, if possible, accustomed to that kind of work, and committees of that character will go out at the beginning of January, as far as we can possibly arrange it, and over each of those committees we propose that some one of some authority, some distinction, in this country should preside.

**Sir AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN:** Is my right hon. Friend assuming that election to the Central Legislature will be direct election? Are we to understand that from what he said?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** No. I am very anxious that neither my right hon. Friend nor anyone else should assume that by my statement we have taken a decision upon it. If I cared, I could go through a long category of problems, which it is quite clear will have to be settled, regarding election to the central authority. If indirect, through provinces? Special constituencies? The provinces being represented directly or not? These questions will have to be settled, and this Committee will make, I hope, a decisive contribution for the guidance of the Government first and Parliament afterwards as to how those questions are to be settled and embodied in the Constitution. There are one or two important problems outstanding. The first, undoubtedly, is the problem of communal representation. I tried my best, and one night I got them so near that only one communal seat stood in the way of a complete agreement, but I have failed up to now. Yesterday an appeal was again made to the community to go and settle the question among themselves, but if they fail again—and I am not sure they will—they have not only had an influence on us, but I think we have had some influence on them, too, and after having impressed on them the necessity for settling this among themselves, I think they are going home with a firmer determination to come to an agreement to which all communities will assent. But supposing they fail? The Government take the view that it is not justified in allowing a failure of this kind to stand between them and the putting into operation of a constitution which is otherwise roughly and generally agreed to. It would never be forgiven. After all, one has got to take political consequences into one's account practically in relation to facts and not in relation to fears like those of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping.

Let the House imagine this situation. We agree on reserved subjects, or are practically and generally agreed on them. We agree about central authorities. The Princes have agreed among themselves as to how they are going to enter, what power and representation they are going to have, and when that is all done the communal question is still unsettled by agreement among themselves and if the Government turn round and say "Until that is settled, we can do nothing at all,"

there is not a political platform in India which would not ring with denunciations that would carry conviction that the Government, from the very beginning of their negotiations with Indian representatives, never meant to carry out their pledges and promises, and never meant business. So far as I am concerned, I am not going to be party to a position such as that, especially when, as a matter of fact, you have got a system, however imperfect, working at the present day. You have set up a system in India which provides for communal representation. [*Interruption.*] Do not let us allow our minds to run in the direction we personally want, and not tackle the problem in front of us. The suggestion is that the Government should make it perfectly clear that, although everything is decided, if this problem is not settled then, it will do nothing. It is asked to do that although, as a matter of fact, the problem does not prevent representative institutions now working in India.

I cannot say what we are going to do if this responsibility has to be faced by us, but the Government might, for instance, say to the Indians when the Constitution is otherwise ready and they have asked us to say how it is going to be worked so far as representation is concerned, "We decline to make a permanent decision, but we equally decline to allow you to bar the way for taking responsibility upon yourselves, and showing it on to other shoulders when trouble arises. Therefore, the decision of the Government is that the present system of representation, necessarily adapted here and there to new conditions, shall be fitted in with the machine, and it shall be used to work the machine until such times as you yourselves are in a position to fit a better part into the machine." That may be the action or it may not be the action. I cannot commit the Government. I say it is absolutely impossible for hon. Members of this House to vote and think or act on the assumption that under existing conditions in India the Government can possibly take up the attitude that, short of communal agreement, no constitution can be worked.

There are also very important outstanding matters relating to the details of the States' representation. We have now had an assurance that the States meant every word they said at the

[The Prime Minister.]  
beginning of the Round Table Conference, that they are busy working on problems—problems very difficult to handle, for hon. Members who know India well know what a tremendous range of variety, power and authority is comprehended in the group of States that are the Indian States. But, again, the Government have said that every assistance they can give to the Princes to come to a conclusion regarding the conditions in which they will enter federation will be given. The third important point is the point of the franchise. I will say no more about that than what I have already said. The whole question of how representation is to be built, and upon what basis, will be referred to a very authoritative committee for our guidance, and the guidance of the Indians themselves, and in those committees the Indians will co-operate.

**Colonel WEDGWOOD:** Does that include the native States?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** No. The Indian States are separate States, and they must be allowed to govern themselves in their domestic affairs. I did not mean to deal with this, but just for the consolation of my right hon. and gallant Friend and those who show the same enthusiasm as he does I will say that it is not by imposing outside authority that these changes will be made, but by the co-operation and companionship of States, and in particular of those that have already taken steps to deal with those matters.

**Mr. ATTLEE:** May I ask whether those committees are going to report back to the Round Table Conference?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** I was just coming to a point that covers that. As regards contact, in the meantime it is going to be kept up between the Government and those committees. I asked the Round Table Conference yesterday if they would agree to my nominating, in consultation with them, a sort of Committee of Consultation which would enable us to keep in contact with Indian public opinion while those inquiries are being made, and while their reports are being digested, and to that they have assented. There is another class of subjects known as safeguards, and there is

a great deal of agreement upon these subjects, like defence, finance, foreign affairs and so on. Those are the three important ones, but there is a fourth of very great importance, too, that is, the question of commercial disabilities. All these subjects have been before the appropriate committee, the Federal Structure Committee, and although I cannot report that there is complete agreement, the position of the Government has been made perfectly clear regarding them. Do not make any mistake about that. There is a very substantial amount of agreement on subjects like defence, and as regards foreign affairs, it is almost 100 per cent., and the others in varying satisfactory degrees.

There was a question raised regarding the method of conducting these negotiations. I want to tell the House without any reserve that I am perfectly convinced that the work which has been done could never have been done by any method except the method of co-operative consultation, and I say further that if any Government here were to try to change that now, it would destroy all chance of continuing agreement and co-operation with India itself. The method by which the Round Table Conference has been handled is the only method that will enable India and ourselves to come to an agreement to work that agreement in harmony, and to use that agreement for the benefit of India itself, and also for the honour and good of the whole community to which we belong. Arising from that is the question of the relation between the negotiating Government and this House, and here again I do not think that Members

4.30 p.m. ought to be left in any doubt about what that relation must be. The Government must conduct those negotiations. There is no question of the nature of this which the House of Commons can conduct by periodical Debate and periodical Resolution. I would like to enunciate a rather old-fashioned doctrine, but one which I think is still very sound. We sit on this Front Bench because, rightly or wrongly, the Government—

**Mr. MAXTON:** Wrongly.

**The PRIME MINISTER:** My hon. Friend will change his opinion soon—because the Government has been elected

by a majority in this House of Commons, and those who sit here have presumably the confidence of the majority of the House of Commons. Having that majority, the Government is charged with the duty of conducting negotiations, and those negotiations have to be carried on from Parliament to Parliament. Otherwise, it is quite impossible to maintain for this nation its status among the nations of the world. I myself once had the duty—a very unpleasant one, I must confess—of carrying through this House a Motion to ratify a Treaty which had been negotiated by a predecessor of mine, and with large sections of which I was in absolute disagreement. I have also, with the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs in the late Government, had to take up certain declarations made on Dominion affairs with which we were not in agreement. Nevertheless, there they were. The Government of the day had agreed to them; we were their successors; and they were part and parcel of the estate to which we were heirs and into the management of which we entered. The right hon. Gentleman may have changed his opinions, but we did not.

That is the method of government, and here, regarding India, the Cabinet must carry on these negotiations, the Government must carry on these negotiations, until a point is reached when a proposed agreement is initialed—a very well known stage in the negotiation of treaties. When the parties to the negotiations initial it, then, at that point, the House of Commons is asked whether it agrees or whether it disagrees. If it agrees, that is all right. If it disagrees, I think most Governments would regard the disagreement as a vote of no confidence, and would take steps accordingly. I just wish, in a sentence or two, to refer to the Amendment. I do hope—and I hope I am not appealing to deaf ears—that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping and the other hon. Members whose names follow his on the Order Paper will be content with the opportunities of Debate, and will not carry this to a Division, or will not move the Amendment. I will tell them why. This Amendment was quite obviously drafted before the White Paper was published—

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** No.

**The PRIME MINISTER:** Really, I am surprised—

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** It was drafted at six o'clock yesterday, after the White Paper was issued.

**The PRIME MINISTER:** I assumed from the contents of the Amendment that it was drafted before the White Paper was issued. Then I hope that all I require to do is to give my right hon. Friend this assurance. The first point is this:

“Provided that nothing in the said policy shall commit this House to the establishment in India of a Dominion constitution as defined by the Statute of Westminster.”

There is no Dominion constitution defined by the Statute of Westminster. I would like to draw the attention of my right hon. Friend, on that point, to this fact, that the Statute of Westminster, in the terms of the Statute itself, can only apply to the Dominions specified in it. Therefore, before anything is done to Burma, India, or any other section that has advanced across the boundary of the absolutely subject State and has been put into the category of self-governing States—not one of them can be subject to or can enjoy whatever privileges the Statute of Westminster confers without specific legislation in this House.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** Nobody ever suggested that a constitution for India could be set up without an India Bill.

**The PRIME MINISTER:** My right hon. Friend is quite wrong about that. I am not referring to the India Bill at all. The only way in which India could be brought under the Statute of Westminster by the Bill which we contemplate would be by a specific Clause in that Bill. But I do not contemplate that; I contemplate a Bill which would go through giving India the powers adumbrated in the White Paper. But that alone would not bring it under the Statute of Westminster. If India is to be brought under the Statute of Westminster, a Clause to that specific effect must be in the Bill; or, if it is not there, and India is going to enjoy the liberties and the powers of the Statute of Westminster, then another Bill adding the name of India to the list of Dominions

[The Prime Minister.]  
in the Statute of Westminster will require to be passed by this House of Commons.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** Do I understand my right hon. Friend to say that there are two methods, the one a Clause in the India Bill and the other an Amendment of the Statute of Westminster?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** The second Bill would be an Amendment of the Statute of Westminster.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** The first alternative is not. Then I was right in my interruption about an India Bill.

**The PRIME MINISTER:** As to the interruption, yes. I said that that was one of two ways; but my right hon. Friend's interruption really meant that powers could not be given to India which would bring it under the Statute of Westminster. I say that no power is given to India—and this is the point; my right hon. Friend must not run away from it—no power that is contained in this White Paper, no power that is foreshadowed in this White Paper, nothing that can develop from this White Paper or on the lines of the White Paper, would put India under the Statute of Westminster.

**Mr. MAXTON:** So that there is no chance of giving them independence.

**The PRIME MINISTER:** Let me deal with that interruption, because, after all, this is not our only audience to-day. In the ordinary way I should let that go, but I say this, that the White Paper and the powers foreshadowed in it have been accepted as promising at any rate by the Round Table Conference, and that the question of the application of the Statute of Westminster, although not dealt with here and not in contemplation by the Government, is not a question that is barred for ever; but, if India comes under it, and when it comes under it, it will be by precisely the same considerations, precisely the same machinery, and precisely the same method as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand have come under it. That interruption will be used in India as meaning that India is being put in an inferior position. It is not accurate, and I hope India will not have any misconception of the position.

**Mr. MAXTON:** The Prime Minister took my interruption very seriously, and I also do not want it to be misunderstood in India. I merely made it to indicate to this House and to India that, in the assurances which the right hon. Gentleman was giving to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping, in reply to an interruption, he was pointing out and making the case that it was almost impossible for the Indian people, under the contemplated legislation, to secure complete independence.

**The PRIME MINISTER:** There is no intention of it, and India does not want it. Moreover, if this is going to be a subject of controversy in India, there are provisions in this White Paper which withhold for a transition period powers from the Indian Central Government which the Dominions enjoy. Everyone knows that, and the Indians agree to it. Therefore, nobody must make that observation serve as a stick to beat this Government with, not here, but in India.

**Mr. LANSBURY:** It is rather important that we should understand what the right hon. Gentleman really means. We understand that there are certain reserved subjects which it is agreed will ultimately be unreserved for the India Legislature. What I want to ask is: Do the Government, when they talk about Dominion status, intend at any period, is it the view of the Prime Minister and the Government, that India shall attain, and you want her to attain, full Dominion status the same as the other Dominions?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** The point is a perfectly clear and simple one. I am dealing with the situation as it is to-day. I say, regarding the Statute of Westminster, two main things. First, the Statute of Westminster, in the way that it is drafted, applies only to Dominions specified in its Preamble. Secondly, so long as this transition stage lasts which is contemplated in the White Paper and agreed to by the Indian representatives, the Statute of Westminster cannot apply to India. When Parliament deals with the reserved subjects, when the time has come to remove the reserve from them, then the Statute of Westminster may be the subject of an Amendment such as has been alluded to by my right hon. Friend. I am sorry that these inter-

ruptions have taken up so much time. The second point in my right hon. Friend's Amendment is:

"Provided also that the said policy shall effectively safeguard British trade in and with India from adverse or prejudicial discrimination."

That is exactly what we are standing for at the present moment. What, moreover, has it to do with the subject of an agreed Resolution, agreed to at the end of the first phase of the Round Table Conference? It is raised on a very slender point; it was raised again the other day; but still the right hon. Gentleman cannot carry anyone into the Division Lobby with him on the ground that there is any doubt as to the position of the Government on this point. The third is:

"And provided that no extensions of self-government in India at this juncture shall impair the ultimate responsibility of Parliament for the peace, order and good government of the Indian Empire."

That is one of the subjects safeguarded.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say the various provisions in this Amendment are agreed to by the Government.

**The PRIME MINISTER:** No.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** I thought that was the purport of what the right hon. Gentleman had been telling us.

**The PRIME MINISTER:** I say the safeguarding provisions are governing conditions. These have been stated at the plenary Conference by Government representatives and have been fought out in the Federal Structure Committee by Government representatives. You cannot ask people to disagree with them on that point.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** I was asking the right hon. Gentleman, will he permit the insertion of those very principles for which he says he has contended? I was asking whether he would not accept the Amendment and assert these principles with which he says he is in agreement.

**The PRIME MINISTER:** If there was anything in the Amendment that really was germane to the present position, I should certainly consider the acceptance of it. I certainly am giving my own very firm decision in the matter that those conditions put down, "Provided that

nothing" and so on, shall be put in. I say, in view of the statements contained in the White Paper, those conditions are not of a nature to justify anyone voting against the policy declared in the White Paper. We stated our position in the White Paper to the Conference yesterday. I put myself in the hands of this House. Suppose I was to accept an Amendment which weakened, apparently, although not in fact, the position taken up by the Government yesterday. If this House asked us to undo what was done yesterday, I should certainly be no party to it. But there is one thing I should like to say. There is the expression here "good government." That expression is so very vague and general that I exempt that from what I have said—ultimate responsibility for peace and order certainly in the provinces as well as in the centre. I am not quite sure what the right hon. Gentleman means by good government. The night before last there was a very remarkable and helpful speech delivered by Mr. Jayakar. I should like to quote a sentence or two from it. He said:

"I thought it was my duty to speak quite frankly from my point of view. I think it is a very great opportunity for your country. The question is whether you will take hold of it. Everything depends on the way you make your choice. We can only watch you make your choice. The privilege of making it is yours. Young and old in India are watching on the tip-toe of expectation to see what is going to be the issue of this conference. Is it going to be success or is it going to be failure—failure in the sense in which I have spoken? I do hope that Providence will enable you to decide that it will be success."

I beg and I pray of this House, by its Debates during these two days, and finally by its decision in the Division Lobby, should that be necessary, to help the Government to make its work a great and an abiding success.

**Mr. ATTLEE:** Anyone who rises to take part in this Debate must do so, I think, with a sense of very deep responsibility. The issues involved in the Indian problem are enormous. On their successful solution depends not only the future well being of the 370,000,000 people in India, not only the future of our own country, but I believe the future of the world. I believe the solution of the questions between Europe and Asia will depend very largely on what is done by

[Mr. Attlee.]

this country in its dealings with India. I think what is said in this Debate may very well have effects far beyond our imaginings. The statement that the Prime Minister has made to the Round Table Conference is obviously one of very great importance. It is one of those statements that mark a stage in the progress of negotiations between this country and India. The Government have reaffirmed certain principles. They have recognised the principle of responsibility to be placed on an Indian Executive responsible to a Legislature at the centre and responsible in the Provinces. They have reaffirmed their belief in an all-India federation, and this House is asked to approve this policy.

This reaffirmation of the principles laid down at the beginning of the year is welcomed by us and is all to the good. We want these principles to be affirmed by the Government and by this House and to be approved by the people of this country. But we want something more than this, and I think we have to examine rather carefully what has been said in this White Paper and what has been said by the Prime Minister with regard to what is to be done in the future in carrying on these negotiations between the people of this country and the people of India. The Prime Minister has not merely brought us declarations of principle. He has reported progress to this House. He has reported what has been done at the Round Table Conference. He has reported progress. But I was not certain whether he asked leave to sit again. That is a vital question. He was not clear, and I want to get a very clear answer to this specific question. In paragraph 14 of this White Paper it is stated that a working committee of the Conference will remain in being in India and that there will be reports of committees which are going to be set up to go into certain details. Then it says:

"But in the end we shall have to meet again for a final review of the whole scheme."

I want to know whether that means that the Round Table Conference remains in being, that these reports are to be made to the Round Table Conference and not merely to the Government or to this House.

**The PRIME MINISTER:** Obviously, the Round Table Conference will remain, and in the end we shall have to meet again for a final review.

**Mr. ATTLEE:** The right hon. Gentleman did not suggest any report to the Round Table Conference, and he was not, I think, quite clear when I asked him this specific point. It is satisfactory to know that the method of negotiation through the Round Table Conference is to continue and that this is an interim process during which certain committees are going to report.

I want to say a word or two on how I view this Indian problem. This is the first occasion on which I have taken part in a discussion on Indian affairs since I was a member of the Indian Statutory Commission, and it makes me all the more careful in what I shall say, because anyone who has had the experience of sitting down to a problem for some two or three years realises to the full the difficulty of any particular subject and, when one gets a subject like India, one realises the enormous complexity of the problem involved. One knows that problem seems to overlap problem. You come up against a particular difficulty which may be derived from history. You come up against another difficulty derived from race and another from climate. You switch off from that perhaps on to a constitutional question. The Indian problem is like a tangled skein. As soon as you take up any particular thread and think you are getting it straight, you find that perhaps you have pulled four or five so tight that you cannot undo them.

I am not for a moment going to suggest, as I think one or two interrupters did, that nothing has been accomplished by the Round Table Conference because everything has not been accomplished. We know that an immense amount of work has been done on this extraordinarily difficult subject. At the same time, I think one has to approach the problem with a certain degree of humility. There are various stages of knowledge of India. I have only reached the second stage, when one knows how little one knows. I cannot possibly compete with the easy dogmatism of knowledge that belongs only to inspired people like Lord Rothermere and the right hon.



Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill). I realise something of the difficulties. In the Indian Statutory Commission Report, at the beginning of our sittings, we emphasised the need for facing the facts. We said: "You have the facts of the Indian situation. They are stubborn facts which no amount of rhetoric or appeal to abstract principles can alter.

5.0 p.m. Some of those facts can never be altered—facts of geography, facts of climate, and facts of history. Those facts have to be faced. They have to be taken into account. But the most important fact of all is the state of public opinion of the Indian people." We emphasised that in our report, and I would like to quote it to show how clearly that was in our minds. We said:

"Just as it would be useless to elaborate a theoretically perfect constitution without reference to the other conditions of the problem, so it must be recognised that representative institutions depend for the success of their working, not so much on their logical excellence, as on their ability to attract and make use of the forces of public opinion."

In these constitutional matters the prime fact is the state of mind of the people for whom the constitution is intended and for whom it has to be worked. That brings me to the first point that anyone should bear in mind in taking part in this Debate, and that is, that the Indian problem is not a static problem. You cannot say that because you knew the Indian problem 20 years ago you know it now. You cannot say that because you knew all the factors three years ago you know all the factors now. The problem is constantly changing. The problem that faced Lord Ripon, the problem that faced Lord Morley, the problem that faced Mr. Montagu is not the problem that faces the Government to-day. The problem that faced us on the Indian Statutory Commission when we reported two years ago is not precisely the same problem that faces the Government to-day. That is true of any movement of this kind, a nationalist movement. I remember, in our discussions on the Indian Statutory Commission, our Chairman making the point very emphatically; the point about the Indian Nationalist movement was that, like all nationalist movements, it did not stand still. It was constantly on the move. If we are trying to deal with the situation as we find it to-day, we must

bear in mind that characteristic of all nationalist movements. It has a very close bearing upon this problem, because we have to remember what has happened with regard to other nationalist movements in the past.

Nationalist movements seem to follow a fairly well-defined course. You get the idea of a few enthusiasts, and you perhaps get a small body of the intelligentsia, but as the progress goes along the Nationalist movement tends, like a snowball, to grow and grow. Nationalist movements tend to increase and to intensify, but very often it means that unless a Nationalist movement is dealt with on wise lines it tends to move further and further left and further and further away from constitutional action, and further and further towards direct action. You can trace that out in the history of the Irish movement; in the movement from Butt to Parnell and from Parnell to De Valera. You can see it in almost any Nationalist movement, and you have to bear it in mind when you are considering and dealing with a Nationalist movement to-day. We have had examples of being too late in dealing with these movements before, and that is why I want to emphasise that the important point to remember is that you cannot, when you are dealing with a problem like this, say: "I will lay it down now and wait a few months or a year or two and then take it up again and deal with the problem." Problems of nationality do not wait like that. You cannot take them up again just as they were before. If you miss the right time for dealing with a problem of this kind, you may have missed the chance of dealing with it at all.

I said that the problem that faces us to-day in this Debate is different from the problem which faced us when we wrote the report of the Indian Statutory Commission. Events are moving with extreme rapidity in India to-day. One found how opinion had moved even between two short visits to that country. I was greatly struck when the Round Table Conference assembled, when I met many friends I had met in India, to find how their views had changed in that short period. What a movement of opinion there was. We noticed, in dealing with this problem, that change from the state of affairs with which we had to

[Mr. Attlee.]

deal in the Indian Statutory Commission's Report. We foreshadowed some of that in our report. We suggested the need for bringing in the Indian Princes. At that time it was hardly thought of and was considered to be an extremely tentative experiment. We were warned that if we made the suggestion in our report we might find that it would put off the day of a greater Indian Federation. One of the most remarkable things is the way Indian Princes have come forward and how in a short space of time the ideal of an All-India Federation has forced itself to the front. We could not anticipate that at the time of our report.

We further had the declaration of policy made by the Government and the assembling of the Round Table Conference, which was again suggested by the Chairman of the Indian Statutory Commission. The Round Table Conference has again made an extraordinary difference in the situation. You have had over two years of talk, two years of work, and two years of the spread of opinion, and, to my mind, India is more politically self-conscious to-day than it was two years ago. I believe that political thought and political propaganda have extended to a far greater degree in India than they had at the time when we were visiting it. We suggested then that Indian political thought might soon be spreading from the towns to the villages. That has already taken place, and so one at once sees that the situation to be dealt with cannot be dealt with on the exact lines laid down by the Indian Statutory Commission.

I have never taken the line that the Indian Statutory Commission's Report was a divinely inspired gospel which was to be adopted under pain of excommunication. The Indian Statutory Commission's Report was an honest attempt to help India by an investigation of the facts and the suggestion of possible solutions. I regarded it as a building to be erected. We knew that many of the stones would be thrown at us, but we hoped that a good many would appear in the final edifice of the Indian Constitution. I think that that has been borne out. We at that time suggested that it would have to take the responsibility in the Provinces and later in the centre. Since then we have had a Government

declaration of responsibility at the centre, and we have had an entire change of the situation by the fact of the Indian Princes coming in. The outstanding difficulty in dealing with the responsibility at the centre was the fact that you had two Indias, one the India of the Princes, the other British India. The fact that they are now within sight, I believe, of a constitution on a Federal basis makes possible that responsibility at the centre which we thought could not come for some time. Therefore, I say that for my part the Report we made has not been cast aside. It is being amplified and brought up-to-date by events themselves. I have never in the least suggested, as some people have, I think, wrongly, that the Indian Statutory Commission's Report has been brushed aside. As a matter of fact, it has been utilised as a jumping off place for further advance, as one always expected that it would be.

We have to-day the situation as told to us by the Prime Minister. I think that one must recognise, first of all, that it is absolutely impossible to go back. When you are dealing with negotiations of this sort, you get to a certain stage. There are people who say: "Oh, we have gone too far; let us go back." The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping has suggested more than once in his speeches: "Let us call a halt; let us find a retreat." The right hon. Gentleman had made many retreats in his time, and most of them have been disastrous, but I am quite sure that any attempt to retreat from what has already been done with regard to India would be more disastrous than any other retreat. It is no good thinking that you can easily build a half-way house if no one is going to live in it. The difficulty we of the Indian Commission were in was that it was very difficult to form what I might call a watertight half-way house. You could not get a logical structure at all. In fact, given the conditions in India, if you want advance at the centre, it can only come about by methods of negotiation and agreement wherein the people who are going to work something which is not absolutely the last word in the constitution accept the position and are ready to welcome it. That is the position we have reached now, and I think the Government chose absolutely rightly in taking the method of the Round Table Conference, the method of negotiation.

I believe that the only possible way of getting a successful issue of this very difficult problem is by employing the method of negotiation. There are enemies to India's peace awaiting from both sides—from the extreme left and from the extreme right. I think that they are both short-sighted, and I believe that the mass of intelligent opinion in this country and the mass of intelligent people in India can, given good will, obtain a solution that will get us over those enormous difficulties. I fully recognise what those difficulties are. Some of them are set out in the White Paper. There is the Hindu-Moslem difficulty. No one who has seen India can doubt the reality of that difficulty. It does no good saying: "Here is a difficulty. We cannot settle it; therefore we will do nothing." You have to live with that difficulty. You will not cure it by saying: "You are a bad boy. You must go away. We cannot do anything for you." You have to face the facts of the situation. There is also the constitutional difficulty. You have the difficulty of the minorities. All these difficulties exist, and they exist to be overcome. They can only be overcome by continued negotiations. From our point of view, we recognise very fully the right of India to self-government. I was very sorry that the right hon. Member for Epping put forward the questions that he did and that he has put down an Amendment demonstrating to my mind his total failure to grasp the essentials of the Indian problem. The essential point of the Indian problem is the demand for equality of status. Let me again quote from the report of the Indian Statutory Commission. We said:

"The political unsettlement which is most widespread among the educated Indians is the expression of a demand for equality with Europeans, and resentment against any suspicion of differential treatment. It is a great deal more than a personal opinion; it is the claim of the East for the due recognition of status."

In this country we English, at all events, are apt to take a very insular outlook. We are essentially a people who are practical and who muddle through, but we do not make nearly enough allowance for the part that sentiment plays in the world. We think that if you have the substance, it does not so much matter what it is called. That is not so with other races. Anyone who has studied,

say, the negotiations with our various Dominions will see that some members of the British Commonwealth of Nations feel enormously the importance of subjects over which some of us can hardly realise that anyone could be excited—minute points of status and nationality. But these things have to be borne in mind. In every nationalist movement you will find that there are these questions. I believe the biggest question outstanding here is the question of status and self-respect, and that that is the great feeling which animates the Indian movement.

I was sorry that the right hon. Member for Epping began to play about with the Statute of Westminster. He has followed up what he did in the Debate on the Statute of Westminster, in which he entirely ignored the substance and went all out for keeping some shadowy words which would preserve his self-respect. I think that at the back of his mind he is, perhaps, not like the rest of the practical people here, because he has at the back of his mind something that flatters his national self-respect in some kind of feeling of Imperial domination. That is not understandable to me. I do not understand, any more than the Indians do, that sort of national self-consciousness. We must make allowance for that. Above all, we have to recognise India's demand for status and self-respect, and until that is met we cannot elaborate the details of their Constitution. It is not a thing that you can argue about; it is simply a thing that exists.

The next point that I would like to emphasise was brought out in our report, and it is the second point on which we on these benches are particularly concerned. The first point is that India should have her self-respect and her status recognised, and that she should be mistress in her own house. We have to make allowance for these things, and we have to take account of the transition period. The second point is brought out in the Statutory Commission's Report:

"Until the demand for self-government can be reasonably met, enthusiasts for various reforms make common cause, and every disappointed element attributes all the evils which they attack to the absence of self-government. In our view, the most formidable evils from which India is suffering have their roots in social and economic

[Mr. Attlee.]

customs of long standing which can only be remedied by the action of the Indian people themselves."

I believe that statement to be profoundly true. I believe that India is suffering from a variety of economic and social ills that will require a giant's hand to remove them, and I am certain that that giant's hand cannot be an alien hand. It can only be done by the people of India themselves. Every national or nationalist movement derives its strength partly from the idea of nationality, but it is almost always based on economic evils which, either justly or unjustly, are attributed to the lack of the power of self-determination. The Irish Nationalist movement derives its strength very largely from the land system in Ireland. In India you have the landlord system, the money-lender system, modern industrialism, all kinds of evils which you may say we were not responsible for introducing, but which we are powerless to remove at the present time, which we must acquiesce in, and which can only be removed when India takes in hand her own responsibility for dealing with her own problems.

I have much sympathy with many administrators who, having worked in India for a long time, are deeply concerned about the condition of the people of India, and particularly the people among whom they have worked. They fear that their work may be abolished if India gets responsibility. I have every respect for their work but I think that, once you have got away from the position of an autocratic government acquiesced in by the people of the country and you have changed over to a Government which is not acquiesced in, which is not actively supported by the people, but is met with active hostility, then the kind of work that was done in their day cannot be done in that way now. It must be done in a different way by India herself.

I would again refer to the report of the Statutory Commission on a point which we feel needs emphasis. I refer to the question of safeguards. I want to see safeguards for the people who are economically and educationally backward in India. I want to see that their political rights are looked after. There are the urban workers, the peasants, the people of the backward classes, and the

depressed classes. There are men and women in the Nationalist movement in India who have done great work and have sacrificed themselves for the sake of the people in a far lower status than they are—poor and depressed people, but nationalist movements generally tend to appear more radical and more reforming than they actually are. We have seen many nationalist movements on the continent of Europe which used to appeal to the British democracy, but when they have got their freedom they have proved oppressors in their turn. I hope India will avoid that.

It has been said to me over and over again by Indians: "We do not want to exchange a white oligarchy for a brown oligarchy." That brings me to the question of the franchise. In any Constitution that is set up you must put the depressed classes, the poorest of the poor, in a position in which they will be politically sufficiently important to make it worth while for politicians to do something for them. I do not say for the moment that you will get many of them taking part in the Government, but I want them to have that potential political power. It is absolutely vital and essential that they should have that power. It is not for me to work out the details, but that position has to be safeguarded in regard to the urban districts, the position of the peasants, and above all, the position of the depressed classes. Under any Constitution that we hand over to the power of the Indian people, it may be that a comparatively limited class will obtain the power at first, but let us be certain that we have a potential power in the hands of the masses of the people. I mention that point because our respected colleague, the late Mr. Vernon Hartshorn, was particularly interested in it and worked very hard in connection with it. We must all recognise the dangers of extra-Parliamentary action if we do not make provision in the Constitution for the masses to get political power. Experience has already shown how it is possible for a few to move the many in India. If we want anything like stability, we must make full provision in the constitution for the masses of the people.

On the general question, I believe that the path of safety is the path of bold advance. We have still the kind of stuff

that appears in the "Daily Mail" and the Rothermere Press. I would like to ask those people what is their alternative to steady advance? Either you are going to get agreement, either you are going forward on the path that we have been following so long, or you must have an alternative. When we were on the Indian Statutory Commission and we discussed various points, we often found some point on which we could not get what anybody regarded as a satisfactory conclusion, but the logic that always brought you "down" at the end was: "What is your alternative?" I would ask the gentlemen who say, "Stop these conferences, send these people packing home, let us have the strong hand in India"—what is their alternative? The strong hand. I should like to know how many of these strong-handed gentlemen are actually going out to India. I think

it would be a good experience

5.30 p.m. for them to live and work there. As a matter of fact, there is no alternative worth looking at to the policy that is being followed—the policy of negotiation. I want to ask one question on the White Paper. In reading this White Paper and in listening to the Prime Minister's speech, I felt that I wanted a little reassurance. It is all very well to lay down general principles. It is an admirable thing, and a very necessary thing when you are beginning to frame a constitution, but there is the question of the elaboration of details to which the Prime Minister referred. To my mind, that is not the next point which comes up. The first thing is to get your general principles and, secondly, you must get your heads of agreement. It is useless to think that you can set up committees of experts to elaborate details until you have come to a decision—in this case by agreement—on definite lines of policy. I was a little disturbed by the Prime Minister's remark in which he suggested that the sittings of the Round Table Conference were only for the purpose of hearing evidence. I did not conceive that the Round Table Conference was for the purpose of hearing evidence. We heard evidence month after month in India. The whole point of the Round Table Conference was to work out the heads of agreement—

**The PRIME MINISTER:** The hon. Member has misunderstood what I said. I certainly did not say that.

**Mr. ATTLEE:** I took down at the time in writing what the Prime Minister said, but I am glad that he did not say so. I confess that I was rather disturbed. As a matter of fact, there is a considerable way to go before you get to the elaboration of details by experts. In my experience that is a very late stage. You get your general idea and then come down to the practical proposals, which have to be worked out in the rough before the details can be added. A lot more time was required for the Round Table Conference. For some weeks, partly due to the General Election, its time was consumed over comparatively minor points, but when it came to the essentials it was only a matter of days. I should have liked the Round Table Conference not to have gone into vacation now, but to have continued and brought to this House the heads of an agreement, fixed and definite; then you could have put your experts to work out the details. The lines of the policy which has been taken are absolutely right, and I want to be quite sure that the method of negotiation is going to be pursued throughout until the very end. We should allow nothing to separate India and ourselves on that point.

Here let me issue a word of warning. There may be at times difficulties in India. There are always people who will make trouble. The right hon. Member for Epping has his counterpart in India of people who believe in physical force. I hope that the Government are going to keep firm on the line of negotiation all the way through, whatever happens. We had a wonderful example of how to deal with these difficult matters from Lord Irwin. No one had a more trying time in India, but he never lost his faith in negotiation. We cannot allow the negotiations now proceeding at the Round Table Conference to fail. It is one of the big, vital matters which face the men and women of this generation; and the Government if they remain firm will rally the country to them. I believe that with patience the difficulties can be settled. I believe that British and Indians, disregarding the extremists on either side, can hammer out a solution, and I am absolutely certain that any attempt to go back and tear up the whole thing will

[Mr. Attlee.]

merely end in bloodshed and ruin. When you come to deal with questions of this sort, you are always faced with the case of the Sibylline books—if you refuse them when you have the chance, you will be glad of them later on. Now is the time to get the greatest possible measure of agreement between British and Indians, and I hope that the Government will go forward in the spirit of the declaration at the beginning of the White Paper.

**Earl WINTERTON:** I was much impressed by the suggestion of Mr. Speaker at the commencement of this Parliament that old Members of the House should endeavour to confine their remarks into as short a space of time as possible and, therefore, I will occupy only a few moments in what I have to say. The hon. Member for Limehouse (Mr. Attlee) will not think me impertinent if I say that he has taken up a good deal of time in telling us many things which we knew quite well before, and as there are a very large number of Members who desire to speak, I doubt whether a speech of 40 minutes was in the best interests of the House as a whole. I do not quarrel with many of the admirable sentiments put forward by the hon. Member; at the same time, I do not think they have much relation to the immediate question before us, namely, the announcement that has been made by the Prime Minister.

I was not surprised that the Prime Minister spoke in a somewhat listless way and, for an important occasion, to a not very full House. It is clear that the announcement of His Majesty's Government is not of a nature calculated to produce much enthusiasm in support or much indignation in opposition. The fact is that in this Debate there is very little scope for rhetoric either from the right or the left, because the announcement made leaves us in the same position in which we have been for the last two years. To-morrow, I understand that the big guns are going to boom across the Gangway. I understand that the biggest and strongest gun is going to boom at the Foreign Secretary, and that the Foreign Secretary is going to shoot back. All I can say is that they might just as well use blank ammunition, because there is nothing to fight over in this announcement. It simply repeats the announcement made by the Government last year.

At the same time, I am grateful that this announcement has been made. I have always pressed for it, and I drafted and moved the Resolution which was passed by a certain committee of this House asking that an announcement of the policy of the Government should be made in the House. But there is nothing in the announcement, I submit, which in any way alters the situation. It is inherent in the declaration of 1917 and in the Preamble to the Act of 1919 that India at some future date should have responsible self-government; and that, obviously, means responsibility at the centre. I do not want to go back, but it is well that the House should realise the extent to which we are bound by past commitments. It may be that the pledge of 1917 was given in unfortunate circumstances. There was no hint given to the public before it was made, and there was no opportunity of testing the views of the country. Many of us who were Members of the House at the time were on Service, the attendance of the House was very attenuated and composed largely of those who were too old to fight or who found it more convenient and more commodious to sit on the green benches than to be at the Front like the rest of us. I am not complaining of their action; I am merely pointing out the circumstances in which the announcement was made. The fact remains that it was a pledge which binds this country and all subsequent Parliaments; and no one can suggest that it can be in any way set aside. That pledge meant no more and no less than the conferment by this House of responsible self-government at some time thereafter to be determined.

What is the announcement of to-day? I ask the House to agree with me that the announcement made by the Prime Minister yesterday was of exactly the same character, and that it meant no more and no less than the conferment of responsible self-government on India at some date hereafter to be mentioned. When that date will be we do not know, nor does the Government. It is clear from the Prime Minister's speech that no immediate legislation is intended, or is possible. One, two or three years may pass, possibly the whole time of this Parliament, before the amending Bill to the Government of India Act is brought in. 'I do not want to say anything

unfriendly, but I will venture to make a prophecy, I think a safe prophecy, and that is that the date of the introduction of the Bill to confer the next stage of self-government on India will not be until the Government themselves decide what the safeguards for minorities are to be, and what the safeguards for finance and other things are to be. These matters will never be settled by Indians in committee or conference, either alone or in consultation with the representatives of the British Parliament.

I do not wish to minimise the work done by the Prime Minister in connection with the Round Table Conference. Every hon. Member irrespective of party should be grateful to the right hon. Gentleman for the strenuous efforts he has made, for the sacrifice of leisure with a real risk to his health, to make the conference a success. At the same time the right hon. Gentleman always gives me the impression that he loves conferences almost as much as he loves committees. I am saying this in all friendliness and, I hope, without any discourtesy. No doubt he loves them because he is so successful in them because of his charming manner and good management. His political motto or slogan might be "Conferences, committees, commissions." But if there is going to be a Bill for a major constitutional change passed by this Parliament, and while the right hon. Gentleman is Prime Minister, he and his colleagues will have to face what has been termed "the irrevocability of decision." They will have to find a solution themselves for the minorities question and for safeguards; no one else will do it for them. There will have to be responsibility at Downing Street, as well as at St. James's Palace. I would add that I do not advocate or deprecate such a course—the introduction of a major Bill. All I point out is the common-sense point of view, that if the Government are going to bring it in, it will be they who will bring it in, and they who will make the decision.

For that reason I must confess that I do not see much good in setting up more committees unless they are to have limited action. The hon. Member who has just spoken and who did such excellent work on the Simon Commission knows that for years he has been talking as if

what we have to face is an interminable vista of consultations, reports, evidence and things of that kind. It has been going on for four years, and yet how much nearer to a solution are we on the minority question than we were when the hon. Gentleman went to India? I hope that the Government will exercise some care in setting up these further committees, under, as the phrase goes, "distinguished Englishmen." They may not do much harm. They may help to elucidate certain points that are still lacking. But I should have thought that all that required to be done was to come to a decision on the available information that is now before the Government. I do not think they will do much good.

I see that the Lord Chancellor in one of his most exuberant bursts of sentiment compared himself with the architect of the Taj Mahal. I would remind the Noble Lord that the architect of the Taj Mahal took 10 years to execute his work, and that at the end of it he was blinded so that he might not be able to produce anything of the same character again. That was not because the great Emperor who had the Taj Mahal built did not like it, but because he wished that it should never be copied. I hope that the Noble Lord will not spend 10 years in committees on India, and at the end of that time be blinded. I cannot imagine anything more likely to have that result than interminable conferences at St. James' Palace.

For many years before the late Labour Government came into office, in various quarters the idea of the Round Table Conference had been mooted. It was suggested from the very start of the reforms. Almost directly after the reforms were brought into operation, those who were discontented with the working of the reforms suggested that there should be a Round Table Conference to consider the whole matter. Until the late Government accepted the idea, successive Governments, two Conservative Governments and one Coalition Government, turned down the idea because it was held that you could never get a body of Indians, representing the extraordinary divergence of races, religions and classes in India, to reach agreement on any salient points of a new constitution. Everything that has

[Earl Winterton.]

happened at this Round Table Conference has proved the correctness of that view. The Prime Minister said yesterday that the Round Table Conference "has not failed." I think he should have added the words, "except that it has not reached agreement on any of the major issues which must be solved before a constitution can be framed." But I am not saying for a moment that the Conference has not had some good results. I think it has. I think that the Prime Minister was fully entitled to claim for it the results that he did. The rough idea of an All-India Federation has been evolved. Without such a Conference it would have been very difficult to have obtained that.

The Conference has taught a much-needed lesson to the public here and in India as to the difficulties in the way of India's rapid advance to self-government. It has taught a much-needed lesson to all, including those in this House, that this question will never be settled by emotional and rhetorical statements about the need for self-government, or about the way in which everything has changed, and all that sort of stuff: Not by that alone. That is no doubt the sugar on the cake that pleases Indians when offered by those who are popular with them on the Front Bench, but such statements do not solve the problem. This Conference has brought right into the centre of the stage the cruel arc lamps, which have shown up the real nature and gravity of the problems to be solved before India can go on to the next stage of self-government. Those problems have not been solved by the Conference and they still remain for solution.

Thirdly—and there the right hon. Gentleman has done as much as anyone—the Conference has promoted really good feeling between individual Indians and individual and distinguished members of different political parties in this country. I am sorry that my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) is leaving the Chamber, because I had one or two remarks to address to him. I see that he is returning. I shall stand for only a short time between him and his tea. I say to him in all friendliness, as I have already been

friendly to the Government, that I do not think there is anything in the Prime Minister's announcement to which my right hon. Friend can take exception. With all respect to him, I venture to support the appeal of the Prime Minister that he should not proceed in bringing forward his Amendment, which is a work of supererogation. "Responsibility, with safeguards" involves no departure from the original pledge made in 1917, for which the right hon. Member for Epping, in common with every other Member of the House, was responsible. Everything depends on two definitions that are at present lacking, that is to say, when is that government to be given and what is the nature of the safeguards? They cannot be defined in this announcement, and I cannot see why everyone should not support the announcement. Everyone is committed to it by what happened in 1917 and again in 1919.

One other matter that I must mention is the Burma Round Table Conference, of which I am a member and which is, indeed, in the midst of its plenary sittings. I trust that if and when the Burma Conference shows a consensus of opinion in favour of a particular constitution for Burma, and the Government accept that opinion, they will next Session present a Bill to Parliament and pledge themselves to give effect to the decision that is reached. I hope that the Government will give us some assurance on that point before the end of the day's Debate, because some of us have to make our second reading speeches at the Conference to-morrow, and we want to know where we stand. I suggest that it is not in the interests of good relations between Great Britain and India that the new constitution of Burma should wait on the long discussions that are obviously still in the offing in regard to the next step in India. I should like a definite pronouncement by the Government spokesman on this point. If the answer is unfavourable, I do not think there is much good in going on with our Conference, because the Conference is intended to suggest to the Government a solution for the future government of Burma, and if the Government accept that solution legislative effect should be given to it, apart from what may be happening in connection with India.



To return to my original subject, there is no doubt that the Prime Minister's announcement leaves the constitutional position in India for the next two or three years in a state of great fluidity and uncertainty. No one can tell exactly what form the new Bill, when produced, will take. It cannot be produced for two years. I do not think that that matters so much, provided that the present administration at the India Office and at Delhi continues the excellent work already begun, of making it clear that the millions of quiet and peaceful Indians will have proper protection from the authorities in going about their lawful occasions. I think that Lord Willingdon and the Secretary of State have made a most excellent beginning in that regard, and, although I know it is a rather delicate subject to handle, I must say that I do not believe there has ever been a more calamitous period in the administration of India within a generation, than the period from June, 1929, to September of this year. It was a lamentable experience.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** Why did you not protest against it?

**Earl WINTERTON:** My right hon. Friend's historical recollection is at fault. I did not protest as aggressively as he did, because I thought that my form of protest would be more effective than his. It is all very well to talk about the need for good will, but we have to remember those who suffered in those days. It was not, except to a small extent, the handfuls of Europeans in India. The people who suffered were the millions of law-abiding Indians who wanted to carry out their ordinary avocations and were prevented from doing so. I have not the least doubt that British sentimentalists at home and abroad wrought great havoc in those days. There is a peculiar type of sentimentalist who is to be found in this country only. He believes that you can show sympathy to the perfectly legitimate aspirations of a people who are partly in subjection to another people, only by condoning or ignoring the law-breaking and the insolence of some of its inhabitants. It is a fatal point of view. I am sure that the exact opposite is true in India. I have seen dozens of Indians, not only Moslems but Hindus as well, who have complained bitterly of the in-

convenience, the discomfort, the loss of money and the danger to which they were subjected by the weakness of the administration in those years.

Let us try to appreciate the point of view of these people. Take the case of the ordinary Indian, the man in the street, rich or poor. Has he not a right to demand from any Government that it shall not, for the sake of sentiment, tolerate a state of affairs which makes it impossible for him to carry on his business? I hope that that era has gone by. I hope that if any person, including the most celebrated opponent of all of the Government, in the next few months breaks the law, there will be no negotiations with him on the part of the Viceroy or the Secretary of State, but that the ordinary law will operate. I am glad that this announcement has been made. A reiteration of the good intentions of this country towards India has been made, and quite rightly. It is now beyond the possibility of doubt that our intentions have not altered since 1917. I am equally glad that it has been accompanied by announcements of the equally good intentions of the Government to take stern steps against those who disturb the peace of the King-Emperor and menace the lives of his subjects.

**Mr. CADOGAN:** The Prime Minister's statement is likely to create some concern in some quarters of the House, but I think, on the whole, it will bring a sense of relief to the majority of Members. I confess that the reaction at 6.0 p.m. which it has upon me is one of mild perplexity, and that is perhaps the condition of mind which the Prime Minister intended to produce in the House. I fail to see in it any occasion either for reassurance or for alarm, until we are more conversant with its implications. It was, no doubt, incumbent upon the Prime Minister not to be too explicit, and perhaps it would be very injudicious of any hon. Member to ask him to be more intelligible, in virtue of this fact, that any conclusions to which the Round Table Conference may be said to have come, depend upon conditions which have not yet been fulfilled and contingencies which have not yet arisen. The statement obviously divides itself into two sections. One is devoted to a forecast of future procedure, with which,

[Mr. Cadogan.]  
 may I say in all humility, I agree in existing circumstances. The other is devoted to an affirmation of the right hon. Gentleman's pronouncement made last year and I hope he will forgive me for saying that I think it requires further elaboration. But in this connection I congratulate him upon what he has said in regard to his pronouncement. I think he must have had the Report of the Simon Commission on the table when he wrote it. The right hon. Gentleman says:

"I want no more general declarations which carry us no further in our work."  
 I hold strongly the view that there is little to be gained by these abstract declarations, and I should have thought that Indians themselves would have ceased to attach any importance to meaningless phrases which are as great a hindrance to a concrete solution as the communal question itself. At one time it was the phrase "Dominion status," now it is the phrase "responsibility at the centre," which put up an effective barrier to calm and logical reasoning. I have studied the reports of the Round Table Conference with the most sedulous care and although on every possible occasion when "responsibility at the centre" can be pressed it is pressed by all and sundry of the delegates no explanation is vouchsafed to us as to how that responsibility can be fitted in with the circumstances, the requirements and the conditions of a federated India. It is surely of the greatest importance that, before the House subscribes to that phrase, we should know exactly what it means.

I share now with only two other Members of this House what has come to be the invidious distinction of having committed myself to views which have been embodied in the report of the Statutory Commission. That report was presented to His Majesty some three years ago although I suppose that, according to modern standards, three years is an appreciable period for anybody to remain consistent in his political views, I am obliged to confess that nothing which has happened in India or in England during that time has offered me any inducement to depart from the views contained therein. On the contrary, every-

thing that has happened in both countries has confirmed those views. It would surely be putting rather too heavy a tax on the credulity of this House, and indeed too heavy a tax on the credulity of the Indian intelligence, were I to affirm—and this would be the only ground on which I could possibly go back on anything to which I had attested in that report—that some mysterious, some psychological change had come over the vast unsophisticated populations of India, 80 per cent. of whom have probably never even heard of all these questions which agitate the minds of the small section of the political intelligentsia, and that they had eaten of the fruit of the tree of political knowledge and had been miraculously enlightened. That would, surely be an insult to the intelligence of the House.

I notice that in a recent speech Mr. Gandhi claimed to represent 85 per cent. or 95 per cent. of the inarticulate peoples of India. Apart from the consideration that the discrepancy between his two rival claims—if my arithmetic is not at fault—represents a population of 30,000,000, the fact that they are inarticulate makes it impossible either to confirm or to refute his statement. The fact remains that the vast majority of the Indian populations are not aware of what agitates the minds of those who have been sitting at the Round Table Conference. I do not put that forward, as some do, as a reason why we should not amend the Government of India Act. I do not put it forward as any reason why India should not develop her institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government. But I do put it forward as a contributory reason why this House and the Government should dispassionately examine the lines of advance laid down by the Report of the Statutory Commission.

It is obvious to me that those who criticise that report have either never read it, or, if they have read it, have been unable to appreciate our attitude. It is said that our recommendations were reactionary. Indians, if I may be allowed to say so, labour under the extraordinary delusion that unless you adopt a slavish imitation of the Constitution here in England, you are retarding their progress; that if you do not agree to a per-

fect facsimile of the Constitution here being translated over to India, it is an affront to their dignity and a reflection upon their capacity to govern themselves. There could be no greater misconception of the situation, and no greater fallacy. The Commissioners in their report were most solicitous to explain that, quite apart from the consideration that the amorphous and heterogeneous populations which compose India might not be in a condition of readiness for such an innovation as responsibility at the centre, in any case responsible Government as it exists in England might not be the suitable or appropriate form to be adopted in an Indian Constitution.

I would go as far as to say that, even if the populations of India were as advanced in education, socially and politically, as ourselves, responsibility as we understand it might not be the most suitable form for India. What does this expression "responsibility" mean? It is highly important that we should understand it and I want to be more categorical than previous speakers. If I may be allowed once again to call the attention of the House to the contents of the Statutory Commission's Report—and I do so with the less reluctance, in view of the very little consideration which has ever been given to it even by those who set up the Commission—I would point out that the Commission argued on the assumption that "responsibility" connoted the responsibility of an executive to a legislature, and, what is just as important for our argument, the responsibility of a legislature to an electorate. We tried to point out that the conditions for such a form of responsibility are not now present in India and may never be present in India. An executive, drawn from a single party, which depends for its existence from day to day on the votes of members directly elected by an electorate—those conditions, I say, do not exist and may never exist in India.

In the second place, presuming that your legislative assembly is to number some 460 members, which, according to the franchise we suggested we did not think an unwarrantable estimate, each member would represent some 500,000 voters—obviously an area and population much too unwieldy to enable any great contact to be established between the

member and the constituents. If we take into consideration that they are to have communal separate electorates, we have this extraordinary situation—that a member might have to conduct an electoral campaign over an area the size of Scotland. We were careful to demonstrate that responsibility of this sort is inseparable from an organised party system both in the House of Representatives, or whatever you like to call the assembly, and in the constituencies. It depends also for its success on close contact between member and constituents. As to "responsibility with safeguards" which I prefer to call by a name not too pleasant in Indian ears, namely, diarchy, we came to the conclusion that the responsibility for the subjects with which the Centre is concerned cannot be departmentalised. I am only giving these details to show that our proposals were not put forward on reactionary grounds.

For these and other reasons—particularly the difficult and complex question of the financial relations of the Centre to the Provinces which I have not time to go into now—we decided that the Constitution of India should be on a strictly federal basis, federal units and not ordinary constituencies being represented in it, and that responsibility as we understand it in England would not be the appropriate form of responsibility for India. We are told that there is a unanimous requisition for responsibility from all the delegates at the Round Table Conference. That is the only subject apparently on which they are all agreed. It is the one common denominator which is apparent in all these conflicting elements, but I invite the House to exercise the utmost caution before they accept that view. The demand put forward by the various sections for responsibility, is put forward in various ways. In the first place, you have the extreme Congress men who ask for immediate responsibility without any conditions. Then you have the moderate Hindu element who ask for responsibility subject to safeguards. Whether that is responsibility or not, depends, of course, upon the extent and measure of the safeguards. Then the minority delegates representing, I suppose, over 100,000,000 people in India, ask for responsibility on conditions which they must see are not very likely to be fulfilled.

[Mr. Cadogan.]

I am not impugning the sincerity of the Moslems, the depressed classes, the Europeans, the Sikhs and other minority communities, but I put it to the House that there is a great discrepancy between accepting proposals upon conditions which are not likely to be fulfilled, and accepting proposals absolutely without any "ifs" or "buts." Then the Princes, who have, throughout the deliberations, made every sort of concession and offered to make every kind of sacrifice in order to help India to realise a federal system of government, also ask for responsibility, but they have not been very explicit as to what that demand really signifies. Bearing these facts in mind I am not so impressed as some hon. Members with the apparent unanimity and enthusiasm of this demand for responsibility which seems to be now a *sine qua non* of any amendment of the Government of India Act.

Until more definite conclusions are come to as to what it really means among the British and Indian delegates, and until they explain how it is going to be woven into the texture of a federated India, I see no reason to depart from the view unanimously accepted by the Commissioners that provincial autonomy with indirect election to a Central Legislature of a federated India, a Central Legislature which will contain within itself the power to evolve self-government, is the right line of advance. While holding these views, I am obliged to say that I fully admit that you cannot force a form of constitution upon a people who will not accept it or work it; at the same time, I believe that the reason they do not accept it is that they do not trust that the British Government is as good as its word, rather than any logical claim of reason. It is indeed deplorable that all our efforts have been unsuccessful in dispelling this illusion. That is, I am quite sure the Prime Minister will agree, the black tragedy of the situation. I believe that if the Prime Minister and his colleagues could succeed in dispelling this mistrust, they would render an incalculable service to the Indian Empire. I see that in the White Paper, in the first paragraph, the right hon. Gentleman says:

"we have won . . . confidence in, and respect for, each other."

I wish that that was altogether true, because later in the White Paper he refers to the offer that he made to the Indian delegates. They refused it, he says, for whatever reason. The Prime Minister knows what the reason was. It was that the Indian delegates did not trust provincial autonomy or think that the British Government meant business and that it would lead eventually to self-government. That, in my opinion, is the real difficulty, and if the Prime Minister can remove that distrust, I believe he will have gone a long way towards solving the whole Indian problem.

In the meantime, what is the best course? Surely, we must all admit that the best course, the wisest course, under the existing circumstances is what the Prime Minister has decided, namely, to continue along the lines of friendly conference and commissions, but I should like to put in a caveat to the right hon. Gentleman to turn a deaf ear to any suggestion that the functions of the Imperial Parliament should be limited merely to giving its *imprimatur* to anything which an outside body is going to dictate. I am sure that he appreciates that the extreme limit of the authority of any outside body, be it a Round Table body, be it a Royal Commission or any other conference, is submitting, with all due respect, its recommendations to Parliament, which Parliament has the right to amend, accept or reject just as it deems fit, but I say that in virtue of the speech made by the late Secretary of State for India at the Round Table Conference at the last plenary assembly.

I note that Sir Francis Younghusband appealed to us, to Parliament, not to leave the impression upon the Indians that we were more concerned with our own self-interest than with the aspirations of India to self-government. I fully respond to that appeal, but I do protest that we are not here, those of us who are genuinely anxious to see a right solution to this problem, influenced so much by self-interest and our own material interests as by the interests of those millions for whom we are the trustees. There is nothing I resent more than the insinuation that because we counsel caution, therefore we are actuated by reactionary motives or self-interest. We have a formal responsibility to India

which we cannot, with a light head or with a light heart, disregard.

I do not lay claim to the long and intimate familiarity which some hon. Members, who, I hope, will address the House during this Debate, have with the Indian peoples, but, both in a private and in an official capacity, I have made immense travels throughout the length and breadth of India, and I have been afforded exceptional opportunities of being intimately associated with all sorts and conditions of Indians. That experience, too exiguous as it may be to enable me to speak with any authority in this House, has certainly left me with an abiding affection for the Indians.

My appointment to the Indian Statutory Commission raised in me hopes that I might be of some service in elucidating the problems which are involved in this constitutional difficulty; and, if I may be allowed a personal note, it was to me the keenest disappointment that the result of three long years of steadfast and unremitting endeavour, exclusively devoted to what we imagined to be the best interests of the Indians themselves, far from achieving, had frustrated that ambition. But I can assure the House that no feeling of resentment, if ever such a thing was present in my mind, would hinder me from wishing God speed to those who have taken on the work where we left it off, and have now to face up to the inexorable facts and the perplexities and difficulties which we had to encounter, and praying that they, both Indians and English alike, will arrive at decisions yielding results which will be for the lasting peace and prosperity of the Indian Empire.

**Colonel WEDGWOOD:** I very rarely have the opportunity of commiserating the Prime Minister, but on this occasion I do so, and with a whole heart. He has thrown himself into the solution of the Indian question. During the last three years he has made it his child. He has worked hand in glove with Lord Irwin and with the late Prime Minister in attempting to bring a real solution of the Indian problem a step forward? One method after another has been adopted. I remember that the question of the Round Table Conference came up in the first Labour Administration, and he has now finished a Round Table Conference.

He has done his best with the Round Table Conference, and that conference has failed, and it is just as well that we should look facts in the face. It has failed. It has not produced the heads of agreement which were necessary if there was to be any agreed legislation, and I am confident of this, that the next step forward will have to be taken now by the British Government taking the full responsibility upon themselves. It is perhaps as well that these stages have been gone through, because the problem is one to which so many eyes were closed, and the consultation with India had become more especially necessary because Indians were excluded from the Statutory Commission. Now we have had that Conference. We have got no agreed report, and the position is clear in that we realise the real difficulties in the way of giving Home Rule to India.

Far from sharing the view of the Noble Lord the Member for Horsham (Earl Winterton), I regard the declaration of August, 1917, as being the finest act of statesmanship that Great Britain has produced, but I will point out to the House that it was produced in the War, that it was produced by Edwin Montagu after having got the individual approval of every member of that tortured War Cabinet, and that it was a gift to India, recognised on the Indians' side by giving their sons to die in the War; and we are bound for every reason to carry through to its ultimate conclusion that famous declaration. But while saying that, we have also to realise what we are learning from these Round Table and other conferences. Has it not struck hon. Members as almost inconceivable that there should have been no agreement come to at that Conference, not between English and Indians, but between Indians themselves? The difficulty, the difference between communal representation and the common roll, important as it is, could not alone account for the breaking down of that Conference, and I believe myself that, faced with the immediate prospect of a complete change in the Indian Government, with the removal of England as supreme and the substitution of India as supreme, the immediate approach of that possibility has frightened the minorities to such an extent that the minorities themselves will invent difficulties in order to prevent the achievement of Indian Home Rule.

[Colonel Wedgwood.]

The point of view of the Mohammedans is one with which I strongly sympathise. I am a Unitarian, and I dislike a multitude of gods, whether Trinitarian or not, and I quite see their point of view. Politicians in India are very like politicians in this country. Politicians are always anxious to get somewhere, but never very pleased when they get there. I always think that they treated Moses very kindly in killing him off before he got to the promised land; and politicians, even in this country, sometimes prefer a grievance to responsibility, and the responsibility of controlling India in its present condition is one of which any Indian may very well be a little bit nervous. But it would be a mistake, now that it is up to the Government themselves to make their own conclusions as to what is to be done in India, to assume that those minorities are really so passionately devoted to that absurd and antiquated system of a communal electorate. It is not so much the nature of the safeguard. What they want to preserve is a certain absence of responsibility, coupled with a real change of heart on the part of the rulers.

I do not know whether the House recollects, if it is permissible to go back into history for a moment, that two or three years ago the dictator in Egypt came to this country, as very many Ministers do. Some go round the world, and some take a trip to England at the Government's expense. He came here for the sake of his health, but he had to see about the perennial Egyptian grievance of the Treaty. He was naturally received at the Foreign Office, and the Foreign Office naturally discussed with him the possibility of a Treaty. He gave what he considered were impossible conditions, and the Foreign Office, by some horrible blunder, accepted his conditions and gave him the Treaty just as he asked for it—a thing which would have been inconceivable to the mind of Mahmud a month or two before. He could not help taking that Treaty. He did not want it; it was the last thing he wanted. He took the Treaty back to Egypt, and he lost his job as dictator. The Egyptians would not touch the Treaty. We have not got it yet, although the Treaty was far more than had ever been proposed before or asked for by the Egyptians themselves.

Many politicians prefer a good grievance which keeps them in power rather than the satisfaction of that grievance. It is human nature all over.

It makes it all the more essential that His Majesty's Government should now make up their minds. I admit that I, possibly alone in this House, hate the Round Table Conference. I dislike intensely the federal solution. I dislike the thought of India, my democratic India, being converted into an oligarchy of Indian Princes. It is exactly as if we combined this House of Commons with an overwhelmingly large number of rich men from the House of Lords, and then said that that was making the world safe for democracy. In the 'Indian governments, in the Central Government and certainly in the provincial governments, the landlord has special representation. A landlord can vote for everybody; he has two votes, so he votes for a landlord as well, so that they have an overwhelmingly powerful mass of rich, educated people representing India's inarticulate masses in the Delhi Assembly. It does not please me to think that this so-called step forward is to convert the Delhi Assembly into something far more reactionary than they have now and than we have ever had in this country.

I do not believe that it is a step forward in the least. I believe that the federal solution, as long as the Indian States are governed with complete irresponsibility, is really a very reactionary step, and I am quite certain that that view of mine is felt, whatever may be expressed, by Indians such as Srinivasa Sastri and Mahatma Gandhi. You cannot find enthusiasm in India for a step in that direction. That is not the vital question, however. The vital question is that all the suggestions made now are that elections to this so-called responsible body of the centre should be made indirectly. That is the Simon Commission's Report, and that is the whole idea. It is really remarkable that there was one thing on which the Round Table Conference was completely unanimous. It was completely unanimous, even including Mahatma Gandhi, on the fundamental principle that the Indian working man was not to have a vote. Fear is again here. They are even more afraid

of Bolsheviks in India than in this country—and that is “going some.”

The responsibility lies with the Government now, and no longer with the Round Table Conference. I would remind the Prime Minister that one of his late colleagues, perhaps one of the ablest of them, was sent on a Commission to settle the constitution of Ceylon in company with other Members of the House. They heard evidence and produced a report, and recommended a definite constitution for Ceylon. Every member of the Ceylon Legislature accepted that constitution as an advance, but said that they would not stand it because it did not give them home rule. It did not give them a complete responsible Government such as other Dominions had. They were very loud in that view, but when you go into it, you find that their real objection was that the Drummond-Shiels Commission recommended universal suffrage. Endless negotiations went on between the Colonial Office and the Ceylon Representative Assembly, and finally after enormous difficulties, and only by the skin of the teeth of the vote of the working man representative in that Chamber—Jayatilaka—they accepted a constitution which the Indian provinces might very well be glad to accept, coupled with the universal franchise which the late Government insisted upon being embodied in the constitution.

There you have a precedent, the British Government standing for a truer democracy than you will get from the rich Indians, the Indian Princes, and the various leaders of public opinion in India. Before we hand over responsibility to the centre and hand over provincial responsibility, I would beg His Majesty's Government to see that there is retained the power of the electors over the elected. I know all the difficulties in the way, such as the enormous constituencies, but indirect election has never been used in this country. It destroys the hold of the elector over his representative. It would be a tragedy if we took the step of starting election to legislatures by indirect election. By all means see that the local panchayats or local boards are elected, but do not make them the basis of election for the provincial councils or for the Legislative Assembly. Do see that the people who are going to be ruled have some chance of governing themselves. I

know perfectly well that the views of Mahatma Gandhi are the same as mine. [*Laughter.*] He will not say so, but I know that they are. His views about the rights of the peasants to have a vote, and his fears as to what will happen if only rich Indians get elected on these councils and assemblies, his expectation of what will happen if politics are no longer divided on nationalist and communal lines and come to be divided on economic lines—these are as certain as the general view that everything that Mahatma Gandhi is aiming at is that it shall be the responsibility of the Governor to the governed that shall effect that complete change of heart which has always been the main object of his politics and philosophy.

There is a man who, above everything else, is trying to break down caste and says that the worst caste is the division between white and coloured. He knows that that can only be broken down if the white man has to go to the coloured voter as his master. His view of democracy is not a wish to govern India, but to break down class distinctions between mankind and to create a real brotherhood. I think that the Prime Minister knows Gandhi better now than he did. It is very difficult indeed for anyone who is at the head of a political movement to expose his real soul round the Conference Table. What really matters is that the new Provincial Governments—I wish there could be 50 provinces instead of 10—should consist of people responsible to an electorate, and therefore really capable of dealing with those multitudinous evils which every one of us knows exist in India. When you read Miss Mayo's book, when you see the poverty, the conditions in the mines and the factories, and the slums in India, it is not enough to say, “We will not be responsible any longer; we will leave it to the Indians elected in their own assemblies on a franchise such as we had in this country before the great Reform Bill.” If we say that, we shall be neglecting our duty and depriving the proletariat of India of the chance of rectifying those ills which civilisation has created for them.

The Government have really a great chance in India now, and I beg them not to take this opportunity of the collapse of the Round Table Conference, and the

[Colonel Wedgwood.]  
collapse, as I hope, of the idea of a federated India, to let the matter slide. They must lay down the law. They must, regardless of the inconvenience it may cause to India or England, do a little thinking for themselves and, as we have done in the past, rely upon this House to produce the Constitution for the countries over which we have at some time or other exercised our sway. We have managed to do the right thing in Canada and in Australia; we managed at last to do the right thing in Ireland. None of those countries has any grievance against us now or any real right to a grievance.

We have achieved that which no Empire in the past has ever achieved. We have found out how to perpetuate our influence in the world, to perpetuate even our power—our power for good—and at the same time to combine Empire with freedom. Rome fell, Alexander fell, Philip of Spain fell, Louis XIV, Napoleon and all the Empires in the past crumbled away through concentration on power at the centre. We seem to have learned the art of budding off free peoples, and it will not do to think that we have done our job when we have budded off the white communities. We have a chance of budding off the coloured races where the birth-rate is not going down, where education, though slow, is spreading, where western civilisation is working out through all its grievous present to something freer and better. It is our business to help that forward. We can do it better than others. We have tried to get Indian co-operation. We shall not get Indian co-operation, but we ourselves must devise a scheme and, conscious of our own rectitude, take whatever risks may be.

**Mr. CHOTZNER:** This is the first occasion on which I have had the honour of addressing this House. I have come to it late in life, but I trust hon. Members will grant me the same kindly indulgence which they always extend to younger men. Most of my working life has been spent in India. I have been a Member of the Indian Civil Service for more than 30 years, and during the last years of my service I had the honour of occupying a seat on the bench of the High Court of Calcutta. I may therefore, perhaps, though with all diffidence, claim

to have some slight knowledge of India, and particularly of Bengal. I have listened to the Debate to-day with the greatest possible interest. No doubt all that has been said will be echoed in the whispering galleries of the East, and I feel that there will be some disappointment in India over the conclusion at which His Majesty's Government have arrived that the time is not ripe at present for any further grant of what was recommended in the Simon Report, namely, provincial autonomy. It is said in the White Paper that the Round Table Conference did not desire provincial autonomy, and I daresay that may be so, but I think there are many people in India who will have hoped for some definite advance on the part of His Majesty's Government towards that goal which has always been the aim and object of this country.

Certain safeguards have been laid down as being essential. There is one very important minority, however, for which no safeguards have been provided in the White Paper, and that minority is composed partly of the Indian Civil Service, without whose aid and co-operation in future no advance, in my judgment, is possible, and partly of that very gallant body of men the Indian Police, on whose loyalty and fidelity the future administration of India must rely. The Indian Civil Service numbers at the present time not more than 1,000 men, partly Indian and partly Englishmen. Those who know what has happened in India will all agree that, had it not been for the loyal and devoted service which the Indian Civil Service gave during the period when diarchy was in force, whatever success has been attained under diarchy could never have been attained. They have put aside their own feelings, which in very many cases, as I happen to know, were not in favour of what was going on, and have loyally carried out the instructions which were conveyed to them by the higher authorities. I hope that when any future constitution is prepared due safeguards will be inserted for the benefit of these loyal members of the Service, who have carried on their work under circumstances of grave difficulty, and, in later days, I am sorry to say, grave danger.

If I may venture on a personal reference, from the days when I was a young



officer, I remember that the peasant always addressed the district officer as "Incarnation of justice" and "Protector of the Poor." There was no irony in those phrases. The ryot of to-day still believes that the white district officer is his one protection from oppression and injustice, and I should feel sad to see the day come when that high standard of justice, which has been the distinguishing mark of the British official in India, should be allowed to fall away. Let me add one word about the Indian police. In India they are frequently maligned, especially in the law courts. If I may again venture to sound a personal note, I have had a great deal of experience of criminal trials, both as a session judge and also as a member of the special tribunals which are sometimes appointed for the trial of anarchist crime. Whatever may be the truth of the case made by the prosecution, the defence often is that the whole case is a concoction by the police. That argument sometimes prevails with juries, and makes it difficult for a conviction to be had even in cases where there should be a conviction. It is not the case, however, where there is a special tribunal.

The important thing to which I would like to call attention is that the police in India are not only detective officers in the sense that they have to investigate offences, but they are preventive officers, and they also have to act as officers of the Crown in disturbances. It is a difficult and arduous task, sometimes, for an Indian policeman to stand up against a hostile crowd, and the way the Indian police have behaved during all the troubles that have occurred has merited the praise of every thinking person. There is no doubt about their courage and their loyalty, and if I were asked why it is they have been loyal, brave and enduring in the face of contumely, danger and sometimes personal boycott which in India means a great deal more than one can conceive in this country, I should say it is because they know, or have known, that at headquarters they had Englishmen upon whom they could depend. They know perfectly well that whatever happens they will get the support of their superiors if they do their duty. Once that confidence has gone, then I am afraid the trust that we and all people in the East have in the loyalty of the

Indian police will also go. That is a reason why we should be so careful to see that nothing happens to interfere with the future well being of the Indian police. I believe that on them depends to a very large extent the future of India, because if we again have anarchy raising its ugly head there, as it may do at any moment, it is upon the Indian police, and upon them alone, that the safety of the whole countryside will depend. In conclusion, I would say that in my opinion the one thing we have to aim at in future is that while we see that India advances by constitutional methods, the English administration, whatever part of it is still considered necessary, should be in no way weakened.

**Sir REGINALD BANKS:** It is with great pleasure that I have the opportunity of being the first to congratulate the hon. Member for the Upton Division (Mr. Chotzner) upon a maiden speech informed with knowledge and with common sense, and adorned by an admirable eloquence in the manner of its delivery, such as is not too often the characteristic of a first effort. In rising to address a few observations to the House I have two objects in view. My first is to appeal to the House to give its approbation to the policy which has been placed by the Prime Minister before the Round Table Conference. I suppose that each Member of the House has his own view of his own duty towards his constituency, dependent, of course, on what he may have promised or pledged himself to in the recent election. I gave to my constituents one pledge and one alone, which was to support the National Government, and I conceive that it is my duty to carry out that governing and overruling promise unless I should find myself differing from them upon a question of principle so deep and so fundamental that it would compel me to offer my resignation to my constituents. I am glad to think that nothing in the White Paper before us this afternoon places me in so awkward a dilemma. My second object, however, is this. There are some passages in the text of the White Paper which, in my opinion, are fraught with a certain amount of danger unless their meaning be more closely elucidated as a result of this Debate. I desire modestly to communicate some of the dangers I fore-

[Sir R. Banks.]  
see, and to offer some criticisms which I hope will not be thought captious or unjustifiable.

First of all, I accept as a sound constitutional proposition the observations which were made by the Prime Minister about Cabinet responsibility, but I associate myself with the hon. Member for Finchley (Mr. Cadogan) in saying that I think it is extremely necessary for us to remember that Parliament is free and Parliament is sovereign. We as the House of Commons are constitutionally bound only by the acts and declaration of preceding Parliaments, not by any statements or declarations which may at any time have been made by Viceroy, Ministers and Conferences or Committees in any centre. The word "safeguards" is constantly employed, and it must be borne in mind that Parliament, in passing the Act of 1919, safeguarded itself by prescribing very carefully the procedure that was to be followed in the future consideration of this great problem. That procedure has already been outlined by the Prime Minister this afternoon. At the end of 10 years a Statutory Commission was to be set up—not a Royal Commission, not one of those ordinary commissions which are appointed mainly in order that a subject may receive decent interment, but a statutory commission, differing in that respect from those other bodies. This Commission has produced that amazing document, the Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, probably one of the most important and able State papers ever printed, which has been received with a degree of consideration, interest and approval by the public such as I do not think any State paper hitherto has enjoyed.

That is the document which Parliament in 1918, by anticipation, prescribed as the basis of our judgment in the years to come. If I were to take

7.0 p.m. a pedantic point of view, I might go so far as to argue that that is the only report and the only document which we are strictly entitled to consider in this House at all. I do not want to be pedantic; it will not do to be pedantic. The course of events contemplated by the Act of 1919 has completely changed. The Round Table Con-

ference has held its sessions, and that is a fact of which we in this House—to use a legal phrase—are bound to take judicial notice. We must also take notice of the fact that this Conference is in no sense a constituent assembly, that it possesses no statutory powers, and that its conclusions can in no sense bind the Imperial Parliament. As a corporate body it has no *locus standi* and no more corporate authority as a body than any one of the delegates to it taken individually. Without being discourteous enough to mention any names, there are a good many delegates to the Round Table Conference who claim a representative position which they would find it extremely hard to justify in fact. I hope it will be recognised and recorded here to-day that the committees which the Prime Minister proposes to set up in India, which it is quite right he should set up, as committees are probably the best machinery he could adopt for the further consideration of this problem, will not be statutory committees, and that the utmost they can do is to offer evidence and make recommendations for the consideration of the Imperial Parliament.

When all is said and done we, the Imperial Parliament, have the awful responsibility of framing a constitution. If we do amiss, we shall have the blame for any calamities that may result. It follows, therefore, that if this be our responsibility, our freedom and our sovereign power shall not be limited, fettered, or circumscribed in any way whatsoever. In one most important particular that freedom is specially safeguarded and mentioned in the Statute with which at present we have to deal, the Act of 1919. Let me remind the House of the words in the Preamble of that Act:

"Whereas the time and manner of each advance can be determined only by Parliament. . . . and whereas the action of Parliament in such matters must be guided by the co-operation received from those on whom new opportunities of service will be conferred, and by the extent to which it is found that confidence can be reposed in their sense of responsibility."

That Act is not repealed. It describes our constitutional position at this moment. We may ask ourselves whether the record up to now of some of these gentle-

men, who are supposed to represent Indian opinion, has in the past been such that confidence can be opposed in their sense of responsibility. Take those two points, the time and manner of advance, bearing in mind the fact that we have got to decide. I am inclined to think that the general language of the statement before us, its general tenour, conveys an impression that all you have got to do is to get some unanimous conclusion of a conference or some unanimous recommendation by these new committees and, once you have got that, complete and responsible self-government for India is a matter of a few short months. If that is not the meaning it would be more prudent for the Prime Minister or one of his colleagues to say quite clearly that, while that freedom and responsibility are our ultimate goal—we take that promise in all seriousness—there are at present fundamental differences between India and Canada, for example, which it is not at all likely will be removed in the course of a few short months, or even a few short years.

There is the question of finance, there is the communal question still waiting a solution. I was going to say that the communal question is peculiar to India. It may be said that there was a communal question in Ireland. Perhaps there was. You had between Protestant and Roman Catholic in Ireland divergencies of tradition, religion and outlook which in some way may be compared to the difference between Mussulmans and Hindus in India. But you would have to multiply that question a thousand-fold in order to get the divergencies and difficulties with which you are confronted in India. Comparatively easy as it was in Ireland, it never was solved, and to this day you have to have two parliaments in Ireland. Then there is the minorities question. I am adopting a phrase which I heard from the right hon. Gentleman whose name we associate always with this remarkable report. He said that one of the essential differences between our own politics in this country and any political system that the ingenuity of man can devise for India is this. No doubt it will be a great consolation to the Leader of the Opposition to hear him say so. Here in this country the minority of to-day is the majority of to-morrow. It is not crystallised and stereotyped for ever. In India

that is not the case. The Mussulman minority, the minority of the depressed classes, and the others are permanent fixed minorities, which under any constitution you can devise are never going to get an opportunity of being returned as a ruling majority in any Indian assembly. Therefore, you have here in this country an organised stable party system, with the opportunity always of the under-dog of to-day being the top-dog of to-morrow, which enables us here to have an executive responsible to an assembly democratically elected. I do not propose to be tedious by going over the arguments on that point, which the hon. Member for Finchley (Mr. Cadogan) stated with such conspicuous clearness and lucidity this afternoon.

I am bound to say that all of us, who have been following the debates and reports of the Round Table Conference, are tired of the amount of time, the amount of discussion concentrated on this question of responsibility at the centre. They all seem to be obsessed with the importance of the centre. That is important enough, but it seems to me that what they have been doing is to argue about the decoration and the design of the intricate mosaic of the dome to be erected over their heads while shrinking from dealing with the more important matters of the foundations and the drains. That is not the way in which the Statutory Commission dealt with this matter. The Statutory Commission put first things first and did so rightly, because I do not believe that in any federal country in the world one can find that a house similar to this has been built in such a topsy-turvy way.

I propose to deal with only one of those questions about which the problem of safeguards arises, a very crucial problem indeed, and probably the most difficult obstacle in the pathway of complete responsibility for India. I refer to the problem of defence. It seems to me that people in India are divided into two groups. There are those who know nothing at all about India and those who know rather too much. The first group are apt to be idealists and think that, because a thing works in Wigan, it is bound to work in Peshawar; the other group tend to be reactionaries and think that, because a thing works in Wigan, it is bound to fail in Peshawar. I belong

[Sir R. Banks.]  
to neither of these two groups. Of course, I say that only to give importance to my position as one who does not know much about India, but can at least back my opinions with some personal experience. I happen to be one of the few amateurs whose War service was performed entirely in India, and who had the interesting experience of commanding Indian troops on the North-West Frontier in a very exciting time, so that, although I am not saturated with the traditions and prejudices of the Service, I know something of the difficulties.

Let us contrast the position with regard to India and with regard to, say, Canada. These are facts that will remain, not for a month or two or for a year or two, but probably for a lifetime or two. Between the United States and Canada there is a frontier line of something like 3,000 miles which does not require a single sentry, a single gun or a single fort, for the simple reason that an attack upon the Dominion of Canada by the United States of America is absolutely inconceivable. It is a very different thing when you come to deal with the North-West Frontier of India. That Frontier is a constant menace; it always has been throughout history, and it is so to-day. If you look at the history of the last 50 or 60 years, you find that on the average we had a war on the Frontier about once a year, although some of those are little wars and fade into insignificance beside the world War. My own battalion, the 2/5th Gurkha Rifles, who had the good luck to come practically unscathed through the fighting at Baghdad, on one pleasant afternoon when ex-King Amanullah let loose his men had six British officers and 150 men of that battalion practically wiped out. That is the sort of thing which is constantly happening on the Indian frontier unknown and uncared for by Indian politicians or British politicians. If you are going to take care of that problem, you must have a first-rate defence force to do it.

Then we come to the consideration of the British Forces in India. The British Forces in India are there for two reasons: first of all, to maintain internal safety and law and order in India. It is no use blinking the fact. Everybody who has served in India—and among my other

experiences I was a private serving in the sinister city of Cawnpore—knows the anxiety which prevails at the seasons of religious festivals lest there should be a shindy between Mussulmans and Hindus. When such a shindy occurs as in Cawnpore—and it seems to me that in that recent case the Hindus were on the aggressive, and the Mussulmans the sufferers—it is really asking more than we can expect to ask of Hindu troops that they should fire on their own co-religionists at a moment when fanatical feeling runs so high. The only person that can be trusted, the only person whom the inhabitants trust and thank God for, is Private Thomas Atkins and that will continue to be the case.

There is another reason why the British Army such as it is—and it is lamentably small—must remain in India. I do not believe that there is an Indian officer, however proud of his own battalion—and I am proud enough of my association with the Gurkha Rifles—who will not admit that it is a wise practice, which we adopted during the War, in every Indian brigade of having three Indian battalions stiffened by one English battalion. No one can say that they were superior to regular British troops. If they were, we should not be in the position of drawing those battalions from our erstwhile foes. If you put aside the question of the British Army, and come to the Indian Army, even if it were possible to withdraw the British Army from India, which it is not, we should have to maintain our responsibility at the centre. We must have a first-rate fighting force to deal with frontier problems, and we have to ask the question: where are you to get that fighting force? There is not any particular county or class in India from which alone an adequate number of good soldiers can be drawn. A man may be a Quaker and have religious convictions against fighting, but once you overcome those convictions, those men are just as gallant fighting men as any other class. That is not so in India, although there are certain races and certain places where you can look for good recruits. The recruiting figures speak for themselves. Take the Punjab, with a comparatively small population of about 5,000,000. The Punjab itself provides about 54 per cent. of the Indian

Army, and 62 per cent. if you include the Ghurkas who are the subjects of an independent sovereign State and who come voluntarily into our Army. Bengal with a population of 47,000,000 does not contribute a solitary combatant to the Indian Army. It is sometimes said that it is not good policy to recruit soldiers from Bengal. I remember very well about the year 1916 or 1917 how a Bengal double company of 250, enlisted from a population of 47,000,000, were inaugurated with a great flourish of trumpets, and quite a number of other ceremonies to mark their gallantry in coming forward, but their performances in the field of battle did nothing to shatter our preference for the Sikh and the Punjabi.

Another difficulty in India is that the class of Indians who fight best are by no means the best at passing examinations. The best soldiers will not face the examination, and this is one of the difficulties which it is necessary for every soldier who wishes to become an officer to surmount. Even if India was without British troops, and the Indian people were of opinion that they could find adequate men for their own defence in their own country, they would still have to look to a very few Indian races for their soldiers. Imagine the state of things in this country if we found ourselves entirely incapable, physically and spiritually, of finding enough men who would make good soldiers, and if we had to rely for our defence upon a few isolated districts as is the case in India. Suppose, for instance, that we could only get satisfactory recruits from Scotland. No doubt, in those circumstances, the Scottish people would feel that they were in a position to become dictators in this country, as people in that position are entitled to think if they possess the only fighting men. The fighting races in India are the Sikhs, Rajputs, and the Maharrattas, and these fighting men do not feel in any sense that they are fighting in defence of India, and they fight simply because they are fighting men. These men are proud to serve under their enemies, and they appreciate the fact that the best men to lead them in the field are British officers. That is one of the problems which will have to be faced before we can give complete responsible self-government.

I would like to say a few words about safeguards. I do not quite know what is meant by safeguards during the transitional period. The value of a safeguard depends entirely on how long the transitional period is going to last. We have had much experience of safeguards in the past. We have had statutory safeguards before, but when the parties concerned change their views and get more power those safeguards are not worth the ink with which they were written. It is well known that the Indian Mahout ties a piece of grass string to the leg of his charge and says to him that he is tied up and cannot move. So long as the elephant believes that story the grass string constitutes an adequate safeguard, but once the elephant ceases to believe that story he snaps the string. It is because these safeguards may snap that we feel we must reserve to ourselves some power to provide for adequate protection in any contract or treaty. When you reserve certain power, if you are not ready to enforce those powers to the extent of shedding blood, it is no use thinking that you are going to enforce them by shedding ink. I hope hon. Members do not think that I am using language of exaggeration, but I put these views forward in the hope that some of them may receive the consideration of the Prime Minister, whose sincere, consistent, and arduous work for the cause deserves the deepest gratitude from every quarter of the House. I put these views forward, confident that they reflect opinions which are widely shared by many of the Prime Minister's most faithful and loyal supporters.

**Mr. KIRKPATRICK:** On this occasion, I have to make the usual apologies, and ask the indulgence of the House in addressing hon. Members for the first time. I think the remarks which were made by the hon. and learned Member for Swindon (Sir R. Banks) about the Bengali are calculated to do considerable harm. Let me say here and now that when I was younger I started my career in India, and I then had a feeling of prejudice against certain classes, and particularly the Bengali, but after going up country in other parts of India I met Indians and Englishmen who assisted in breaking my prejudice against the Bengali. The result has been that in Bengal I claim to have some of my best friends.

**Sir R. BANKS:** I entirely agree with what the hon. Member has just said. I did not wish to say anything prejudicial about the admirable people of Bengal, but what I said was that I did not think Bengal was a place where you could hope to recruit any great number of effective soldiers.

**Mr. KIRKPATRICK:** I quite agree with what the hon. and learned Member has just said, and I am not pro-Hindu or pro-Bengali. I am sure that we are sympathetic towards all classes in India. I feel sure that the whole of the work of the Round Table Conference, and the efforts of the Government to do its best for India, will have the effect of keeping India within the Empire, not as a completely subject race, but, as far as possible, under conditions associated with our best traditions. I regret to see the Labour benches so empty at the present moment. I do not know whether that is due to their lack of interest in Indian questions, or an indication of the ignorance of the Labour party generally as to the conditions in India. I know what the policy of the Labour party was in Lancashire during the recent election when they pointed out that you could not force an unwilling people to buy Lancashire goods. What the Labour party said on that subject in their propaganda is contrary to the truth of the case. One member of the Labour party, the hon. Member for Bridgeton (Mr. Maxton), predicted that within two years time we should have left India altogether. I do not think remarks of that kind will have the effect which the hon. Member for Bridgeton has in mind, because he must have known that his remark would have the effect of drawing the attention of the people to the very remote possibility of our ever leaving India. The people of India know, as certainly as they could know anything, that we have no intention of ever leaving India. If the people of India knew for

7.30 p.m. certain that we were going to leave India, I, having some knowledge of Indian mentality and some Indian friendships, believe that there would be far fewer claims that we should leave India, and far less agitation in that direction. The more shouting that there is to us to leave India, the more it means that the people know that we are

not going to leave. The great Montagu-Chelmsford reforms were brought in on the backs of those loyal civil servants of India to whom reference has already been made, Indians as well as British. I claim that our native Indian civil servants are in every way as loyal as our British Indian civil servants. Every Indian official that I have met, from the highest to the lowest, has as one of his outstanding qualities extraordinary loyalty, whether he be a Judge of the High Court, a deputy-commissioner, or one of those soldiers whom my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Swindon seems to know so well. Loyalty is in the bones of all Indians. Every Indian wishes to be loyal. He is true to his salt. It is born in him, and we want to do everything we can to maintain that loyalty.

The only way to obtain the real, friendly loyalty of India is by friendship and sympathy. The one thing that we must maintain is that which is indicated by the word "status." If we lose our status, we lose India. We hold India by the maintenance of status, which includes our reputation for fair dealing and honesty of purpose. However much we may criticise the White Paper which has been laid on the Table of the House—and I, for one, could criticise it, though I will not do so now—it indicates on the face of it honesty of purpose and a desire to meet the situation. I would that the question of law and order were included, as I had hoped might be possible, in the safeguards. I should like to see the British merchants of India face the position. A defeatist policy, however, has followed the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms; there has been vacillation and weakness on the part of Governments ever since, stultifying the position all round. British officials have been affected, and British business men in Bombay and Calcutta have been affected, by this extraordinary policy of defeatism. There has almost been a "cut-and-run" policy among the business men of Bombay. The business men of Calcutta have, perhaps, reached what they think is their last ditch; let us hope that the side of the fence on which they may fall will be the right side.

I am prepared to accept the whole position as laid down in the Round Table Memorandum. There are difficulties and

trouble ahead, but I have confidence that the National Government, whom we are supporting, will see the whole matter through. The two things that we want in India are "guts" and brains. We can do without the brains, but we must have "guts." We must have sympathy and "guts." "Guts" are appreciated by all classes in India. The Englishman is the only individual, the English community is the only community, that can hold the scales of justice between the various communities in India. The Englishman, whatever his community or class or religion may be, must remain there. I am in favour of as complete an Indianisation of the Services as is possible compatibly with British ideas, but we must always have a definite leavening of British officials. I believe that the opportunities in India for Englishmen of all classes, both in business and in the Services, are as great to-day, and offer as good chances of reward, as has ever been the case before. I thank the House for the indulgence with which they have listened to my remarks.

**Mr. EDWARD WILLIAMS:** I am sure that I am expressing the view of the Whole House in congratulating the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Kirkpatrick) on his maiden speech. I sincerely trust that we may have the benefit of his extensive knowledge in our Debates in the future. In rising to address the House this evening, I feel that a responsibility rests upon me which I shall endeavour to observe. I am the successor of the late right hon. Vernon Hartshorn, who was called upon, as most Members of the House will recollect, to serve with certain other hon. and right hon. Members on the Indian Statutory Commission, and I shall endeavour to place before the House the point of view which I think he would desire to express if he were here this evening, namely, the point of view of the workers and of their relationship to the new Constitution that will have to be propounded. Previous speakers have dealt with the problem of defence and with other matters that will have to be considered judicially, but my purpose to-night is to deal with the workers' aspect, and particularly the trade union aspect, in India, and I desire to put a few specific questions to the Prime Minister or the

Foreign Secretary as to what precisely is likely to happen in this regard.

There are four specific points with which I desire to deal. It is known that the leaders of the Labour movement in India have placed their case before the Round Table Conference, not only on this occasion but last year. Their first claim was for adult suffrage. They also placed before the Conference a declaration of rights, and, thirdly, they claimed that there should be a reservation of certain seats, and that these should be allocated upon a population basis. Fourthly, they claimed that, whatever legislation might go through the Federal Legislature with regard to Labour conditions, those conditions should apply in precisely the same manner to Federal, Provincial and State legislation.

Those four points have been placed by the trade union leaders of India before the Round Table Conference. In dealing with the first point, I think it is essential that the House should realise that the franchise is now based upon a very high property qualification. I am informed that no one in India has a vote to-day unless he has an income of about 3,000 rupees, or about £150 a year, and that there are not more than from 7,000,000 to 8,000,000 people who to-day have a vote. We are anxious, on behalf of the enormous number of workers in India—roughly about 6,000,000, apart from the Untouchables—to know whether some provision of some kind will be made so that, if adult suffrage be impossible, at any rate the income qualification may be scaled down so low as to enable substantial masses of the people to obtain the vote. It was recommended about two years ago, by a sub-committee dealing with the franchise, that not less than 10 per cent. or more than 25 per cent. of the population should have the franchise if it were to be accorded on a population basis. I should like to have a specific reply as to the method that will be adopted in permitting the mass of the working people to obtain the vote.

**The SECRETARY for MINES (Mr. Isaac Foot):** In order to make that question clear, may I ask whether the committee to which the hon. Member has referred was that which was appointed in association with the Round Table Conference 12 months ago? He spoke of a committee two years ago.

**Mr. WILLIAMS:** I am sorry; it was 12 months ago. It will be appreciated, from what I have said, that the vote to-day is almost entirely in the hands of capitalists, landlords, and people of that kind, and in this connection the House should appreciate that not only the classes to which I have referred—people who have an income of £150 a year—have the franchise, but, in addition, special constituencies are allocated to the wealthy. In addition to their having a vote, special constituencies are allocated to capitalists and landlords, while no special constituencies are allocated to the workers. It is true that there are a few workers who are nominated Members of the Legislative Assembly, but they are not representative of special constituencies such as are allocated to the other classes to which I have referred. The Whitley Commission dealt with this matter in its recently issued Report on Indian Labour Conditions. They said:

“The trade unions are weak and young, and the Government of India, being the largest single employer of labour, has always tried to suppress the interests and rights of the workers.”

The Commission, therefore, have recommended a more liberal policy in the direction of the development of trade unionism and of its representation. With regard to what the Prime Minister said this afternoon in dealing with the communal problem, we on these benches hope that there will be no such thing as a kind of separatist vote—that is to say, that the Hindus, Moslems and Christians will not, as minorities, be given a separate right of franchise. We hope that in this transitional stage all these distinctions of caste or race or religion will as far as possible be obliterated, and that economic and social factors will be regarded in preference to any others. While the trade union movement is not substantially strong, it is composed of all these religious and racial sections, and it is still an economic unit, and, as an economic unit, we are anxious that it should have representation. The Prime Minister has announced in the White Paper that there will be a Franchise and Constituencies Committee sent to India early in the new year. We are hoping that upon that committee specific representation will be given to the workers in order that the features which concern the workers' interests, in particular, will be stressed

and that their claims and their point of view in relation to industry, to the franchise, and to whatever may be pertinent to them, can be brought forward.

It is well to realise the terrible conditions that obtain in India. There are people working for 14s. a month, and there are women working in certain trades for as low a wage as 10s. 6d. a month. Medical evidence was given before the Agricultural Commission a few years ago that five or six million people are dying every year from preventable diseases. These problems should be tackled. Further, it is hoped that, in the setting up of a central Legislature, any enactments that may be passed by it will apply to the provincial and the State Legislatures likewise. I am sure the Under-Secretary will appreciate how difficult it would be if an Act of Parliament regulating hours in coal mines were passed through a provincial Legislature and did not likewise apply to State Legislatures. The employers in the States would at once complain of unfair competition. It is, therefore, essential that any enactments dealing with labour conditions which are passed in the central Legislature should apply to all provincial and State Legislatures as well. That is the only way to prevent inter-necine competition as between the States and the provinces.

**Mr. FOOT:** Is the hon. Member's suggestion that legislation adopted by the central Legislature shall also be enforced on the Indian States, where frequently they have no Legislatures at all?

**Mr. WILLIAMS:** Yes, that there should be an endeavour to see that any legislation that goes through the Central Legislature should apply in the States as well as in the provinces. The position is the same as it would be here if we had Home Rule in Wales and in Scotland and certain Acts were placed upon the Statute Book by this Parliament which would apply perhaps to Scotland but not to Wales. The Scottish employers would immediately complain of the unfair competition of the Welsh coalowners. So that we hope that legislation will apply throughout the whole of India, both to States under the control of Princes and to the provinces. That is the only way in which it is possible to give to the Indian workers something like reasonable



conditions of employment. We hope that the recently published report of the Whitley Commission will be borne in mind by the people whom the Government are sending to India to continue the work of the Round Table Conference. We appreciate that the Round Table Conference, as such, is postponed and that whatever is done will be reported back to them. May I read a paragraph from the Report of the Whitley Committee to indicate the conditions that obtain:

"Due to insufficient wages, the workers are heavily involved in debts. In order to keep the body and soul together, the workers have to borrow money at very high interest, which exceeds sometimes 75 per cent. Very often they have to pay off their whole year's earnings to the money lender. The unhappy dumb millions are thus kept as bondslaves to capital. Take another human tragedy. There are factories in India, which are known as unregulated factories, in which there is at present no inspection or control under any Factory Act. Here, you may find small children, as young as five and six years' old working for long hours in cramped positions and often under most unsanitary conditions. There are many factories that have no intervals for meals, rest days and working from 10 to 12 hours daily. Take, for instance, in indigenous cigarette factories where the young boys are paid 2d. a day of 10 to 12 hours. In carpet factories young boys are handed over to the proprietors by their parents or guardians in return for a loan. They must work for any hours required by the master. In the coal and the salt mining areas women may be seen carrying heavy loads on their heads in the scorching sun. Bribery for employment plays a great part in the factories. In India the illiterate workers are easy victims in the hands of these jobbers."

That is published in the Whitley Commission's Report, which is obtainable in the Vote Office. There are the deplorable conditions of these teeming millions. There are 50,000,000 of the most degraded of humanity—the Untouchables. It is really a standing scandal to civilisation. We cannot claim that we are a civilised race unless we are prepared to do much to alter the deplorable conditions that apply to these masses of people. There are roughly 60,000,000 attached to industry. We hope the Government will bear them in mind and the necessity for giving them representation, so as to enable the Committee to devise ways and means to safeguard their health and welfare.

These are a few of the views that we are placing before the right hon. Gentleman, and we hope we shall know from him precisely what he proposes to do, firstly, as to what representation will be given upon the Committees which have now to be formed, and which will meet in India to the workers, so that they may bring forward their claims and that the immense crime of inhumanity and wrong can be dealt with immediately. We do not for a moment desire to oppose what the Government are placing before us. We hope they will continue this good work. We trust that it is just the first step and that ultimately it will culminate in giving to India what India desires for itself, and that is self-government. We cannot hope to control India from here. We hope, meanwhile, that we shall elicit all the co-operation. The co-operation must come not only from the Princes and other eminent people at the top, but from the workers' leaders at the bottom. We have to visualise the restiveness and reckless-mindedness that is beginning to develop. Unless one appreciates that these things are but the repercussions that follow oppression, certainly in the very near future action will be taken by extreme elements which may lead ultimately to a horrible catastrophe. We are desirous of avoiding these things, and if proper representation can be given to the people who are trying to harness all those forces, and if we can avoid any breakdown in machinery by obtaining their co-operation, it will be a good thing for Britain, and certainly a good thing for the Indian people.

**Mr. HOLFORD KNIGHT:** I keep in mind the admonition which you made to the House on your re-election to the Chair, Mr. Speaker, that speeches in this assembly should be curtailed as much as possible, and I rise for a few minutes to make some observations upon a matter to which for some years past I have given considerable attention. I also bear in mind the observation which was made, I think, by the Prime Minister himself, if I remember rightly, that the true audience of this Debate is not in this assembly; it is in the great Indian land in which there are millions of men and women drawn from all classes, all castes and all creeds looking to this House in the hope that at last it has under its consideration the enormous problem of

[Mr. Knight.]

India: We have reached this position after a considerable body of service. It is a service as distinguished and as devoted as any which has been given to any transaction with which this Parliament has been concerned. Observations have been made here to-day which might read elsewhere as setting up contested claims in regard to the inquiry which has taken place with reference to the Indian business. I listened to my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Swindon (Sir M. Banks), whose return to this House is a matter for general congratulation, with very great interest. Some of his observations might have been more happily expressed. In particular, I think that his references to the authority of the Round Table Conference were not as happily stated as they might have been.

I would remind the House of another large body of work which was conducted in our name in regard to India to which on this occasion reference should be made. None of us would desire to overlook the considerable service which was done for us, the whole country and the whole Empire by the work of the Simon Commission. I deplore the claim, apparently started some two or three years ago, in some quarters, that we were not paying the attention to the Simon Commission which it undoubtedly deserves. I hope that this discussion will end any such feeling with regard to the Simon Commission. That remarkable inquiry was conducted with the greatest ability. It resulted in the accumulation and presentation of data invaluable in the deliberations that have been presented before us, and no one in this House would desire to mitigate in any way the rightful claims of that Commission to the praise of this assembly.

With regard to the Round Table Conference, I hope that no expression in this House will be used which will diminish in any way the authority which attaches to the proceedings of that great assembly. I am certain that the expressions used by my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Swindon, who, I am glad to see has resumed his seat, with regard to the Round Table Conference were not intended to carry any disrespect to that assembly, or attach to its deliberations any want of authority. Technically, it

is true that that assembly was not set up by this House as was the Simon Commission, but even in this discussion cannot we leave technicalities aside? I plead with the House not to be diverted in this matter. Let us face such facts as are before us frankly. The first fact with regard to the Round Table Conference is that it was the most distinguished assembly drawn from all classes in India, from the highest to the lowest, which has ever served this House by so devotedly carrying through its deliberations at great personal inconvenience and with the greatest possible advantage.

What is the claim which this discussion is intended to elucidate? It is a claim which has progressed during the last 10 years, indeed since the termination of the War, with increasing authority. It is a claim that relationship between India and this country should be reviewed and readjusted on a basis similar to that of the other Dominions. That claim has received unexpected support. I confess that I was surprised and delighted to see the support given to that claim by their Highnesses the representative Princes of India. When I first heard the news that they were prepared to join in a scheme for an all-India Federation, I confess that I did not at once credit its truth, but at the proceedings of the Round Table Conference the representatives of the Princes wholeheartedly joined in the demand, and I observe that one of their Highnesses at one of the concluding sessions of the Round Table Conference this week reaffirmed the view of the Princes, namely, that the claim for equal status was pressed by all classes of the community. It is a matter which requires technical definition. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) has an Amendment upon the Paper in which, I hope, he will not persist after the invitation of the Prime Minister this afternoon, and which raises technical points connected with Dominion status. It is admitted—the Prime Minister himself stressed the point—that the demand of India at this moment is for complete Dominion status. Let us not quarrel about terms. It is admitted that the connection between ourselves and India must be reviewed, and it is admitted that there must be a transition period. It is

also admitted that certain safeguards must be contemplated and provision made for working out safeguards. The Government are proposing to set up a series of committees.

To-day we are asked to support a Motion approving of the policy which His Majesty's Government are presenting to this House at the conclusion of the work of the Round Table Conference. It is a matter of great satisfaction that that policy is agreed to by representatives and leaders of parties in the discussion. The National Government, comprised as they are of leaders of all the great parties, are able to-day to present to this House a policy which was formerly presented by their predecessors. It is a great gain that by a re-discussion of these matters, leaders of the Conservative and Liberal parties have come into the general scheme which is now being presented to the House by the Government, although I am bound to say—I think I detect a smile—there never was any doubt as far as the Liberal Ministers or the representatives of the Liberal party were concerned that they were in agreement with the policy. After considering all the old troubles, and that it is on record that respected Conservative leaders did not altogether see eye to eye with the policy put forward by the previous Government, it is a matter for great satisfaction to-day that the Motion approving the policy is presented in the names of all the political parties. That is a great fact in the history of the connection between ourselves and India.

I say with the deepest possible respect that I do not pretend to speak as one who is especially familiar with Indian business, but I have been concerned with India for a good many years. I have enjoyed the friendship of Indian leaders of all kinds, and for many years I have watched the progress of this demand with the greatest interest. I am most anxious not to say any word which, in India, may cause affront or disquiet, either in regard to the Indians themselves or to the great services they have rendered in conducting their affairs in that country. But I am convinced that if this House can rise to an opportunity of this kind, recognising the differences of points of view and showing a readiness to consider those differences, and also exhibiting that temper of sympathy which is looked for

in India by all classes, and approves this Motion, it will do a piece of work which will redound eternally to its credit.

**Mr. M. W. BEAUMONT:** I rise on this occasion to voice a point of view which I do not think has yet found utterance in these Debates, namely, that of those who dislike intensely and distrust the whole of the tendency of recent policy in India, but who yet feel that there is no alternative but to support the Motion moved by the Prime Minister. I am one of those who, perfectly frankly, have distrusted the whole of the advance towards self-government in India. I distrust, and disbelieve in, democracy in this country, and *a fortiori* I distrust it, and disbelieve in it in India. But there is one thing which, I think, could be worse for India than the application of democracy, and that would be if this country were to break its word. I deplore the Declaration of 1917, but it was made, it was endorsed, and it cannot be gone back upon. It is for that reason that when the Government of India Bill comes before the House we shall try by our votes and by our attitude to amend it in such a way as to reduce what we consider to be the dangers. Nevertheless, we realise that it is essential that, at this juncture, the Government should push on with the work to which they have set their hands.

There are certain hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who wish to put limitations, Amendments, and alterations in the Motion. I wish to say to them that it is useless and definitely harmful to waste the time of the House and to endanger the relations of India by trying to go back on what has been already done. There is nothing in the Prime Minister's statement and nothing in the White Paper to which this country and this House is not already committed up to the hilt. Because of that, I shall ask hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who feel, as I do, the danger of this policy, to realise that we must face up to what has been done and to what we may consider to be the mistakes of our predecessors. We have to go along this line—possibly liking it very little—readily, willingly and without shrinking. It is no use trying to quibble over words, or minor points. We must, whatever our private feelings may be, realising the line we have to take, whole-

[Mr. Beaumont.]  
heartedly support the Government. I trust, therefore, that my hon. and right hon. Friends will not embarrass those who sympathise with them by forcing us to vote against them if they press the Amendment to a Division to-morrow.

**Dr. O'DONOVAN:** As a novice, in his first speech, it is due from me that I should give some reason why I intervene in this Debate, which seems to be monopolised by politicians. We are considering a White Paper on the Indian Round Table Conference and in it we are told that it is necessary to guarantee the observance of certain obligations, and those obligations are amplified by the explanation that they cover

“the guarantees required by minorities to protect their political liberties and rights.”

There are occasions when the sons of Hippocrates must raise their voices and tell politicians of all colours that no votes for political liberties are of the slightest value to dead or dying men. If there is one thing in which this country should take great pride it is the service that my profession of white men has rendered to our Indian brothers. I say, as a doctor, that, without distinction of race, without distinction of colour and without distinction of political outlook, the one great boon that England and Western civilisation has given to India has been the boon of life. I need only recall a few instances. One disease that almost every Anglo-Indian suffers from, years after his return, a disease which sweeps through India generation after generation, carried by an insect so small that you can destroy it between two fingers, is malaria. So potent is malaria that it reduces fertile plains back to the wild jungle and reduces the strength of man to something subhuman, so that he can no longer contest for life with the forces of nature. It is entirely due to white medicine and to the medicine taught in the schools of Europe that India sees a prospect of being freed from that great scourge.

There is another appalling disease that renders men unfit for work, or fit only to die in the ditch, or to live on the charity of their fellows. I refer to hookworm disease, which in some parts of India afflicts from 60 to 70 per cent. of the population. That disease has been the subject of study and investigation in the British and Continental schools of

medicine, but to the study of that disease my Indian colleagues have practically contributed nothing. Hon. Members will also remember the dysenteries that lay men low. In the Royal Society of Medicine, in its tropical section and in the Tropical Hospital in Endsleigh Gardens, these diseases are studied, and the benefit of that research is at the disposal of every Indian hospital. Were English medicine and the English connection to be abruptly cut, and were the only rights to be safeguarded the rights of political liberty, the only people who would suffer would be the Indians.

May I call attention to the condition of the lepers? We have heard of the untouchables, but there are thousands and tens of thousands of untouchables to whom no politician will give the touch of a helping hand; those of whom the old Psalmist said: “They have hands, but cannot touch; they have feet, but cannot walk; they have eyes, but they cannot see.”

But they have understanding, and they can understand. Leprosy can be controlled, and if modern medicine and medical research are allowed their full gambit, leprosy can be abolished. The research upon leprosy is initiated in Western civilisation. It is one of the obligations that we owe to the Indians to see that nothing should be hastily done to amputate the beneficial connection between western medicine and Indian traditions. Need I mention the ghastly question of cholera?—a disease which is most prevalent in India. Indian medicine in its history is completely empty of any records of the study, investigation and cure of cholera. Because of that disease and the investigation of it, many of my professional brothers have died and many more, doubtless, will die, and will die gladly, and it is sad that in the White Papers and in conferences the work of my brothers of the medical profession should be almost unrecorded.

Another disease which is as prevalent in India as here, is tuberculosis. It is quite likely that its great prevalence in India is due to the system of enclosing their womenkind; the custom of centuries which leads to stunted growth, early death, and death in childbirth. That custom will not be broken by politicians, and I fear it will not be broken by

missionaries; it can only be broken by a great increase in medical education throughout the Indian Empire.

One of the most extraordinary features of the situation is the keenness of Indian students to come to study in England; the mother and mistress of the teaching of medicine in these modern days. So numerous are the Indian medical students that the deans of our medical schools are hard put to it to find places for them. That is a proof that we have much to give to India, and there is a great duty upon politicians to do nothing by playing down to the politics of the healthy to prevent this help being freely offered. Although I have never been to India the diseases of India have been impressed upon my mind and upon the minds of my colleagues from our earliest medical days. Malaria was known in the days of Hippocrates, and among those who have studied it are Sir Ronald Ross and Sir Patrick Manson. So intimate is the knowledge which the London Medical Schools have of the medical needs of India that I feel I may speak on this subject, not as a stranger, but as one to whom these things are an everyday matter. I thank hon. Members for their indulgence in allowing me on this important occasion to put before politicians the fact that politics are mere phantoms unless they are directed first to the health of the people, which is of far greater importance than either votes or status.

**Mr. E. T. CAMPBELL:** The duty falls upon me, and it is a very pleasant one, of congratulating the hon. Member for Mile End (Dr. O'Donovan) on his very interesting speech. I have lived 21 years in the tropics and I cannot say that I have had all the complaints to which he has alluded. He did not mention one very important complaint, colonel's liver. Hon. Members who have made the journey to the East will have met colonels and majors who have been suffering from this complaint, and disagreeable fellows they were as a rule. There are some of them in this House, and, although they have never been to India, they have a liver. We have seen the White Paper for which we have looked with interest and listened to the speech of the Prime Minister, and I think that the majority of hon. Members are satisfied with the position. The

Amendment, I hope, will not go to a Division. It cannot do the Movers any good, and it would certainly do a great deal of harm if it went to a vote. Many people in India and also in this country imagined that with the return of a National Government, whose principal supporters are Conservatives, that there would be a stop in the progress towards self-government in India. That is entirely untrue. Anyone who has been in the East will realise that the important thing for a Britisher is never to go back on his word; a promise that has been given must be fulfilled; and no one who calls himself a white man ever forgets that. He may not have wished to have said what he did, yet, having said it, he must stick to his word. I was never in favour of the Montagu-Chelmsford agreement of 1919, but the prime movers of the Amendment are the very people who agreed to the agreement of 1919.

**Sir REGINALD CRADDOCK:** Not all of them.

**Mr. CAMPBELL:** No, not all of them; but I am referring to the prime mover, the right hon. Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill). I hope the Amendment will not be carried, indeed that it will not go to the vote. In saying that - 8.30 p.m. it must be understood that I am very anxious that the safeguards should be agreed upon before any further steps are taken. The Prime Minister told us to-day that there was a great deal of agreement in regard to safeguards. That may be so, but we shall get on far better and far quicker when we know that there is entire agreement. I mean safeguards in regard to defence, the Army, and the Navy, which is sometimes forgotten when we are discussing India, the police, and the Indian Civil Service, which has done so much for India and upon which the future of India depends. Then there is the question of external relations and financial safeguards. In this connection I should like to suggest the following fundamental propositions which have already been before the Federal Structural Committee. First, that it is essential that the financial stability and credit of India should be maintained. Secondly, that the financial credit of any country rests in the last resort upon the confi-

[Mr. Campbell.]  
 dence of the investor, actual and potential. Thirdly, that one result of the connection which has subsisted between India and the United Kingdom has been that her credit in the money markets of the world has hitherto been in practice closely bound up with British credit. And fourthly, that a change in her constitutional relations with the United Kingdom which involves a certain severance of the financial link between the United Kingdom and India would disturb confidence and so place the new Indian Government and Legislature at a grave disadvantage.

Then there is the question of commercial discrimination. We have to remember that a great deal of the prosperity of India is the result of the pioneer work of people from this country, most of them Scotch like myself, who have gone out and built railways, provided irrigation and started businesses; and they want to feel that these businesses are safe, that having invested their money in India they can be perfectly sure that whatever may happen as regards the Government of India their businesses will not be jeopardised. Let me now turn to the question of publicity and propaganda. I received a letter from a friend of mine who has just returned from India. He says:

"During my private visit to India last winter when in the course of my shooting expeditions I came in contact with hundreds of simple villagers in remote places. I was struck by the utter lack of propaganda to counter the insidious lies and distortions of the truth spread both orally and through the medium of the vernacular press by those who are evilly disposed towards British rule. I was frequently asked 'Sahib, is it true that the English are clearing out of India? Are they going to desert us poor folk and leave us to be oppressed by the Indian officials? If this is not true, then why do you Sahibs allow them to come amongst us and tell us such things?' That they were bewildered is beyond all doubt."

I want to ask what is being done by the Secretary of State for India in regard to publicity? Many admirable measures have failed, both in this country and in India and in other parts of the world, for want of publicity, and because they have been intentionally or otherwise misunderstood. In India this aspect is very important, and it has been lamentably neglected. I want to make three suggestions. The first is to

strengthen local provincial newspapers by making it cheaper to send Press telegrams within a local area of, say, 300 miles; secondly, to cancel the present multiple telegram concession. Thirdly, to register all agents and confine the privilege of sending messages at Press rates to duly registered agents, as is done in England.

Without a reliable Press, garbled accounts of all happenings are bound to spread, and those of us who have been in the East realise how quickly gossip does spread. I remember that when there was a mutiny in Singapore we heard of it in the Dutch East Indies almost before it had started. How the news spread we do not know to this day. But news spreads like wildfire, and my idea is that we should overtake it. As long as it is good news it is all to the good, but bad news and gossip spread generally a great deal faster than good news. The Prime Minister's declaration must convince our Indian friends of British good faith and sympathy. Let them remember, however, that only by their co-operation can they achieve any measure of self-government. The more restraint they show the sooner the Government of this country will be justified in giving them what they want. Let them remember that as long as violence and murder continue in India, so long will we in the House of Commons be compelled to vote against self-government, which many people in this country are anxious to see and to which all of us are committed at some time or other. In general I agree entirely with these proposals, but I think that we must be careful. I hope that my Indian friends, now that they are returning to India, will remember that if they can only lead their friends in India to behave as they themselves behave in this country, they will far sooner get the confidence of all people in this country than by carrying on as they have carried on in recent months in India.

**Mr. HAMILTON KERR:** I must crave the indulgence of the House as one who is still a novice in its time-honoured methods of procedure, and I must especially crave it on this occasion when so many right hon. and hon. Members, with very wide experience of Indian affairs, have lent weight and brilliance to the Debate. But, having the honour to represent one of the leading cotton spin-

ning towns of Lancashire intimately connected with India, and having also had the interesting experience of travelling in several parts of that vast continent, I am urged to say a few words. I think we must welcome the Prime Minister's declaration that this country is proceeding towards the goal of the Federation of India. But I conceive the all-important factor to be the time factor. There is a great deal of misleading propaganda abroad to-day, especially in the United States. For I have heard some lecturers compare the Indian Swaraj movement to that of the American colonists in the eighteenth century who strove for liberty against the autocratic Government of Lord North. I think we can say, without casting any aspersions, that the shrewd independent colonists of the New England States were of a very different political and cultural mettle to the people whom we have to deal with in India to-day. They had inherited our democratic traditions; they were the descendants of those who had fought to overthrow the autocracy of the Stuarts. But in India democracy is as new to the soil as is the British race.

The Prime Minister referred to the Panshayat system among the Hindus, a system under which village elders discussed small and unimportant matters. But we can find no single instance throughout the history of India where democratic forms of Government have carried with them any measure of responsibility. Surely the one essential foundation—you might call it the central bastion of democracy—is the idea of the equality of the individual. But the whole philosophic and religious foundation which shapes Indian society is based on the inequality of the individual. The Code of Manu, devised during the second and third century of the Christian era, definitely crystallised Indian society into four grades. In all these various compartments, separated from each other by ancient traditions, prejudices, and social customs, we find that it is very difficult for democracy to take root. Because, if we look at India, it resembles almost a honeycomb, where each little particular section is divided from the others by walls of prejudice and ancient custom. Among the Brahmins I believe there are 800 sub-castes who may not even intermarry and much less dine amongst themselves.

To what, then, does the democratic movement in India owe its origin? I believe that there are three fundamental and all important causes. The first is the Russo-Japanese war, when European prestige, founded on material pre-dominance, suffered a severe blow. On the battlefields of Manchuria, where the Japanese gained the ascendancy, the East discovered that it could produce just as efficient armies, generals, and equipment as the West. Then I believe that the Treaty of Versailles, which set the fashion throughout Europe for self-determination and caused the dismemberment of such nations as Austria and Hungary, and led to the creation of such anomalies as the Polish Corridor, opened sources of trouble which passed to the East. Lastly, and more intimately connected with Lancashire, we have had the decline in the price of silver which not only reduces the purchasing power of millions throughout India, but means a low price for their commodities. And in consequence of the poverty entailed, political agitation gains a lever.

We have to remain true to our English traditions, to the great tradition of trusteeship advocated by Burke in Mr. Fox's India Bill. We have always been true to those traditions in the past. Except for those few exceptional Nabobs, caricatured in the novels of Thackeray, who, rich in the plunder of the Indies, flaunted their wealth on flunkeys and magnificent carriages, we have loyally maintained our trust. We have, in the first place, stamped out the organised brigandage known as dacoity. We have removed the custom of female infanticide and Sutti, whereby a widow was forced to jump on to the funeral pyre of her husband. We have supplied bridges, and hospitals, and sanitation and good roads, and now we have come to the second phase of our obligations, and that is to devise a constitution which is suitable to the soil of India. We must not give a freedom which will destroy freedom: such a freedom as Tennyson describes in those famous lines of Locksley Hall 60 years after:

“Freedom, free to slay herself,

And dying, while they shout her name.”

We must not give freedom to those people in India who will abuse the privilege. Let it be one of the foundations and principles which will guide us, that the

[Mr. Kerr.]

material prosperity, liberty and security of the meanest individual shall in no way be prejudiced by any advance or concession which we give to the agitators. I believe that if we keep up to those principles we shall always retain a firm affection in the minds of the Indian masses.

There is an ancient tradition which has now strangely come true. Some 300 yards to the north of where the Viceroy's house, built by Sir Edwin Lutyens, now stands in New Delhi is the tomb of a Sikh prophet. He died just about the time when Clive, as a clerk in the service of the East India Company, came to Madras. He knew nothing of the English save as traders, working along the fringes of the coast. But he prophesied that the English would rule India from that very spot where the Viceroy's house stands, and when you enter the Viceroy's house you see that the capitals of each column there are four stone bells. An ancient Indian tradition tells that the ringing of a bell in the palace of the Emperor announces the fall of his dynasty. But these bells, being of stone, will never ring. Thus I believe that we must keep before us these fundamental conceptions: firstly, that that India with its caste system is not yet ripe for democratic institutions because democracy demands the equality of the individual; and, secondly, that in any concessions we make, or in any advance that is made towards more representative institutions, we shall embody the ideal that not even the meanest person in the whole of India shall suffer at the hands of his superiors.

**Miss RATHBONE:** It is my pleasant duty to congratulate the hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Kerr) on his maiden speech, which showed a great amount of research into a subject with which his constituency gives him a natural connection. I believe that even in this House of young men he is one of the few young enough to be likely to see the full growth of that tree of which we are this year sowing the seeds in India. I am one of those who heaved a sigh of relief on reading the Prime Minister's statement, because I had feared that the Government might have been impelled by reactionary forces behind it to go back on the pledges given to the people of India. I do not under-rate the dangers

and difficulties of the task which the Government have set themselves. There is no path which they could have chosen which is not encumbered every yard of the way with difficulties and dangers, but there is worse than danger—there is dishonour, whether of the cruder or the subtler kind. It would, indeed, have been a misfortune if the Government announcement to-day had given even the shadow of a possible excuse for the charge that they were keeping their promise to the ear, but breaking it to the sense. I do not see a word or line in the statement to give any shadow of plausibility to such an interpretation. But when there is ill-will, and lack of scruples, charges of bad faith can be spun out of thin air. What matters is what proportion of the people of India are likely to believe such charges.

My object in rising is to peak of a certain factor in Indian conditions which seems to me likely to affect vitally the chances of securing that atmosphere of good will without which no Government can work successfully. In India, as in every country, the root cause of discontent is poverty. National pride and in some cases personal ambition may have produced the nationalist leaders of India but their power to kindle the great mass of Indian peasants, those illiterate villagers who for generations have endured so much, so patiently—to kindle them not only into nationalism but into revolution—is due to the desperate poverty, to the pitiful ill-health of the people. And, because that is so, the power of the purse—words which have, I am afraid, an ugly sound—may, I believe, be a beneficent and healing power, if wisely and generously used. Those who have talked much with Indians—whether obscure or prominent Indians—must have noticed how incessantly they harp on the argument that India is held down and kept back by the burden of keeping up an Army and a civil administration with a standard of pay out of all proportion to that of their own people. That view may be exaggerated. It may be made the excuse for things which are due to quite other causes, but, at least, justification can be found in many official statements for the view that at any rate a part of the cost of the Indian Army might rightly be contributed to by Great Britain or the Empire as a whole.



For example, we have the statement in the Simon Report that the North West Frontier is not merely the frontier of India but is an international frontier of the first importance from the military point of view to the whole Empire. Again I notice that my colleague in the representation of the combined English Universities (Sir R. Craddock) in a very able maiden speech made the plea that it ought not to be necessary to reduce the pay of the Indian Civil Service because the wealthy classes in India were taxed so lightly. Might not that argument be applied with even greater cogency to the starvation of the social services. Starvation is perhaps the wrong metaphor in that connection because you cannot starve what has never drawn breath. In a large proportion of the Indian villages in which the great majority of the people of India live the social services except for some insufficient schools are practically non-existent. It is hard for English people to realise what that means.

This House is full of new Members many of whom in their elections paid little attention to the question of India. They now find themselves Members of a House to which, technically and constitutionally at least, is committed a final decision on India's destiny. May I suggest to those new Members a simple experiment which may bring home to them the answer to the question: Why is there discontent in India? Let them take any of the books which deal with the life of the masses of the Indian people—not books written by politicians or tourists but any of the recent Blue Books, such as the Linlithgow Report on Agriculture, or the Whitley Report on Labour, or the Joshi Report on Child Marriage—though the last needs strong nerves on the part of the reader. Let them try to visualise the kind of life which is indicated by the dry facts in those documents. They may find it hard, because not to many is the faculty given to visualise life from figures. To those who have that rare and uncomfortable faculty it often seems that a single line of vital statistics, an average or a percentage, contains more tragedy, more sobstuff, more cause for tears than all the tragedies of Shakespeare and Aeschylus.

Let us take just one or two crumbs at random from these reports. Let us

take the fact that the average life of an Indian is 25 years, as against 54 for an Englishman, that they have a death-rate of from 30 to 35 per thousand, that in the area of Ahmedabad—

“the area occupied by the working classes . . . presents a terrible picture of squalor.”—

I am quoting from the Whitley Report—

“Nearly 92 per cent. of the houses are one roomed; they are badly built, insanitary, ill-ventilated, and over-crowded,”

etc. Even in the large towns few sick people, even those fatally ill, ever see a doctor, and certificates of death are usually guesswork, given by a non-medical registrar. When one imagines what life under those conditions means, can one wonder that the minds of the Indian peasant are like dry tinder, on which one spark may raise a conflagration, and I suggest to the last speaker that in that abject poverty and ill health, rather than the interesting historical facts of which he reminded us, may be found the root causes of India's discontent. Therefore, when those committees are set up to consider the financial and defence problems of India, I trust that they may find it possible to devise such arrangements as will cause some relief from the burden of defence, of the Army, and of civil administration, so as to make it possible to quicken the terribly slow pace of social reform, in education, in health, in agriculture, and, above all, in the conditions of marriage and maternity. All thoughtful and progressive minds in India are agreed in the desire to quicken the pace of those reforms which are held back by the problem of finance.

But there are, behind the progressive politicians, reactionary forces of which we hear comparatively little. There was a speech made a few days ago at the Round Table Conference, unreported so far as I saw in any paper. I had my attention drawn to it by an English woman journalist. It was a speech by the Maharaja of Darbhanga, and it affected me, I must say, rather like the faint premonitory rumblings of an earthquake or a thunderstorm in a tropical country. I will read a single passage from it:

“The tendency of Indian Legislatures has of late been to dabble with problems of social reform adversely affecting the religious ideas and traditions of the Hindu community at large. Religious matters or social

[Miss Rathbone.]

reforms should not be allowed to come within the purview of Legislatures. These questions should not be allowed to come before the Legislatures but should be left alone to the leaders of the community or to the care of time and the advance of society in the line of reform by itself. Any such step is regarded as unauthorised and wounds the feelings of those who hold their religious traditions in sacred esteem."

That may be a view which is much less heard of than the view of progressive politicians in India, but there is a real danger that the time may come when, in a reaction against Western culture, that view may become effective in India unless it is carefully guarded against in the future Constitution. I am told that the Maharaja of Darbhanga is a young man of 25 years of age, very wealthy, the owner of many palaces, and the leader of one of the strictest sects of orthodox Brahmins.

Let me say something which I am sure the authorities of the Round Table Conference were too tactful to say, and that perhaps can only be safely said by a mere back-bencher and free lance like myself. So far as this constitutional change goes, I believe and hope that in a very short time, a few years at most, India will become a free and equal partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations. But real equality cannot be brought about by law-makers. It is a thing of the spirit. Until the working classes of India are set free, not only politically but economically, until they have secured education and all the other conditions of healthy and self-sufficient life, India will be like a cripple with only one arm. And until the women of India are set free in fact, and not only in theory, and until they have

9.0 p.m. been able to emancipate themselves from the cruel customs which have weighed on them so long, India will be like a man with one leg, and in the councils of the world India may be accorded a position of complete equality of constitution, but, if she obeys the advice of the Maharaja of Darbhanga, there will always be those who when this claim of equality is made will wear the smile of people who say very little, but who think a great deal.

I suppose I have got more Indian constituents than any other Member of this House, except other University Members, and nearly all my Indian constituents are

men, but I must confess that in what I have been saying I have been thinking mostly of the women of India. In all recent committees and conferences on Indian affairs, unstinted tribute has been paid to Indian women:

"The Indian woman"—

says the Simon Report,

"is pivotal . . . . the whole texture and strength of the national life are largely dependent on the contribution which women make to it."

I make no charge of deliberate neglect of women, either by the British or Indians in India, but we all know that in every Legislature and Administration in the world those who get their needs attended to are those who are strongly organised, articulate, skilled in putting forward their own claims. The women of India are far more out of sight than the women of this country. They have, it is true, their organised women's movement, which is splendidly active and vigorous in proportion to its size. They have eloquent leaders. We have all heard of the part that the women of India have taken recently in the non-cooperation movement, brought into it often by a genuine impulse of patriotism, whether wisely or ill-guided. But we cannot ignore the fact that, judged by every test that can be applied, the poverty, and the illiteracy, and the ill-health of India, which weigh heavily on the men, weigh far more heavily on the women, and with more disastrous results. That is due to causes which it would be inappropriate to discuss here, but they all point to this, that if it is to be possible for the women of India not only to secure attention to their own most urgent needs, but to fulfil their natural functions as the guardians of the domestic and social life of the nation, they must be enabled to take their full share in the framing and working of their own future constitution.

I will ask the Prime Minister to tell us whether in those committees that are going to be set up, those small working committees that are to get down to business, there will be the women represented as well as the men. It is not for British women to dictate to Indian women as to how they shall use the power so entrusted to them. They must fulfil their own destiny. But British women cannot

forget that they too have a responsibility, indeed a double responsibility, first, because ours is the oldest and strongest women's movement in the world, and we feel we must share with others the experience which we have gained in that movement, and, secondly, because as British citizens we realize that, rightly or wrongly, whatever the future may be, British domination has been; and if there is much in the present social conditions of India, now that we are about to hand it over, of which Indians themselves feel a kind of shame, so that they are reluctant to have alien eyes fixed upon it, they ought to remember that it is our shame as well as theirs, and because that is so, we cannot divest ourselves of our sense of responsibility. Many of us recognise that there is much more that might have been done in the past to remedy the conditions of life which we all now deplore in India if there had been greater knowledge and sympathy between the two peoples.

Now perhaps the last service we can render to India is to see that we hand over the estate to those who will manage it in future in as good a condition as possible, and, above all, to see that we hand it over to the guardianship of those who shall be really representative of the people of India, not a narrow oligarchy of class or caste or sex, not that thing which is sometimes even more oppressive than an oligarchy, a democracy so ill-organised, blind and unwieldy that it is like a bull with a ring through its nose to be led about by anyone who can get hold of the cord. The Lord Chancellor has reminded us of the need for patience. Patience there must be, but it must be the patience of those who will neglect nothing that is necessary to achieve a perfect result, but will never lose an unnecessary minute of time, because they are driven on by the compelling consciousness that there are in India millions of the population who are badly fed, badly housed, overworked and oppressed by old, cruel customs. Only when the political question is settled will those who care for the real India be free to turn their attention to those ends to which constitution making is only the means, that of bringing about conditions in India which will secure the happiness and prosperity of the whole people, the common people, of India.

**Sir R. CRADDOCK:** The hon. Member who has just spoken, who shares with me the representation of the English Universities, is extraordinarily optimistic as to what will be the consequence if we grant constitutional reform. She apparently blames the British raj because the millennium has not already been introduced and because there are no social reforms. While the provincial revenues represent only 7s. per head per annum, how can anyone organise modern social services such as we have in England for a population of 350,000,000? I cannot help feeling that some of the speeches recently delivered, interesting, sincere and enthusiastic as they were, departed from the realities of the situation. It is said about me that I am a back number and a reactionary. One Indian paper said:

"Sir Reginald Craddock having now emerged from his well-deserved obscurity . . ."

It might have said rest, but it did not. The same paper, referring to myself and some other old administrators of India, said:

"Of course, fossils of this kind carry no weight."

Then it went on to say a little more, but I was comforted by the final sentence, which said:

"But we must watch these dangerous fossils."

If you are a fossil, it is rather a satisfaction to be thought a dangerous one. The Indian problem has become—I emphasise the words "has become"—the most difficult one that any nation has ever been called upon to solve. It has become so during the last 14 years. Before that time we had our difficulties, we had anarchical conspiracies and rebellions on a scale which was small for a country of that size, and how can you expect that there shall not be some disturbances of that nature? We had famines and pestilences, and the brave way in which the poor people bore themselves and endured them cannot be too highly commended. I do not share the opinion of the hon. Lady who spoke last that these people are irretrievably and hopelessly unhappy and are thereby ripe for mischief directly the instigator comes along. I think there can be few people who have talked to the villagers of so many villages as I have. I have reckoned it up, and in the 27 years that I was in

[Sir R. Craddock.]

the Central Provinces I discoursed with the people on the spot in 7,000 odd villages.

Although I may be considered out of date, I am bound to say that that is not the opinion held by a great many Indians. I do not like saying these things about myself, but I must defend myself against this charge of being a reactionary. Only four years ago, just before the personnel of the Statutory Commission had been decided upon, I had a letter from a friend of mine, a Brahmin and an ex-President of the National Congress. I had not heard from him for a great many years, and I was not even sure that he was alive. I had a very friendly letter from him reminding me of our old contests in the Legislative Council, and he ended his letter by saying:

"If the Statutory Commission is appointed, there will be no one whose appointment on it will give me greater pleasure than yourself."

That was a bit of testimony to one who is called a reactionary. He was not a reactionary; he had only recently been President of the National Congress, and he had opposed the Government nearly all his life. Since I had the honour of being elected to this Parliament, I had another letter, which came only by the last mail. The gentleman who wrote it had served on both the central and provincial legislatures, and has been a stout opponent of the Government. He said:

"The absolute accuracy of your facts and the knowledge of our country make me delighted that you have been elected to Parliament."

and he added that all Indians not infected with the Gandhi Congress microbe would be as glad as he was. I am only quoting this because I am defending myself against a charge. If I thought that self-government in India could possibly work to the happiness of the people there, I should be only too delighted to assent to it at once. It is because I feel that a great deal of all this well-meant talk, though sincere, is only talk, and that the granting prematurely of any system of self-government in India would be disastrous, that I have been anxious to curb and check as far as one man can by his advice the movements in that direction.

I consider that Mr. Montagu's announcement in 1917 was a most unfortunate one. It may be that it is correct

to hold it as a pledge but I do not object to pledges at all if they can be fulfilled. The pledge to give to the Indians an increasing association with every branch of the administration was not only due to them, but even overdue, but when it comes to saying that a pledge was made to give India responsible government, I object, because I do not like giving pledges about things which it is impossible to fulfil. The reason why that is impossible of fulfilment is not through any ill-will on our part, but simply because all we can give them in fulfilment of that pledge is a paper constitution which may bear the name "**Democracy,**" "**Responsible Government,**" or whatever you will, but will, in effect, be a complete sham throughout the country. It will not give them democracy or responsible government. It will give them bondage and an oligarchy of men from whom we have been so long protected.

We have allowed India to get out of hand; and I must say that I think it is absolutely true that the major part of the trouble has arisen in England and not in India; the fact being that a great many well-meaning people who know very little about the country, who do not perceive what the situation is, who do not understand the meaning of some of these movements, have given encouragement to movements which have only ended in disappointment and, indeed, in danger. So far as this declaration of the Round Table Conference goes, it is hedged round with distinction after distinction, with qualification after qualification, all sound, no doubt, but all capable of being argued in different ways. One person will argue one way, and another in another, and in the end we shall find that we have been committed to things which we do not anticipate.

I wish to point out how the development of these movements has come about. The Montagu pledge, such as it was, had no time limit. It never suggested that responsible Government could be obtained in so short a time. Indeed, as the hon. and learned Member for Swindon (Sir R. Mitchell Banks) has pointed out, the Act laid down clearly the conditions under which any further advance should be made, but in the talks at the Round Table Conference those conditions appear to have been lost sight of. We are told

that we are pledged to responsible government, both at the centre and in the provinces

“with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee during a period of transition the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances, and also with such guarantees as are required by minorities to protect their political liberties and rights.”

Those were qualified also.

“In such statutory safeguards as may be made for meeting the needs of the transitional period, it will be a primary concern of His Majesty's Government to see that the reserved powers are so framed and exercised as not to prejudice the advance of India through the new constitution to full responsibility for her own government.”

All these qualifications will admit of being interpreted differently. It will be said when you put on your usually reserved powers, “But this interferes with the progress of India; this is contrary to what you said about not prejudicing the advance of India.” The transition period, too, is a very difficult matter. It can be a subject of argument. After a year or two they may say, “The transition period is over,”—or it may be five, 10, 15 or 20 years, or five generations. Safeguards for a transition period are always difficult to define, and very difficult to uphold.

When we examine the events of the last three years it will be found that there has been a great landslide from the position we took up a short time ago. In 1927 the Statutory Commission was appointed and went out. Then the trouble began. It seems slight to them now, and it did not seem much to us then, but it was a serious trouble. The chosen delegates of a sovereign Parliament were treated with contumely and insult. That contumely and insult should have been better restrained by the measures taken by the authorities. It may seem nothing to us in this country, but even here I do not think we should like the delegates of Parliament to be treated with contumely and insult in any place which they had been sent. In India the effect was very marked. It was not the people—they did not know what it was about. A barber in Calcutta, when asked why his shop was closed, said, “I do not know. They keep on saying ‘Simon, Simon,’ but who Simon is God only knows. All I know is I have lost two or three days' earnings.” The

truth is that those people are so ignorant that they can be moved by inflammatory statements and by intimidation such as would affect no self-respecting men in England. There is a good deal of popular clamour which has no substance in fact.

We are told that we must give responsible government at the centre, provincial autonomy and all these new things, but as a matter of fact we should not be breaking any pledge if we found that it was impossible to give them. An attempt is being made to persuade the English people that we are constantly breaking our pledges. We are an easy-going people, and when we hear that we pick up our ears at once, and, without waiting to see whether we have broken a pledge or not, we say: “We have broken a pledge; we must not break a pledge; we must do this or that.” That is what those who accuse us of breaking pledges are guilty of. John Bull, honest, straightforward John Bull, is no match for Brahmins. When it comes to dealing with the subtle wits and clever machinations of the National Congress, that little Soviet which has been set up in India, a handful of men, mostly Brahmins and Baniyas—the Baniyas are the class that lends money and the Brahmins are the priestly class—our honest negotiators and talkers have no more chance than Adam and Eve had with the serpent. There was an apple in this case also.

The apple of discord was thrown among the people of India by Mr. Montagu. Up to that time there was no difficulty whatever in governing the country—none at all. We had our troubles, as I have said, but Hindu and Moslem lived peaceably together as neighbours. Now and then they had a row, or riot, but those were local, and there were none of these bloodthirsty pogroms which have been happening since. These people felt that at all events they were being governed impartially, they were perfectly happy and they did not at that time want any change. But when this apple of discord was thrown in, then it became an entirely different question. From that moment the question was: If the British are not going to govern us, then who is going to govern us? That question has separated the peoples of India ever since Mr. Montagu, no doubt with the best inten-

[Sir R. Craddock.]  
 tions, threw in that apple of discord. Then there has come the Round Table Conference. I have great respect for the people who belong to it for many of them are my friends, but they have talked and I do not know that very much has resulted from that talk. One of them who left the other day said to me: "The more we are together, the further apart we grow." Another said to me: "How can we get any further as long as the British Government are only bent on placating implacable enemies?" I cannot help feeling that the Prime Minister, when he gets really old, will perhaps, looking back on the Round Table Conference, quote that quatrain of Omar Khayyam:

"Myself when young did eagerly frequent  
 Doctor and saint, and heard great  
 argument.

About it, and about, but evermore came  
 out,

By the same door that in I went."

During the last three or four years the administration of the law has been miserably and lamentably weak. What has it been done for, and why was all this weakness permitted? Why now do we depart from our proposals? They said to us, "If you would only say Dominion status, all would be well." We said Dominion status, and then there was the civil disobedience, and all was not well. They then said, "A round table conference will put all matters right." You have had the Round Table Conference and we are still in the same position. Anyhow, it did not pacify them. Now they have said, "We are not content with provincial autonomy; we must have responsibility in the centre." Finally, now they say, "We do not want provincial autonomy unless you give us responsibility in the centre." We have therefore reached a deadlock. All this loss of prestige, if you like to call it so—and I believe in the word "prestige," because it means being held in honour—was borne with and submitted to in the vain hope of placating the National Congress and of inducing Mr. Gandhi to come to London. Mr. Gandhi has come to London and I ask, Was it worth all those things that have gone on during the last two or three years? Was it worth the deaths of so many people who would have been alive but for the febleness in enforcing the

law? Was it worth the millions of damage and loss of revenue? Was it worth those insults to the British flag which passed by unnoticed—the Union Jack being trampled in the mud while the police dare not intervene? Was it worth all those things?

As to Mr. Gandhi, I do not wish to probe into the sincerity of any man by looking into his mind, for no one can do that. All I do say is that

9.30 p.m. he has tried to fill a most difficult role. I think the

House will agree that it is very difficult for a politician to be a professional saint. I wonder whether it is not even more difficult for a saint to be a politician? This House will know something more about those difficulties than I, a new Member, can possibly know, but, at all events, Mr. Gandhi adopted both these roles. It is impossible to say whether he came here as a saint or politician. He was a sort of benevolent Dr. Jekyll one day and a fierce and almost malignant political Mr. Hyde the next. On alternate days he explained away what he had said the day before. He is a perfect master of subtlety, and has a greater passion for inconsistency than any other man I have ever heard of or met. With his alternate fluctuations over six days there was one day left, and that was his day of silence, when no one on earth knew whether he was Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde.

This matter is a very serious one indeed. There are many hon. Members in this House who think they are really doing what they ought to do, and what British men should do, in conceding all these points to the people of India. My contention is that the pledge we gave was not to one section of India, but to the whole people of India. What did you do? You promised responsible government. What is the meaning of responsible government? I take it to mean democratic government. From all we have heard to-night that is the meaning that is attached to it. Now democracy in India is an absolute impossibility until the Hindu religion has absolutely disappeared from the land. Such a thing is incomprehensible and incredible. That religion has stood for 30 or 40 centuries. It has many blemishes on it, but in many respects it is a very

fine religion, and it induces people to perform certain duties. His religion is the finest discipline to which any Indian is subject, and you simply cannot abolish the Hindu religion in the hope of introducing democracy. The Hindu religion is the complete antithesis of democracy, and when a Brahmin or any other high caste says he is an advocate of democracy, you really cannot attribute sincerity to him.

Why is it that the Brahmins and the high caste Hindus are the only people who say, "Let us have no communal electorates for us. All we want are general elections. We want democracy"? Do you suppose these Brahmins and high caste Hindus want to be governed by the poor low-caste people and by the depressed classes? It is incredible and impossible. Hon. Members may perhaps have heard that after hearing what was said at the Round Table Conference several of the high-caste Hindus met in the Madras Presidency and said that if they were going to have Swaraj they would be able to put further restrictions and chains on the depressed classes. One of the things they laid down was that those people should not be allowed to wear any garments above the waist. It is sheer mockery to suppose that the depressed classes will be looked after by the higher castes. I do not say there are not some sincere men of high caste who consider untouchability wrong, because some of them have passed a resolution saying they would abolish untouchability. How can you abolish it by resolutions on paper? This House might as well say, "We will abolish all betting and gambling in England," and then go on to say, "Now we have become a really moral nation, for we have abolished betting by resolution, and no more betting and gambling can take place." That is the kind of value that attaches to a resolution of the description I have mentioned. That has no binding effect at all, and it would be no use to protect the untouchables from being ill-treated because you cannot do it. You cannot accomplish that end by safeguards; it can be done only by changing the feeling which exists among the people themselves. I remember in 1924, when I was in India as a member of the League of Nations Commission, we heard witness after witness in out-of-

the-way courts where the Brahmin judge or magistrate would not let the untouchable witness come into the court at all, and he had to stand outside the court. Of course in the larger towns, where there was more supervision and publicity, they could not carry out those restrictions.

The House must remember that this untouchability is really part of a religious faith, and it is supposed that a man becomes an untouchable because of his sins in a previous life. If you reason with the Brahmin and say, "It is disgraceful that you do not associate with this man because he is an untouchable," he will reply, "How can I associate with him. He has been born into that state of life, and I cannot interfere with the discipline and decrees of Providence. It is not up to me to interfere with the decrees of Providence." That is the basis upon which untouchability exists, and you cannot alter their religion or interfere with customs of that kind merely by promulgating a Resolution. In these circumstances, people cannot help having a certain amount of affection for these people and sympathise with them in their simple life. These people number about 150,000,000, or one-fifth of the population of the world, and they provide material for 20 or 30 nations. When we speak of not giving responsibility at the centre it is not a technical manoeuvre, but we have to recognise that there are these nations. They have only come together by the cement of British rule, and they may fall apart again.

You may claim that the Bengali has an inherent right to govern Bengal. The same would apply to the Moghul race. In all these cases the people belong to their own country. If you grant provincial autonomy, then you are asking for something which is more reasonable, but, if you ask for power to govern them from Delhi, that is another question, and you might as well claim that the inhabitants of Portugal have a right to govern Latvia. The Portuguese have not the same right to govern Latvia as they have to govern their own country. In these matters, the whole question of responsibility at the centre is seen on a different plane. In regard to provincial autonomy, the Statutory Commission recommended that law and order should be

[Sir R. Craddock.] transferred. That sounds eminently reasonable, but until you know how they are going to work you cannot tell whether they are going to be dangerous or not. Anyone who has studied the system in India will agree that the transfer of law and order is an extremely dangerous thing. The Statutory Commission only recommended it with great hesitation and reluctance, and they did so because they did not recommend responsibility at the centre. Hon. Members cannot understand this question unless they have been in India and have studied the thing on the spot. I am afraid that what is going to be done will break up the loyalty of the services altogether, because they will not be there. What sort of police will be there? How on earth can the police serving the provincial Government be controlled by the people who are running the Congress? To whom are they to be loyal, the Viceroy, the British people or the Government under which they serve. that is, the provincial Government? These propositions do not appear to have entered into the minds of many of those who, quite honestly, are advocating reforms in India.

We are always being told that nationality is irresistible. That seems to be a point on which Lord Irwin has been persuaded. I yield to no one in my respect for Lord Irwin, but I think he made profound psychological errors, and he exemplified the truth of the old Indian saying, "It is always darkest under the lamp." In Delhi, the Viceregal Court has its attractions, and the tendency, as I know from having been in Simla, always to say "I respectfully agree with your Excellency," is very strong. It is merely human nature. I am not accusing these men of anything in the nature of failure to do their duty; there are Vicars of Bray, after all, in every community; but the real trouble about the Council, the Secretariats and so on in India, has been of late years that the men who have gone there, having been taken away early from the Provinces, have got one appointment after another in Simla, instead of the salutary rule being followed that, when a man had been at headquarters at Simla at Delhi for three years, he went back to refresh his mind in the district or the division. Now you have men there at

Simla and Delhi who know no more about the country in general than the people at the India Office. I am not insulting the people at the India Office in saying that; I am merely pointing out that they live in Whitehall, and are always dealing with papers and documents, and, if you go on dealing only with documents, and not seeing the real life that is behind them, you are very probably living in an imaginary world.

That is the position. An enthusiastic, high-minded Viceroy goes out; he is persuaded by the people around him; he is overborne by the atmosphere of Simla and Delhi; and, after having been there for two or three years, he thinks that India is the Legislative Assembly, and the Legislative Assembly is India. Having got those two facts before him, the man in the district or the Province, and all the things that are going on there, become dim and far away and cannot be seen. In that way the whole administration grows weaker and less in touch with what is really going on. The ordinary law was not enforced as it should have been. There is a law of tradition in India, and it provides for the punishment of people who hold up the Government, as constituted by law in British India, to contempt and hatred. That law has been deliberately allowed to remain in abeyance for three years, and the result has been the bloodshed, rioting, and all those events which have been the natural consequence of not restraining the Press.

Anarchists are made by this Press. I have had to deal with anarchy. I was dealing with it for many years, and I know the effect that the Press has had when it has not been restrained. The Press has invoked the Goddess Kali, to whom goats are sacrificed, and has said that the time has come to sacrifice the white goats, namely, the British. That was the invocation on which these young men were worked up. It was infinitely sad that men of so much promise should be worked up by cunning people into that state of exaltation and emotion in which they became murderers. I know that the Press has been responsible for that. How do I know it? I know it from the lips of the anarchists themselves. One after another of these boys in the Andamans has said to me, "What put us astray were these papers." They men-



tioned the names of the papers—[*Interruption.*] It was much worse than the "Daily Express" or the "Daily Mail." I have never known the "Daily Mail" to encourage assassination. If hon. Members opposite knew these papers, or read them in translation, as I did for years, they would know what I mean. The "Daily Mail" certainly has never written anything which would cause people to commit murder or political dacoities. After all, a movement must be poorly supported if it is necessary to commit dacoity and robbery in order to keep its funds going.

I do not care what people may say who have no acquaintance with the country, but a Press Act is always necessary in India, because evil may be done by the Press which it is impossible in any other way to restrain. The mind of the public in England, the storehouse of British opinion, contains asbestos and a few damp squibs; but the storehouse of the public mind in India is crammed with petrol and high explosives, and obviously different storage rules are necessary in India from those which are sufficient here. It was the neglect to restrain the Press in India that brought all the other evils in its train. The dire consequences that have followed have been the direct result of weakness in administering the ordinary law. Only once during my 40 years of service have I had to put into force a special Act or special repressive measure. I do not want repressive measures but I do know that, if you enforce the ordinary law as it should be enforced, the need for the repressive measure very seldom arises.

I want to make an appeal to hon. Members not to be hurried in their action into doing things which may have disastrous consequences hereafter. It is easy for anyone to be liberal and magnanimous, and to ignore the fact that other people are going to suffer when we have made a magnificent gesture. I do not know whether hon. Members recollect the story of the boy scout who went to bed having forgotten to do his good turn for the day. He got up and gave his white mouse to the cat. That parable has an application to what I am asking hon. Members to bear in mind. I ask them not to make magnificent gestures to the cat at the expense of the mouse. You may make a magnificent gesture of liberality to certain small sections of the

public, but that may mean death to someone else. I ask this House to consider well and carefully before it decides that all these things, like provincial autonomy, responsibility at the centre, and so on, are just light things to be given away, and not to give them away without reflection as to the terrible consequences of disorder, chaos and suffering which they may entail.

**Lieut.-Colonel MOORE:** Having lived for some years in India, I thought possibly at one time I might have something of value to contribute to the Debate. Now, having found the number of Members who have spent their lives in the service of India, I feel rather diffident about following the last speaker. He seemed to me to introduce a breath of realism after the somewhat sentimental but delightful suggestions made by the hon. Lady below me. No doubt they balance each other in the representation of the Combined Universities. It was rather indiscreet of the hon. Lady to refer to India from the point of view, as it seemed to me, of the student's room in her university. She said the lack of social services in India was the fault of the finance of India, and also that there was a lack of knowledge and sympathy on the part of those who administer the country. From my small experience, that is not so. The real interference with the development of the social services is the caste system, and a priestly caste system at that. We all know that, where the urine of that sacred animal the cow is regarded as a panacea for many diseases, social services cannot progress as we should like. You cannot remove the caste system and you cannot remove the priestly system, and that is your greatest obstacle to bringing the social services up to the level at which we should like to see them.

**Miss RATHBONE:** I said nothing about lack of knowledge and sympathy among the English now in India. I said had we known as much in the early years of our rule in India as we know now we should be able to render greater service.

**Lieut.-Colonel MOORE:** I do not wish to enter into an argument with the hon. Lady. Perhaps her recollection is better than mine. I should like to make one or two remarks about the Prime Minister

[Lieut.-Colonel Moore.]

in regard to the White Paper. I think everyone in the House must admire and applaud the right hon. Gentleman for the amazing tact, skill, pertinacity and ingenuity that he brought into the negotiations at the Round Table Conference. That he has failed—and he has failed—is no fault of his. I think we should all pay him that great tribute, for no man could have done more, and no man feels the fact of his failure more than he does. He did not realise perhaps, not having an intimate knowledge of India, that at the very bottom of his initial difficulty was the inherent communal question and, until you have solved that, you cannot, as the last speaker said, bring together these divergent interests into a common community with any regard for the interests of a common people. It is no good expecting the Moslem lion to lie down with the Hindu lamb, especially when the lion knows that he is stronger and especially when he is in a minority, and that is one of the reasons why I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman not to try to press a constitution on the lion. The Mussulman is our friend in India. The Mussulman knows his master, and he knows an honest man, and he has found them both in the Civil Service and the police service and in the officers in the Indian Army. If anything is to be got out of this Round Table Conference, it must be by the will of the people taking part in the Conference, and the mere suggestion that the Prime Minister has made that this Parliament might evolve and devise a constitution for the Indian people and force it on them by law would be one of the most fatal things for the future peace of India that we can visualise.

There is one point that I should like to bring to the attention of the House—the only point that we can consider now. Are

there any advantages to be  
10.0 p.m. gained out of having failed?

In my belief there are. If the Prime Minister had succeeded in bringing about, in this peaceable, persuasive atmosphere of London, some sort of agreement, would not the great chance have been that, when the agreement was taken home to India, the same result would have happened as happened in Ireland when De Valera broke off the Treaty brought back by Collins and

refused to acknowledge it? We know what has happened in the past, and I suggest that the Prime Minister, had he succeeded in making a settlement, might have incurred more odium and brought more dislike and hostility towards the British people than we can ever incur through failure. At any rate, the onus of that failure is on the Hindu and the Mussulman. It is on the people who constituted this Round Table Conference, and, therefore, we, as British people, can say we offered all our help, we offered all our suggestions, we made every contribution and every effort to bring about, through the mouth of our Prime Minister, a solution, and it is you who have failed to come to a solution, and, therefore, our hands are free and we can hold up our heads, as we have always been able to do in India.

There is another thing that we are disquieted about, and that is the Prime Minister's statement that autonomy cannot be started in the provinces. I believe it would be one of the best things that could happen for the future government of India if autonomy could be started in the provincial centres. The Indian will have gained experience without that experience costing India or ourselves too much. Everyone who has been in India and has read the reports of the Round Table Conference, and watched the reports coming home from India, knows that the mill owners and big landowners want to have autonomy at the centre. They want to have authority at the centre. Naturally, it means authority over the military, over foreign policy, and, above all, over fiscal policy. If they get tariffs, they know that it means wealth for them. They are too short-sighted to see that in a few years time, having got this authority at the centre, having got this complete control, they would have the people coming down from the hills and their ill-gotten wealth would not be left to them for very long.

We have not to consider the mill owners, but the people of India, those vast unvoiced millions, the peasants; that so few visitors, even visiting Royal Commissions, see. They want the security of knowing that their interests are being looked after by their judge, their counsel, their father and their mother, and that is the District Officer or the British Commissioner, as the case may be. They

know they will get justice from him. They are by no means certain that they will get it from any Brahmin or Indian who may be set in power over them. There are too many of these young men who have come over here and got a superficial education but have not absorbed the tradition of government. They have not absorbed the real traditions of our Britishers during centuries of development of intelligence. They go back to India, and the only benefit they have received is, a glib tongue and a superficial knowledge of politics and policy. They harangue these peasants of the towns and cities, and these poor people are taught to believe that they are going to get everything they enjoy under Great Britain plus this illusory self-government.

I hope that the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for India will bear all those matters in mind, and will not, perhaps, be led away too much by promising too much. In the future consideration that will be given by those committees set up in India and by the consultative committee to which the Prime Minister referred, I wonder how they will conflict with the Viceroy's powers. Will there be any conflict with, or any diminution in, the powers of the Viceroy through the setting up of the consultative committee? Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will make mention of that matter when he replies. I hope that these committees, when they are taking this matter into further consideration, will utilise their efforts and their opportunities in getting autonomy started in the Provinces. I feel sure that there is no future for India at all if authority in the centre and autonomy in the Provinces are to be started at the same time. The hon. Member for the English Universities (Sir R. Craddock) has made it clear in a lucid, logical and intelligible manner what actually would be the position if authority at the centre were started to-day. It is impossible. Everyone who knows India knows that it is impossible. Let the Indians see that we mean what we promise them. Give it them, if you like, by force—though I dislike the word—in the Provinces. Let them see the difficulties of administering the Provinces, and then they will not perhaps be so urgently clamouring for the full authority at the centre.

I wish to say a word or two in regard to Mr. Gandhi, whom I am very glad to have had the opportunity of seeing over here. We have seen him, and known him and heard him. I will not say any more about that. He made a claim for control of the army the other day. Could anything be more absurd than claiming control of an army which one day very soon may have to control him? I think that that sort of speech was a dangerous speech to make in this country, and far more dangerous for the people of India to read. Or possibly it is a good thing, because it will make them see exactly what may take place.

In conclusion, I want to refer to the question of Indianisation, which, I hope, will be pushed on in the services which are suited to it, and retarded in those services where Indianisation is not suitable. The point we have to consider is not the few but the many. We have to consider the vast millions of people of India who have to live their lives under bad or good government. Bad government and bad administration can be developed too rapidly in the Indianisation of Indian services. We want to do the best for the people, and to get the best Government and the best administration. That can only be done by walking slowly and gradually, and with the permeating influence of British officials, and by keeping the British administration behind as strong as possible.

**The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir Samuel Hoare):** A new Parliament unlike all its predecessors has been gathered together. The unprecedented size of the majority is the outward expression of the national demand for action. Just as in some countries that are used to dictatorships the demand for action has shown itself in Fascism and Bolshevism, so here with our Parliamentary traditions it has taken the form of a great Parliamentary majority. To-day this House of Commons is probably the most omnipotent political body anywhere in the world. May I ask it resolutely, calmly, and dispassionately to consider one of the gravest questions with which we shall be faced during the years of our existence? A decision upon Indian policy cannot be avoided. Will it or will it not succeed in building a new bridge between England and India in friendly

[Sir S. Hoare.]

partnership and mutual understanding? It has often been said that the House of Commons takes little interest in Indian affairs. I hope that that charge will not be justified against this House of Commons. Certainly, if to-day's Debate is significant of the future, I think that we must say that we have among us many new Members whose contributions to our Indian Debates should be of great service.

To-day we have had three interesting maiden speeches from hon. Members who spoke with first-hand knowledge of Indian problems, the speech of my hon. Friend the Member for Upton (Mr. Chotzner), the speech of the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Kirkpatrick), and the speech of the hon. Member for Mile End (Dr. O'Donovan). Then there was the speech of my hon. Friend the junior Member for the English Universities (Sir R. Craddock). It was not his maiden speech, and therefore I cannot congratulate him upon making a maiden speech, for I had that pleasure only a few days ago. It was a very informative speech. Indeed, it was almost omniscient. I was very glad of that. It is something to have in this House someone who knows all about India whereas he told us just now that the Secretary of State and the India Office know nothing about it at all. Perhaps he will pardon me for saying that, while I listened with great interest to his speech, I did somewhat regret, I will not say the attack, but the criticism which he made against the Viceroy's advisers. Be that as it may, it is a subject for congratulation that we have among us so many new Members who are ready to take so useful a part in our Indian Debates. Let that be symptomatic of a further response. Let hon. Members, whatever be their opinions, follow this Indian question closely and constantly, and, if they think fit to criticise the action and policy of the Government—these questions are much too grave for platitudes, reticences and generalities—certainly as long as I have the honour to hold the office I hold to-day, not only shall I not resent reasonable criticism, but I shall welcome it, particularly when it comes from hon. Members who, owing to long association with India, have a perfect right to speak from their own knowledge and give the House of Com-

mons the advice which is founded upon their experience.

Of all controversies, the most difficult controversies are those in which both sides are right. When all the right is on one side and all the wrong on the other, it is very easy to come to a simple verdict. When, however, the balance is evenly held and there is a great deal to be said on both sides, the decision, the course of action, is by no means so easy to take. Such a controversy is the Indian controversy. On the one hand, there is the long partnership, spreading over more than 150 years, between Great Britain and India—a splendid record, a record as splendid as can be found in any chapter of history. We have given to India a unity that it never possessed before. We have given to India peace and justice. We have driven away the spectre of famine, and we have provided opportunities of advance that they would not otherwise have had for the teeming millions of India's population. From the day of small things, when our only officials were revenue collectors, when our only interest was trade, when Warren Hastings was an assistant warehouse clerk and Stamford Raffles was earning a few shillings at a desk of the East India Company, our partnership has developed to such an extent that it now enters almost inextricably into every branch of the life of British India. Such associations, the result of nearly two centuries of splendid endeavour, cannot be destroyed. Such a partnership, of the utmost value, as I believe, as much to India as to ourselves, must not be dissolved. That is the first factor in the situation.

I come to the second factor, which is of a different character. It is not associated in its origin with the British connection at all. It is an integral part of that great wave of nationalism which, particularly in recent years, has swept over the world from one end to the other. It is part of the same movement that we have seen in Europe, in such countries as Poland and Czechoslovakia. It is part of the same movement that we have seen in Asia, in Turkey, in Iraq, in Arabia—and we should be the last people in the world to condemn it. Through almost all our history we have encouraged national movements. In the case of India it is due more to us than to any

other cause that there is the national unity that we now see there. Somehow or other this is the core of the whole problem. We have to reconcile the obligations of this long British partnership with India with the legitimate aspirations of Indians to take a greater part in their own government. That is the problem which faces us, that, in a sentence, is the problem we are discussing to-day.

I have now been interesting myself in Indian questions, in office and out of office, continuously for more than a year, and, if I may with all deference give the House a piece of advice founded upon my own experience, I would say to hon. Members that, in trying to make this reconciliation between these two controlling factors in the Indian problem, they should follow the advice so wisely given by the Prime Minister at the Round Table Conference yesterday, and in this House of Commons this afternoon, and keep clear of phrases and generalities. Phrases and generalities, it seems to me, have done more harm in our attempts to find a reconciliation between the two views, the British and the Indian view, than almost anything else, and, so far as I am concerned, I have always tried to avoid the use of high-sounding phrases and have tried to address myself constantly and continuously to the actual facts. A year ago we were wrangling about the phrase "Dominion status." I hope that we shall not get into a similar wrangle about the phrase "responsibility at the centre." Responsibility at the centre to some people appears to be one of the Ten Commandments that you must always observe, and to others it appears the unforgivable sin that you must never commit. In point of fact, it is a very difficult form of government which we first introduced here, and which we have subsequently seen introduced into other parts of the world.

So far as India is concerned, all three parties are equally committed to accepting the fact that responsible government is the ultimate objective to which all of us are working. It is therefore not a question of whether India is to have responsible government or not, because we are agreed that at some time in the future it will have responsible government; the question to which I invite the attention of the House is not whether India is to have responsible government

or not, but when it is to have responsible government and in what conditions. The Prime Minister's statement and the deliberations of the Round Table Conference throw much light upon the answer that we can at present give to that question.

Let me say, in passing, that so far as the Round Table Conference is concerned I do not admit the justice of many of the criticisms that have been made against it during the course of this Debate. I believe that, though it may have failed so far in finding agreement upon many fundamental questions and a great many details, yet it has played a useful part, and the Indian controversy will never be quite the same again. Speaking for myself, I can honestly say that it has been a great opportunity and a great privilege to me to sit there day after day and week after week with a number of prominent Indian representatives, and to exchange views with them. Very often it was a difficult task. The representative of the Government was in a peculiarly difficult position, and very often my Indian colleagues must have thought me hypercritical, and it may be unnecessarily reserved, but I can assure them and I can assure the House that during those long sessions I learned a great deal, and I believe they learned something too. I am sure that controversy, if controversy there be in the future, is never going to be as bitter as in the past, as a result of the associations and the friendships we have made during these last weeks.

I have said that by the way, and I must come back to the point at which I left my argument, namely, the present position of the Government, and, I believe, of the great majority of hon. Members in this House, towards an advance to responsible government. The Prime Minister's White Paper clearly sets out the position of the Government. We state clearly and categorically in that document that we accept what the Prime Minister said on behalf of the last Government last January. We are prepared to make an advance to responsible government both at the centre and in the provinces upon certain definite and specified conditions. There are two conditions in particular, and even though most hon. Members know all about them

[Sir S. Hoare.]

I must, for the sake of clearness, repeat them at this part of my speech. The first condition is that the responsible government at the centre must be an All-India government, representing both British India and the Indian States. The second condition is that certain obligations which have resulted from our long association with India must be safeguarded, and must be safeguarded, as I think I shall show later, just as much in the interests of India as of ourselves. The whole basis of our discussions during the last 12 months has been that the

constitution that we are considering must be an all-India constitution. As the world grows more closely knit together, as time and distance are eliminated, so it becomes quite impossible in a sub-continent like India for one section of it to be isolated from the other sections, but I am quite sure myself that whether it be in the interests of the Princes and the Indian States, or whether it be in the interests of British India, the future of India must be the future of India as a whole upon an all-India federal basis.

It is the fashion to say that an all-India federation has, during the last few weeks, drifted away to a very distant and very vague background. Let me say categorically that that is not the case. Necessarily, differences have emerged. What else could we expect when dealing with 600 Indian States varying in every detail of their governments, varying from the great State of Hyderabad, as big as some of the great Powers of Europe, to a small State, it may be of a few acres, with a revenue of quite few rupees. Of course there must be differences to be adjusted when one is dealing with a body of individuals and States whose interests and conditions are so very varied. None the less, I can tell the House that the idea of All-India federation definitely still holds the field. Only at the last session of the Round Table Conference the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, His Highness the Nawab of Bhopal, speaking for the Chamber of Princes, and Sir Akbar Hydari, speaking for Hyderabad, the greatest of the Indian States, said that not only was it an ultimate ideal, but it was a practical

factor in the problem, and that they were going back to India to surmount those differences and to make it possible for the Indian States and Princes to take their part in the All-India Federation. So much for the first of the two conditions on which we are prepared to advance towards responsible government.

Let me now come to the second condition, the safeguarding of the obligations that have grown up during the long years of our association with India—obligations, let me say again, that must be satisfied just as much in the interests of India as of ourselves. I have more than once in this House stated those obligations. I venture to state them once again. I shall state them shortly and it may be rather abruptly. I hope that none of our Indian friends will think, upon that account, that I wish to be peremptory about the details or about the machinery for ensuring them. If I state them shortly, it is because I have not an unlimited time during which I can address the House. First of all, until India is in a position to defend herself, our command of the Army must be clear and undisputed and our control of foreign affairs must be reserved. Secondly, our relations with the Princes must be retained by the Crown. Financial stability must be effectively safeguarded, and so ultimately must be internal security. Minorities must be protected, there must be no unfair economic or commercial discrimination against the British trader, and the rights of services recruited by the Secretary of State must be safeguarded.

I said just now that those were obligations which must be protected just as much in the interests of India as of ourselves. Let me tell the House why I think that is so. I will take the case of the Army. Surely until India can defend herself, it is to the advantage of India to be protected from the ravages of invasion, to which, before the British occupation, she was so often subjected. It is therefore immensely to the advantage of India, if India is to develop and if India's new Constitution is to mature, to have the protection of the British Army. Then again, with finance, surely it is to the advantage of India, particularly in this difficult period—and any

period will be difficult when you are embarking on constitutional changes—to have behind it the steady support of British credit. Nothing would do India greater harm than to have its credit shaken. Nothing would do India greater harm, particularly in these difficult days of constitutional changes, than to shake the confidence of British credit to whom India owes so much in the past and to whom, I believe, India will owe so much in the future for the capital it so greatly needs for its own development.

I know I have said enough in the two examples that I have taken to show that when we speak of safeguards we are not creating obstacles for the purpose of blocking India's constitutional development. We are thinking much more of the protection that is urgently needed for India no less than ourselves. These safeguards are not shackles upon India's future; they are rather stays, without which the new Indian Constitution will lack the sure and safe stability that it will so much need. If these obligations can be satisfied, if, on the one hand, we can set up an All-India Federation, and if, on the other hand, we can ensure these necessary reservations, I am prepared to make the advance, both in the centre and in the provinces, that is foreshadowed in the Government White Paper. Indeed, I go so far as to say that I believe that a Government set up under such conditions as I have mentioned might very well be a stronger Government than the Government that we have got in India at the present time.

I do not make the least criticism against any official high or low in the Government of India. I think that they are carrying out their difficult task with magnificent efficiency, but what does strike me, coming fresh to the India Office, in the course of the last few weeks, is that the Government of India as it is at present constituted is vulnerable in two directions. First, it appears to me to be over-centralised. In the old days, when the problem of Government was a central one, and the needs of the governed were very few, it was possible to rule a great continent with a highly centralised machine. I suggest for the consideration of hon. Members that they should give their attention to this side of the problem and ask them-

selves whether, now that the problem of government has become so immensely complicated, the time has not arrived when there ought not to be some kind of decentralisation. That is the reason why I, and I think the great majority of Members in the House, have always been anxious to see this decentralisation carried out in the way of provincial autonomy.

There is another consideration, and if hon. Members will take it into account, they will appreciate its significance. The Government of India to-day is a Government composed of official and nominated non-official members. Almost every politician in the country, to whichever party he belongs, is in the happy position of being in totally irresponsible opposition. That leaves the Government in a very vulnerable position. I look forward to the time when the Government will no longer be in so vulnerable a position, and when, with the ebb and flow of politics, the opposition might be subjected to the salutary checks, the hopes or risks of being in office itself. I am only suggesting these two lines of thought; I do not wish to dogmatise upon them. What I wish is that hon. Members, in approaching this problem, would give them their most careful attention.

If my survey of the situation is correct, I would venture to say that our objective should be the following. First an All-India executive and legislature, and I hope that neither that executive nor that legislature should be too big. They should both be designed for the exclusive purpose of carrying out certain clearly marked federal duties. Secondly, autonomous provinces, in which each province shall be given the greatest possible freedom for its individual development; and, as the basis of the whole structure, safeguards without which British and Indian safety and credit cannot continue. That should be our objective. That is the objective of the Government White Paper. That is the Government envisaged in the White Paper.

Here let me turn aside for a moment and say to my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) that I do not quite understand the bearing of his Amendment upon the statement as I understand it. No doubt to-morrow he

[Sir S. Hoare.]

will elaborate his views when he comes to address the House. Let me only say to him to-night that, knowing the views that he has so brilliantly and so frequently expressed in this House and in the last House, I am a little bit nervous as to whether we and he mean the same thing. One of my great causes of regret during the last few months is that he and I have not always seen alike upon Indian questions, and I would like to be quite clear, before we end the Debate, whether he and I understand the statement and his Amendment in the same way. I do not want to press him now, but let me suggest to him the kind of doubts that are in my mind at any rate. If his Amendment is intended to be a derogation or a diminution of the Government statement, then quite obviously we could not accept it. If it is not intended to be a derogation of the Government statement, then I do not quite understand what it does mean. For instance, there is the passage about the Statute of Westminster. I really do not know what he means by that. The Statute of Westminster has no more to do with the statement of Government policy than the man in the moon. Secondly, there is his point about commercial discrimination. I have said quite clearly that we insist, as one of the safeguards that must be made, that there shall be no unfair discrimination against the British trader. Perhaps to-morrow he will let us into his confidence and tell us whether there is more in his mind than that. Thirdly—what is the third point? [Interruption.] Thirdly, there is the point about law and order.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** The ultimate responsibility of this Parliament.

**Sir S. HOARE:** I hope very much that he and I are in agreement. What we mean is not that the British Government or the Government of India should intervene in the day to day details of Indian administration. If we meant that it would be a mere farce to talk about any transfer of responsibility at all, either at the centre or in the provinces. What we mean is that in extreme cases there must be an ultimate power somewhere, and that ultimate power would reside in the provincial governors and the Viceroy. That is what we mean, and perhaps

to-morrow he will tell us whether he and we mean the same thing. I very much hope we do.

Now, having stated as well as I could the objective of the Government policy, let me, in conclusion, suggest to the House the way in which I think we should approach it. I have noticed in the course of the Debate that there has been a good deal of suspicion in the minds of many hon. Members lest this process of procedure by conference should side-track this House and Parliament as a whole. Let me say clearly and definitely that there is not the least intention in the minds of any member of the Government of side-tracking this House in any way or in any direction. This House must have the final say. This House is a sovereign Parliament, and any Bill that passes on to the Statute Book must stand the fire, at every stage, of discussion both in this House and in the other. Let, therefore, no hon. Member think that he or this House are being pushed out of the picture, and that one of these days we are going to wake up to see some document signed, sealed and delivered behind our backs that we have got to accept at a moment's notice.

Having said that let me, however, add that I think hon. Members, in their own interests, would be wise not to discourage this method of consultation and conference. I would suggest to them that if we are discussing and legislating upon Indian constitutional questions, it is much better that when we come to our Debates we should have for our consideration the views of representative Indians. I think it would help us a great deal, particularly if we had the agreed views of representative Indian opinion. Moreover, in proceeding by this method of conference and consultation we are not adopting any method peculiar to India or Indian affairs. The method of procedure by conference is a method that seems to me to be adopted in dealing with almost every big national and international question at the present time. When the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs goes to Geneva and discusses the Manchurian question or Disarmament, this House is not abdicating its powers. When, again, in a few months time the Imperial Conference meets to discuss the vital question of the Empire's economic future, we, here in this House, are not



divesting ourselves of any of the powers of a sovereign Parliament. I would, therefore, venture to suggest to hon. Members that they would do well not to discourage, but rather to encourage, this method of procedure, always remembering, as I have said more than once in my speech to-night, the final word must rest with them.

As to the committees—and I have been asked a question or two about the committees that are going to report—there again the House is in no way losing its ultimate control. These committees are committees with a definite term of reference to undertake certain inquiries that would have been quite necessary if there had been no Round Table Conference at all. For instance, we would anyhow have had to have a committee about the franchise. That would have emerged directly out of the report of the Indian Statutory Commission. Let me say this about the franchise, as I understand certain anxieties were created earlier in the Debate. Definite instructions will have to be given to the Franchise Committee as to how they are to work. The Prime Minister, when he spoke of the *status quo* in electoral matters, said inferentially that obviously such arrangements as the system of separate electorates, where it at present exists, could not be altered. I say that to show that the Franchise Committee will have to have some definite instructions. So also with the other inquiries. Two of the other inquiries connected with the relations of the Indian States with British India—particularly in matters of finance—those Committees are absolutely essential not only to the Round Table Conference, but even more to this House if we are to come to an intelligent decision when at some time in the future

we discuss the question of changes in the Indian Constitution. I hope that I have now said enough to reassure the House, and to enforce the final appeal which I venture to make to them.

**Earl WINTERTON:** Will my right hon. Friend answer my question about Burma?

**Sir S. HOARE:** I would like to do anything that the Noble Lord asked me, but I cannot answer his question to-night. To-night, I am asking the House of Commons to throw the whole weight of their unprecedented authority behind this attempt to reconcile the British and the Indian point of view, and I am asking hon. Members to keep constantly in mind the factors which I have emphasised in this speech, and to help us in finding reconciliation between Indian aspirations and Imperial needs, between two points of view, both of which are right, and between two great civilisations, each of which, though it may differ from the other, can claim an ancient existence, a splendid history, and a brilliant future. [*Cheers.*]

Motion made, and Question, "That the Debate be now adjourned," put and agreed to.—[*Captain Margesson.*]

Debate to be resumed To-morrow.

—  
*The Orders of the Day were read, and postponed.*

—  
ADJOURNMENT.

Resolved, "That this House do now adjourn."—[*Captain Margesson.*]

Adjourned accordingly at One Minute before Eleven o'Clock.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS.

*Thursday, 3rd December, 1931.*

## [OFFICIAL REPORT.]

*The House met at a Quarter before Three of the Clock, Mr. SPEAKER in the Chair.*

## PRIVATE BUSINESS.

Sea Fisheries Provisional Order Bill,  
As amended, considered; to be read the  
Third time To-morrow.

## ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS.

## COST-OF-LIVING INDEX FIGURE.

1. Major NATHAN asked the Minister of Labour whether he can give any information as to the committee on the cost-of-living index referred to in Professor Bowley's evidence before the Macmillan Committee (question 8,221) and, in particular, the terms of reference, membership, and the date of appointment of that committee, and by whom it was appointed?

The MINISTER of LABOUR (Sir Henry Betterton): I presume the reference in Professor Bowley's evidence is to a Committee of the Economic Advisory Council. The proceedings of the Council and of its Committees are confidential.

Major NATHAN: In so far as the evidence and work of this Committee has been revealed by the published documents, is it not right and proper that the House should be informed of its terms of reference?

Sir H. BETTERTON: The hon. and gallant Member must not ask me to lay confidential Reports before the House.

## UNEMPLOYMENT.

## LIQUOR TRADE.

2. Mr. PIKE asked the Minister of Labour the number of unemployed per-

sons in the liquor industry compared to the numbers unemployed prior to the operation of the Finance (No. 2) Act, 1931?

Sir H. BETTERTON: At 24th August, 1931, there were 14,654 insured persons in the drink industry classification recorded as unemployed in Great Britain. At 26th October, 1931, the number was 16,423. This classification includes the brewing of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks and the bottling of both kinds of beverages.

Mr. HANNON: Do not the figures which the right hon. Gentleman has just given to the House indicate that they ought to make representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Beer Duty should be modified?

Mr. T. WILLIAMS: May I ask whether these figures include barmen and barmaids?

Sir H. BETTERTON: As the hon. Member knows this is a complicated classification, and I think it would be for the convenience of hon. Members if I circulated a statement in the OFFICIAL REPORT.

*Following is the statement:*

The Ministry of Labour "drink industry" classification includes the following:

The manufacture of ale, beer, wines, liqueurs, and spirits, cider, perry, aerated water, herb beers, cordials, fruit juices and syrups, lime juice, non-alcoholic ale and stout, sarsaparilla, and yeast. It also includes the bottling of these drinks, and malt and hop drying, roasting and grinding.

The statistics relating to the numbers of insured workpeople unemployed do not distinguish those engaged in the other branches of the drink industry included within this classification.

## BENEFIT DISALLOWED.

3. Mr. D. M. ADAMS asked the Minister of Labour how many claims to unemployment insurance benefit by men and women, respectively, have been rejected since the 31st August last?

Sir H. BETTERTON: During the period 11th August, 1931, to 9th November, 1931, 72,432 claims to benefit made by men and 137,084 made by women were

[Sir H. Betterton.]

disallowed by courts of referees in Great Britain. In addition 2,516 claims were disallowed by insurance officers under the trade dispute disqualification.

15. Mr. TINKER asked the Minister of Labour how many men and women, separately, have been disallowed benefit for each of the four weeks, in Walsall, by the courts of referees?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** Statistics of claims to benefit considered by courts of referees are compiled monthly. During the four weeks ended 9th November, 1931, 146 claims made by men and 742 made by women were disallowed by the Walsall court of referees.

**Mr. BUCHANAN:** Does that mean that 742 women have been refused benefit under the Anomalies Act or under the Acts that were passed before it?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** No, Sir. The question relates generally to the whole of the cases put before the court of referees, and I have given particulars of those.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS.

4. **Captain FULLER** asked the Minister of Labour whether he will issue a circular to local authorities urging the need for them, when making appointments, to give priority to unemployed men, so long as their qualifications and character justify it, rather than to men already in receipt of means of livelihood in the form of pensions, etc.?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** The consideration mentioned by my hon. and gallant Friend is one which would no doubt be borne in mind in engaging staff, and I do not think it would appropriately form the subject of a circular to local authorities. I may add that if the authorities make use of the Employment Exchanges for this purpose, as many of them do, suitably qualified unemployed men would be submitted, in accordance with the usual Employment Exchange procedure.

**Captain FULLER:** May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman will make a special point of excluding ex-Service men's disability pensions from these instructions?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** That is a matter which does not arise on this question.

#### JUVENILES.

6. **Mr. LEONARD** asked the Minister of Labour whether he is aware that officials in charge of Employment Exchanges (juvenile sections) endeavour to ascertain if boys registering for employment have been members of boy scouts or similar organisations; and if such questions are put on his instructions?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** Yes, Sir. This item of information is generally asked for as it is of assistance to juvenile employment committees in their endeavours to keep in touch with juveniles after they have been placed in employment, and for this purpose the committees make a good deal of use of the various juvenile organisations to which the boys and girls may belong.

**Mr. LEONARD:** May I ask whether such questions do not restrict the field of opportunities for boys who may not be members of such organisations, and would it not be advisable to leave such questions to the employers when the boys present themselves?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** I cannot agree with the hon. Member in his assumption. The procedure now is exactly the same as it has been for many years past, including the time of the Labour Government.

**Mr. NEIL MACLEAN:** Does the fact that a procedure has been in existence for a long time make it necessary to carry on what is a wrong procedure?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** No, but if a procedure has been going on for a long time and has worked well for a number of years that fact must be taken into consideration.

**Mr. HARRIS:** Is not this information used by after-care committees?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** I think that is so.

#### FURNITURE TRADE.

7. **Major-General Sir ALFRED KNOX** asked the Minister of Labour what percentages of workers in the furniture trade were unemployed in 1928; and what is the percentage at the present time?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** At 22nd October, 1928, 4.8 per cent. of insured persons

in the furniture making and upholstering industry classification were recorded as unemployed in Great Britain. At 26th October, 1931, the percentage was 17.3.

**Sir A. KNOX:** In view of the large increase, will the right hon. Gentleman make representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer for some protective duty to be put on?

#### CLUB STEWARDS.

8. **Mr. SOPER** asked the Minister of Labour whether he will consider bringing within the scope of the Unemployment Insurance Acts men employed as club stewards?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** The future scope of the Unemployment Insurance scheme is within the terms of reference of the Royal Commission on Unemployment Insurance, and I must await the Commission's report.

#### WORK SCHEMES.

9. **Mr. LUNN** asked the Minister of Labour whether the Unemployment Grants Committee will consider and approve schemes of work for the unemployed submitted to them by local authorities after 31st December next; and what will be the percentage grant for approved schemes?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** There is nothing I can add to the information which I gave the hon. Member in reply to a similar question put by him on the 26th November last.

**Mr. LUNN:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a very large number of schemes are now before the Unemployment Grants Committee and that a large number are being prepared by local authorities? Is it not time that the Government said something about what is to be their policy for finding work and also for helping local authorities in this matter?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** The answer is this, that the limit of time for presenting schemes for the winter of 1931-1932 is part of the conditions laid down by the Labour Government which we have accepted. With regard to the second part of the question, it is obviously impossible for the Government now to say what

their schemes will be for the winter 1932-1933. It is too early to judge what the position is likely to be then.

**Mr. LAWSON:** Was not the time limit laid down by the late Government for the purpose of encouraging and stimulating local authorities to come to the Unemployment Grants Committee and thus find employment for the unemployed, while the opposite process is now being followed?

**Sir JOSEPH NALL:** Is it not the case that these unnecessary schemes have contributed to the country's present difficulties?

10. **Mr. LUNN** asked the Minister of Labour what was the number of unemployed persons engaged on work schemes approved by the Unemployment Grants Committee on 30th November, 1931; and what was the number similarly employed on 30th November, 1930?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** At 30th October, 1931, the latest date for which figures are available, 51,115 men were directly employed on schemes of work approved by the Unemployment Grants Committee. The corresponding figure for 31st October, 1930, was 43,150.

**Sir JOHN FERGUSON:** May I ask whether the figure quoted by the right hon. Gentleman is in excess of the 7,000 men for whom permanent employment has been found by the Committee?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** Yes, Sir.

11. **Mr. LUNN** asked the Minister of Labour the total amount of grants for work schemes approved by the Unemployment Grants Committee from 1st September to 1st December, 1931; and what was the total amount of similar grants made by the Unemployment Grants Committee from 1st September to 1st December, 1930?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** The information asked for in the first part of the question was given yesterday in reply to a question by the hon. Member for the Deritend Division (Mr. Smedley Crooke). The corresponding information for the period referred to in the last part is £5,750,000, the estimated present value of the grant from State funds being 48.5 per cent. of the cost.

**Mr. LUNN:** Will the right hon. Gentleman give me an answer to the question.

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** I was under the impression that I had given the hon. Member a complete answer. In reply to the first part of his question, I referred him to an answer given yesterday, and, in reply to the second part, I have given him the figures.

**Mr. LUNN:** Is it not a very unusual answer?

TRANSITIONAL PAYMENTS (ASSESSMENT OF MEANS).

12. **Mr. HOLFORD KNIGHT** asked the Minister of Labour whether he has considered the resolution, a copy of which has been sent to him, instructing Labour representatives on public assistance committees to refuse to assess transitional and other cases below the scale agreed on by the Joint London Labour meetings; and whether such an instruction is in accordance with the regulations of the Ministry dealing with such matters?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** I have no knowledge of this matter beyond the reference to it in the Press. As regards the second part of the question the duties of public assistance committees in respect of transitional payments are laid down in the Order-in-Council which requires committees to deal with all applications according to the individual circumstances of each case.

**Mr. KNIGHT:** May I ask whether it is contemplated by the Order to which the right hon. Gentleman has referred that this interference by outside bodies should take place, and whether it is within his knowledge that similar interference is taking place in other parts of the country?

13. **Mr. LAWSON** asked the Minister of Labour whether he is prepared to authorise the payment of expenses of applicants for transitional payments on their being required to attend before a meeting of a relief committee?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** No, Sir. So far as I am aware, the need for such provision has not arisen.

**Mr. LAWSON:** If there is any such need will action be taken?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** If the situation arises it will be considered.

14. **Mr. LAWSON** asked the Minister of Labour whether the words invested savings mentioned in paragraph 4 of the circular of 10th November, 1931 (L.A. 3), include National Savings Certificates, Post Office savings, and money in co-operative societies; and whether it is necessary that such assets should be realised before the payments to a person on transition are determined?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. As regards the second part I cannot add anything to the considerations brought to the notice of authorities in the circular itself.

**Mr. LAWSON:** Does that mean that the assets should be realised before payment is made?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** No. If the hon. Gentleman will look at the circular he will see that it contains quite clearly the meaning of the expression.

**Mr. LAWSON:** Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the public assistance committees are in trouble because they do not know what the circular means?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** I have endeavoured to make, as clear as language can make it, what the meaning of that expression is. I cannot help it if they cannot understand what is really a very plain statement.

**Mr. LAWSON:** In view of the fact that public assistance committees, such as Sheffield and others, are finding very great difficulty—

**HON. MEMBERS:** Speech!

**Mr. SPEAKER:** The hon. Member is now repeating the original question.

16. **Mr. GORDON MACDONALD** asked the Minister of Labour if he will state the number of members of public assistance committees that have declined to administer the means test to unemployed persons on transitional payments?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** I have no information as to the action of individual members of public assistance committees, but I am happy to say that all committees are co-operating in the task of administering transitional payments.

23. **Captain FRASER** asked the Minister of Labour if His Majesty's Government will take the necessary steps to make it obligatory on public assistance committees when dealing with transitional payments not to take into account disability pensions when assessing the incomes of ex-service men?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** I cannot issue any instructions which would conflict with the Order-in-Council. Under the Order, the public assistance authority must not make it a rule to disregard disability pensions, but in considering the needs of a pensioner, they must have regard to his disability, and it is entirely within their discretion to make an increase of award, within the limits of the full rate of transitional payments, on the ground of that disability, and the increase of need that results from it.

**Captain FRASER:** Could the hon. Gentleman answer the precise question that I asked him? I asked him, not to make regulations, but to legislate.

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** I really cannot give the undertaking asked for. In my answer, I have endeavoured to explain quite clearly what the position of public assistance committees is, and I cannot give any undertaking to embark on legislation.

**Mr. W. THORNE:** Will the same sympathetic consideration be given to disability compensation cases?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** That question shows how difficult it is to treat these cases of disability in isolation. Compensation cases also might have a claim for consideration.

**Mr. LANSBURY:** In case of any action, will the hon. Gentleman also consider the need pension of the wife of a man who has died in France or Flanders?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** That again shows that there are other questions which will have to be considered. The matter must be considered as a whole, and it is difficult to regard one particular item in isolation from the others.

Several **HON. MEMBERS** *rose*—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** We cannot go on with this question indefinitely.

#### STATISTICS.

17. **Mr. LOUIS SMITH** asked the Minister of Labour if he will issue a table showing the latest percentages of unemployment in the iron and steel manufacturing industries, the motor-vehicle industry, the paper-making industry, and the hosiery industry?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** The figures desired by my hon. Friend will be found in the issue of the Ministry of Labour Gazette for November, pages 432 and 433.

18. **Mr. T. WILLIAMS** asked the Minister of Labour if he will state the number of unemployed workers during July and October, respectively, in the coal, iron and steel, cotton, building, and shipbuilding industries?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** The figures desired by the hon. Member will be found in the issues of the Ministry of Labour Gazette for August and November, respectively, pages 310 and 311, 430 and 431.

19. **Mr. ANEURIN BEVAN** asked the Minister of Labour if he will state how many persons were in employment in the iron and steel, coal, cotton, building, and shipbuilding industries, respectively, during each of the past three months?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** Statistics of the numbers actually in employment in individual industries are not available for the dates referred to, but the estimated total number of insured persons in each industry classification at the beginning of July, 1931, will be found in the November issue of the "Ministry of Labour Gazette," while the numbers recorded as unemployed towards the end of August, September and October, will be found in the issues of the Gazette for September, October and November.

**Mr. BEVAN:** Cannot the hon. Gentleman provide the House with more recent information?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** I have told the hon. Member that the information is in the issue for November. I cannot tell him more than that.

**Mr. LAWSON:** The last issue of the Gazette came out about 15th November, over a fortnight ago. Is it not possible to get more recent information?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** The hon. Gentleman is really a little unreasonable. If we had to obtain these further very complicated figures, it would mean a great deal of labour.

**Mr. BEVAN:** Cannot we have the figures of employment up to a more recent date, in the same way as hon. Members can get the figures as to imports?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** The hon. Gentleman knows that the books extend from the beginning of the month of July in each year, and it is only from July that there is any classification of trades in relation to unemployment in those trades. The other question I have answered already.

**Mr. MAXTON:** Will the Minister consider whether this method of answering questions by reference to obscure publications is the most convenient form in which the information can be given to Members?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** I am extremely sorry that the hon. Gentleman thinks that the "Ministry of Labour Gazette" is an obscure publication, for I know no more careful student of the Gazette than the hon. Member when he wants to use it for the purpose of attacking the Government.

#### ECONOMY MEASURES.

22. **Mr. COCKS** asked the Minister of Labour if he can give an estimate of the number of persons who have lost their employment, directly and indirectly, respectively, as the result of the abandonment, in pursuance of the Government's economy policy, of schemes of local development?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** While I am not in possession of any comprehensive figures I can say quite definitely that the alarmist reports on this subject which have appeared in the Press have no substantial foundation. The Government in recommending to local authorities that they should submit all items of expenditure to a careful and detailed scrutiny, expressly warned them against the dangers of embarking on a wholesale and ill-considered course of cutting down expenditure whatever be its character or its purpose. It is clear, in any event, that owing to commitments already entered into, there will in fact be a large

volume of employment provided by local authorities during the coming winter. I venture also to remind the House that the effect of the economy measures upon employment should be judged, not in relation to the narrow area which they directly restrict, but with regard to this much wider field of industry as a whole; and here, while making due allowance for the various factors which have operated, I may fairly claim that our experience in the past few months has given us real ground for encouragement.

**Mr. LAWSON:** Has not the Government definitely closed down works in connection with the Road Fund and transport?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** Obviously that question should be addressed to the Minister of Transport.

**Mr. LAWSON:** If what I have stated is the case is it not a direct contradiction of the answer the hon. Gentleman has given.

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** Any question with regard to roads and transport must be addressed to the Minister of Transport. I have endeavoured, to the best of my ability, to answer the question on the Paper.

#### BENEFIT.

48. **Mr. TINKER** asked the Prime Minister to what extent the cost of living must rise before he will consider increasing the unemployment benefits?

**The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Ramsay MacDonald):** I cannot deal with a purely hypothetical question. For the general position, I would refer the hon. Member to the discussions on the National Economy Bill, especially the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Minister of Labour on the 28th September last.

**Mr. TINKER:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that he made great play about the cost-of-living when he talked about the reduction of benefit, and is it not time that we knew something about the position if the cost-of-living should rise?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** That is a different point. That is a purely hypothetical question. There is a relation, but it is not purely mathematical.

**Mr. A. BEVAN:** Is it not desirable for the right hon. Gentleman to arm himself with powers before the Adjournment, in order that he might be able to make an adjustment with regard to the cost-of-living?

**Mr. BUCHANAN:** In view of the Prime Minister's statement that the question of rent was playing a very important part in regard to unemployment benefit, will the right hon. Gentleman say if he has yet come to any decision as to what can be done to ease the problem of rents for the unemployed?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** Not as yet.

#### ALIENS.

66. **Vice-Admiral TAYLOR** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the large number of unemployed in this country, he will consider the imposition of a poll tax on all aliens not owning their own business or employing labour?

**The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Chamberlain):** No, Sir. There are many objections to the imposition of such a tax, and in any case I do not think it would be a suitable instrument for effecting the object which my hon. and gallant Friend has in view.

**Vice-Admiral TAYLOR:** Is it not a fact that there are a great number of men unemployed owing to their jobs being taken by aliens?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** My hon. and gallant Friend is no doubt aware that the entry of aliens into the country is very carefully restricted.

#### WASHINGTON HOURS CONVENTION.

5. **Mr. MANDER** asked the Minister of Labour the policy of the Government with reference to the ratification of the Washington Eight Hours' Convention; and what action, if any, for revision or otherwise is contemplated?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to the hon. Member for Chester-le-Street (Mr. Lawson) on 30th November.

**Mr. MANDER:** Does the right hon. Gentleman appreciate the great import-

ance of this matter in view of the attempts that are being made to lengthen hours in Lancashire and other parts of the country?

**Mr. HANNON:** As a matter of fact, are not we better off in this country so far as hours of labour are concerned than if we ratified this Convention?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** With regard to the question asked by the hon. Member for Wolverhampton East (Mr. Mander), I am not at all prepared to say that, if the Convention had been in operation in this country, the same difficulties would not have arisen.

**Mr. T. WILLIAMS:** Is it not the case, and does not all the information supplied to him by his Department prove it, that there can be no final solution of unemployment, until we settle this question?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** That is a different question.

#### JUVENILE OFFENDERS.

24. **Major NATHAN** asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he proposes to introduce a Bill to give legislative effect to the recommendations contained in the Report of the Departmental Committee on the Treatment of Young Offenders (Cmd. 2831) especially in relation to the abolition of imprisonment for young persons under 17 years of age, and the abolition of the sentence of death upon any person under the age of 18?

**The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Sir Herbert Samuel):** Yes, Sir. As I stated in reply to a question by the hon. Member for Chelmsford (Sir V. Henderson) on Thursday last, the Government hope to be able to introduce a Bill dealing with this subject in the course of the present Session.

#### POLICE.

##### MOTOR ACCIDENT, WHITEHALL.

27. **Mr. RIKE** asked the Home Secretary whether he is aware that on 25th November, at approximately 12.35 p.m., a small child was run down by a motor omnibus in Whitehall; that the constable on duty, after handing the child into the care of a pedestrian, left the scene



[Mr. Pike.]

of the accident, and that seven minutes elapsed before the child was placed in a car and taken to hospital; that this was entirely due to the initiative of a pedestrian; and will he assure the House that in any such future event the police will be empowered to claim the assistance of the first approaching car?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** I have made inquiry and find that the constable placed the child in the care of a bystander while he went to a telephone nearby to summon an ambulance. The police may, in proper cases, obtain the use of cabs or private motor cars for the removal of injured persons to hospital, but it is not always possible to ascertain on the spot the full extent of the injuries which have been suffered: much harm may be done by removal in an unsuitable vehicle, and when an ambulance can be obtained quickly it is generally safer and better in every way to await the arrival of that vehicle. I do not think any fresh instructions are required.

**Mr. HARRIS:** Is it not a fact that the London County Council have a complete system of motor ambulances which, if properly utilised by the police, affords facilities in these cases?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** Yes, Sir; and in this case the constable was making use of the service.

**Mr. LUNN:** Will the right hon. Gentleman make inquiries as to whether the policeman in this case left the scene of the accident, although the child had been run down?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** The policeman went to summon the ambulance.

#### COMMISSIONER (EMOLUMENTS).

36. **Mr. G. MACDONALD** asked the Home Secretary whether the terms of the appointment of the present Commissioner of the Police and the emoluments he receives are the same as those paid to his predecessor?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** The terms and emoluments are the same except that in Lord Trenchard's case the pay of the post (at the rate of £3,000 a year) has been abated by 10 per cent. under the Superannuation Act, 1887, because Lord Trenchard is in receipt of half-pay as Marshal

of the Royal Air Force, and by a further 10 per cent. as part of the measures recently introduced for securing economy in police expenditure.

#### METROPOLITAN FORCE (STRENGTH).

37. **Lieut.-Colonel Sir FREDERICK HALL** asked the Home Secretary what is the total strength of the Metropolitan Police Force; and how many of the officers and men employed in the force are engaged in duties relating to the control of traffic and other work not bearing directly on the detection and suppression of crime and the protection of the public against evil-doers?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** The total establishment of the Metropolitan Police Force (excluding men employed at the cost of Government Departments and others, mainly at dockyards, etc.), is 20,098 and the actual strength 19,844. The number employed on traffic duties is 1,287 and on clerical and administrative duties is approximately 1,502.

**Sir F. HALL:** Has the right hon. Gentleman's attention been called to a statement by a learned judge recently to the effect that crime is now greater than it was 60 years ago; has he considered the large number of men utilised on traffic regulation, and the importance of the duties of the police in looking after criminals; and, in view of the necessity for the protection of property in this country, will he consider increasing the force?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** The suppression of serious crime is a matter of the first importance, to which the police must primarily direct their attention and their efforts, but the proportion of the Metropolitan Police engaged on traffic duties is only small.

**Mr. T. WILLIAMS:** Does the right hon. Gentleman in any way connect the increase of crime with the poverty problem in this country?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** I would like notice of that question.

#### SUNDAY RACE MEETINGS.

28. **Mr. DENVILLE** asked the Home Secretary what steps, if any, he proposes to take to prevent racing by horses, dogs,

etc., in this country, on Sundays, at which charges for admission are made and book-makers are present?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** The enforcement of the law in this matter does not rest with the Home Secretary. In case of any infringement of the Sunday Observance Act, 1780, Parliament has provided that the remedy shall be by way of civil action for penalties.

#### AIR-GUNS (ACCIDENT, BETHNAL GREEN).

29. **Mr. HARRIS** asked the Home Secretary whether his attention has been called to the injury caused to a boy in Bethnal Green recently by another boy firing an air-gun obtained through cigarette coupons; and whether he proposes to make any restrictions on the use of air-guns in crowded areas?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** This incident had not previously come to my notice, but I have obtained particulars. I presume that the hon. Member has in mind the possibility of applying the provisions of the Firearms Act, 1920, to the use of air-guns in crowded areas, but there is only power to apply those provisions to specially dangerous types and thus far no sufficient ground has been shown for applying them. A gun licence is already required for carrying or using an air-gun outside the curtilage of a dwelling-house, and the Metropolitan Police Act, 1839, provides penalties for the wanton discharge of any missile to the damage or danger of any person.

**Mr. HARRIS:** Does the right hon. Gentleman realise that by the firing of this air-gun in this area another small child lost an eye?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** I understand that, unfortunately, that is so.

#### SUNDAY PERFORMANCES.

30. **Sir J. FERGUSON** asked the Home Secretary whether he has considered the request made by associations representative of the theatre industry for the setting up of a Departmental inquiry into the whole question of Sunday performances; and whether, in view of the fact that the Sunday Performances (Tem-

porary Regulation) Act is due to expire in October, 1932, he will consider the advisability of instituting such an inquiry at an early date?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply which I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield (Mr. Remer) on the 23rd November. I have received the request referred to and it is having my consideration.

#### SWEEPSTAKES.

31. **Mr. HALL-CAINE** asked the Home Secretary whether he will consider favourably the investment of the Racecourse Betting Control Board with power to promote sweepstakes in Great Britain, in order that money for sweepstakes purposes shall, as far as possible, be retained in this country?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** This proposal would require legislation and I am not contemplating introducing a Bill for this purpose.

**Mr. BUCHANAN:** Is it not time that the Racecourse Betting Board was shut down entirely as a useless body?

#### CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

32. **Mr. VYVYAN ADAMS** asked the Home Secretary the number of executions that have taken place since the Select Committee reported in favour of a suspension of the death penalty for a period of five years?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** The number is eight.

**Mr. ADAMS:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the public anxiety that some decision should be come to quickly on this matter?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** That does not arise out of the question on the Paper.

#### MAINTENANCE ORDERS (IMPRISONMENT).

33. **Mr. HUTCHISON** asked the Home Secretary in how many cases during the past 12 months men in receipt of unemployment benefit have been imprisoned for being in default with payments under orders to contribute to their wife's

[Mr. Hutchison.]

maintenance, the amount of the men's income from all sources, and the amount ordered to be paid for such maintenance in each case; and whether he will consider taking steps to prevent the imprisonment of persons in such cases?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** The information asked for in the first part of the question is not available. As regards the second part, it is for the Court to decide whether an order of committal to prison should issue in default of payment in any particular instance. I see no ground for proposing the alteration of the law so as to make it impossible to commit to prison in the class of case to which the hon. Member refers, for without power to commit there would often be no effective inducement to pay.

**Mr. HUTCHISON:** Can the right hon. Gentleman say if there are not a certain number of people now in prison for maintenance orders of 25s. who have been receiving unemployment pay?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** I must have notice of that question.

#### WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION.

35. **Mr. G. MACDONALD** asked the Home Secretary whether he is aware of the long delay in the settlement of compensation cases where an employer who has failed to insure his workpeople for compensation purposes goes into liquidation; and whether he is prepared to take the necessary action at an early date to facilitate the settlement of such cases?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** I am giving further consideration to the question whether any change in the existing law is practicable. The question of devising a remedy by fresh legislation raises points of much difficulty, but I propose to go further into the matter.

**Mr. MACDONALD:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that there are scores of miners who have been waiting as long as two and a-half years and have not yet got any compensation?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** I believe that the liquidators in these cases endeavour to expedite claims of this class, but the matter can only be dealt with, absolutely and finally, by fresh legislation.

**Mr. TINKER:** Would not compulsory insurance under the Workmen's Compensation Acts meet the case?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** That is a project which is being examined, but there are difficulties in the way of it also. I hope to go into the matter further.

**Mr. MAXTON:** Why this speed in the matter of motor cars and this slowness in the matter of miners?

#### LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (SCHOLARSHIPS).

39. **Mr. McENTEE** asked the President of the Board of Education whether he is aware that the London County Council contemplates the reduction of maintenance grants awarded to the Council's scholarship holders; and, in view of the fact that the Board have decided not to reduce grants for higher education, what steps he proposes to take in the matter?

**The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of EDUCATION (Sir Donald Maclean):** I understand that the London County Council are considering the possibility of effecting economies in their expenditure on maintenance allowances, but that no decision has yet been reached by the Council on the subject. I am accordingly not in a position to say what action I may be likely to take in the matter.

#### HOUSING.

##### CLEARANCE ORDERS.

42. **Mr. J. JONES** asked the Minister of Health the number of clearance orders submitted by local authorities during the four weeks ended 21st November under Section 2 of the Housing Act, 1930, the number approved or confirmed, and the areas affected?

**The MINISTER of HEALTH (Sir Hilton Young):** During the period in question, eight clearance orders were submitted for areas in the County Boroughs of Reading and Wallasey and the Rural District of Hinckley, and nine were confirmed relating to areas in the Metropolitan Borough of Wandsworth, the County Borough of Smethwick and the Urban District of Prestwich.

## WORKS NOTICES (APPEALS).

43. **Mr. J. JONES** asked the Minister of Health if he will give to the latest convenient date the number of appeals against the execution of works notices issued by local authorities under the Housing Act, 1930; and the number that have been confirmed, quashed, or varied by order of the county court?

52. **Mr. D. M. ADAMS** asked the Minister of Health how many appeals against the execution of works notices issued by local authorities under the Housing Act, 1930, have been confirmed, quashed, and varied, respectively, by county court justices?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** The Housing Act, 1930, came into operation on the 15th August, 1930, and I am informed that between that date and the 31st December, 1930, the latest date for which figures are available, 11 appeals were entered under Section 22 of the Act. Of these five were withdrawn or otherwise disposed of and six were pending on the 31st December.

**Colonel CROOKSHANK:** Will the right hon. Gentleman consider any measure for dealing with city and urban areas on the lines of the Rural Housing Act?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** I think I should certainly have notice of that question.

## RURAL AUTHORITIES ACT.

53. **Sir J. WALKER SMITH** asked the Minister of Health what progress is being made by the committee appointed by the Minister of Health on 31st July, 1931, under the Housing (Rural Authorities) Act, 1931; whether or not it is still considered desirable that houses should be provided under the terms of the Act; and, if so, whether he will take steps to that end to secure expedition in the activities of his Department and the committee concerned?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** The committee, of which my hon. Friend is a member, have held one meeting and have arranged to hold another meeting when all applications have been received. The Act is operative, and applications under it must be considered by the committee. I do not understand what my hon. Friend has in mind in the last part of his question.

The time allowed for local authorities to make applications only expired this week.

**Sir J. WALKER SMITH:** Does the right hon. Gentleman claim to exercise the same pressure and use the same influence with the rural local authorities as has caused the urban local authorities previously to estimate their needs and submit their proposals for many hundreds of thousands of pounds?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** I do not quite understand the bearing of my hon. Friend's supplementary question, but the Act, as I have already said, will be administered according to the law.

## LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL PROGRAMME.

59. **Mr. COVE** asked the Minister of Health the number of houses proposed to be demolished by the London County Council under its five years' programme and the number which it now proposes to demolish?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** The number is 3,000. I have not been informed of any alteration.

## PADDINGTON (LOCK HOSPITAL SITE).

62. **Miss RATHBONE** asked the Minister of Health whether his attention has been drawn to the site of the Lock Hospital, in Paddington, extending to four acres and now advertised for sale; and whether his approval of its use as a site for working-class houses has been applied for?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** I am aware that the property referred to has been for sale for some time. My approval for its purchase for housing purposes has not been applied for.

**Mr. HARRIS:** Will the right hon. Gentleman bring pressure on the public authorities concerned to make use of this most suitable site, which is badly wanted in that area?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** No, Sir; I am not of opinion that this is a case in which I should bring pressure to bear upon the local authorities.

## OLD AGE PENSIONS.

44. **Mr. J. JONES** asked the Minister of Health the number of men aged 65 or over, with wives not yet 65, who are in

[Mr. Jones.]

receipt of an old age pension and have no other source of income; and if he will consider such amendments to the Widows', Orphans', and Old Age Contributory Pensions Act, 1925, as will make possible the payment of a pension to the wife under 65 of an old age pensioner who is unable to obtain employment of an amount equal to that payable for an adult dependant under unemployment insurance?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** As the hon. Member is doubtless aware, an old age pension payable to an insured person is not subject to a means test, and even if it were possible to estimate the number of married pensioners whose wives have not yet reached the age of 65, in itself a task of considerable difficulty, it would be quite impossible to ascertain or compute the number of them who have no other source of income than the pension. The answer to the second part of the question is in the negative. The addition suggested would entirely change the character of the pensions payable under the Act of 1925 which, not being associated with earnings or other means, are not now subject to revision with any change in the circumstances of the recipients.

#### DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE (BRITISH DELEGATION).

45. **Mr. MANDER** asked the Prime Minister if he is now able to state the composition of the British delegation to the Disarmament Conference of the League of Nations?

46. **Mr. COCKS** asked the Prime Minister who will be the representatives of His Majesty's Government at the forthcoming World Disarmament Conference; and whether, in view of the importance of this subject, he will allow time for a debate before Christmas?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** I would refer my hon. Friends to the answers which I gave yesterday in reply to questions by my right hon. Friend the Member for St. Marylebone (Sir R. Rodd) and my hon. Friend the Member for Southampton (Mr. Craven-Ellis).

**Mr. MANDER:** Can my right hon. Friend give the House an assurance that no attention will be paid to the propaganda which is going on in certain foreign countries for the postponement of the Conference?

**Mr. COCKS:** Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the second part of my question as to whether time will be allowed for debate?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** No further time than will be available on the Motion for the Adjournment.

#### NATIONAL FINANCE.

##### LAND VALUES TAX.

47. **Mr. LAMBERT** asked the Prime Minister if he will give time for a discussion of Part III of the Finance Act, 1931, or, failing a decision of the House, will he direct a suspension of land valuation activities?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** I cannot arrange to give special facilities for such a discussion. As regards the second part of the question, I can add nothing to the answers which have been given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on this subject.

**Mr. LAMBERT:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that many of his supporters, hon. Members of this House, cannot assent to a continuance of these Land Values Duties without stultifying themselves in the eyes of their constituents?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** There are others who also require to suffer a good deal of stultification, but a debate of one day or any length of time would not alter the legal situation.

**Mr. HARRIS:** Will the right hon. Gentleman consult the Lord Privy Seal on the matter?

**Mr. LAMBERT:** May we have an answer as to when this statement is to be made?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** That question should be addressed to the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

**Mr. MARJORIBANKS:** Will the right hon. Gentleman implement the suggestion contained in the original question without discussion, as he considers discussion waste of time?

73. **Mr. THOMAS COOK** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer the number of officials at present employed in order to operate Part III of the Finance Act, 1931, and the weekly cost to the Exchequer of their employment?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** The number of officials at present employed is 716. The present weekly cost to the Exchequer is approximately £2,750.

**Mr. COOK:** Is the House to understand that that expenditure is to be incurred until the next Budget?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** Perhaps the hon. Member will be good enough to await the statement that I promised to make to the House.

#### INTER-ALLIED DEBTS.

67 and 68. **Mr. THORNE** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) the dates of the funding of the Italian and French War Debts, respectively; the terms of the settlements; and whether any portion of the debts arising from the settlements was added permanently to the National War Debt of Great Britain;

(2) the amount of the French War Debt to Great Britain at the time of the funding of the debt; and the terms of the settlement?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** The Agreements for the funding of the Italian and French War Debts were signed on 27th January, 1926, and 16th July, 1926, respectively. The net amounts of the Italian and French War Debts as at the date of funding were £560,000,000 and £600,000,000, respectively. The detailed terms of the settlements are given in Command Papers 2580 and 2692 of 1926. The sums advanced to France and Italy were, of course, borrowed by the British Government and constitute part of our War Debt. The average cost of borrowing during the War was over 5 per cent.; and on this basis, the funding agreements represent a remission of 62 per cent. of the French War Debt and of 86 per cent. of the Italian War Debt,

and the British taxpayer has been left to bear an equivalent proportion of the charge involved by these war borrowings.

**Mr. THORNE:** Does that mean that in round figures we give Italy a sum of over £500,000,000, which is costing the taxpayer over £20,000,000 per annum; and that we give France over £400,000,000?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** The hon. Member's figures are not quite accurate, but they are not very much above the actual figures.

**Mr. COCKS:** Who is responsible for this?

#### INCOME TAX.

79. **Captain CAZALET** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer the total sum of arrears of Income Tax and Surtax, separately, owing to the Exchequer up to the latest convenient date?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** In the case of Income Tax the only estimate that I can furnish in respect of arrears outstanding for past years is the amount of those arrears which it is estimated will be collected during the current financial year. At the 30th September last this amounted to about £15,000,000. As regards Surtax, including Super-tax, it was estimated at the 30th September last that the amount of tax then in assessment for past years, which will ultimately prove to be collectible after allowing for reductions and discharges, was about £6,000,000.

80. **Mr. HANNON** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer the amount of Income Tax paid by co-operative societies under Schedule A during the financial year 1930-31 and the gross and net assessments on which this tax was assessed?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** I regret that this information is not available. The statistics collected regarding the Income Tax Schedule A are not classified according to the ownership of the property under charge.

**Mr. HANNON:** Is my right hon. Friend contemplating any change in the taxation of co-operative societies?

84. **Mr. CLARRY** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what will be the position in 1932-33 of taxpayers assessable

[Mr. Clarry.]  
under Schedule E who, in this year 1931-32, have voluntarily accepted a reduction in their emoluments; and will they, in 1932-33, be assessed upon the basis of the actual balance of emoluments of 1931-32 after the waiver or on the full contractual emoluments, although part of them have been voluntarily surrendered?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** I assume that my hon. Friend has in mind the case of a taxpayer assessable to Income Tax under Schedule E who, without any question of subsequent recoupment, agrees to accept a reduction of his emoluments for a part or the whole of the year 1931-32. In such a case the Income Tax liability for the year 1932-33 would be based on the actual emoluments of the employment for the year 1931-32. I would, however, remind my hon. Friend that, as stated by my predecessor on the 29th September last, the Income Tax Acts do not authorise any relief from Income Tax in respect of voluntary gifts which a taxpayer may make out of his income.

**Mr. CLARRY:** Is it not the case that a taxpayer who voluntarily waived part of his contractual emoluments would be in a worse situation than a taxpayer who had had to accept a forced reduction?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** That really depends upon the form in which the arrangement is made. If it takes the form of a new contract, then the taxpayer will pay on the reduced emoluments.

85. **Mr. POTTER** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is aware that foreign fishery-vessel owners landing fish in this country make no contribution to our national taxation in respect of the earnings arising out of the proceeds of sale of such fish; and whether he will take steps to have such earnings ascertained and assessed for Income Tax purposes?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** It is understood that foreign owners of fishery vessels who land fish in this country normally sell through general commission agents and cannot therefore be charged to tax through those agents under the existing law. I would remind my hon. Friend that the exemption of the general commission agent was confirmed and extended by the provisions of Section 17 of

the Finance Act, 1925, and that powers were taken in Section 17 of the Finance Act, 1930, to agree with other countries for the reciprocal exemption from Income Tax of certain profits arising through agencies.

#### MONETARY POLICY.

70. **Mr. CRAVEN-ELLIS** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether it is his intention to proceed with the development of a national monetary policy without seeking the co-operation of the United States and France;

(2) if it is his intention to suggest the framing of an Empire monetary policy as an item for discussion at the Imperial Conference to be held at Ottawa in 1932?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** I would refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Colchester (Mr. O. Lewis) on the 12th November.

**Mr. HAMMERSLEY:** Is it not a fact that while we are off the Gold Standard, we are in fact operating on a national monetary policy?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** That is a matter of opinion.

71. **Mr. LECKIE** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the continued decline in sterling, he can reassure the House and the country that steps are being taken to cope with the problem of the international exchange?

87. **Mr. JOHN** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he has taken, or proposes to take, under the Gold Standard (Amendment) Act, 1931, to protect the pound from further depreciation?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** I understand that the weakness of the exchange during recent weeks is ascribed primarily to factors abroad, which are not within our control, coinciding with heavy seasonal and other demands for imports. I see no reason to view recent movements with apprehension.

81. **Mr. HANNON** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will be in a position to make a statement before the House adjourns for the Recess on any measures contemplated by the Government to bring about either an international agreement or an inter-Imperial agreement relating to currency?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** The suggestions made by my hon. Friend cover questions which are constantly under my attention, but I do not anticipate that I shall be in a position to make any such statement in the near future.

**Mr. HANNON:** Will my right hon. Friend be prepared to make a statement on the resumption of the House after the Recess?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** Perhaps my hon. Friend will put a question to me then.

**Mr. BOOTHBY:** Will it be on the Agenda for the forthcoming Imperial Conference?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** I cannot answer that question.

86. **Mr. HAMMERSLEY** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government is prepared to co-operate in any international scheme to broaden the metallic basis of currency?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. and gallant Member for North-East Bethnal Green (Major Nathan) on the 26th November.

**Mr. HAMMERSLEY:** Does not my right hon. Friend appreciate the fact that a lack of world-purchasing power is one of the main causes of our present economic position, and would it not be desirable for our Government to take some action in the matter?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** If the Government can see any prospect of any useful result following upon an international conference no doubt they will take action.

**Mr. AUSTIN HOPKINSON:** Would not much the simplest way of increasing purchasing power be to reduce weights and measures all round?

90. **Mr. CHARLES BROWN** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any steps have been taken to control the purchase of foreign exchange under the powers given to the Treasury, and the nature of such steps?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** On the 22nd September the Treasury made an Order under Section 1-(3) of the Gold Standard

(Amendment) Act, 1931, that until further notice purchases of foreign exchange, or transfers of funds with the object of acquiring such exchange directly or indirectly, by British subjects or persons resident in the United Kingdom were prohibited except for the purpose of financing normal trading requirements, contracts existing before 21st September, 1931, or reasonable travelling or other personal purposes.

#### BEER DUTY.

74. **Mr. T. COOK** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is aware that by the increased duty on beer the output by the brewers and the consumption by the people has fallen in the County of Norfolk by 50 per cent. resulting in more unemployment; is he aware that this increased duty has jeopardised the barley trade; and what steps he proposes to take to remedy this state of affairs?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** All relevant facts will naturally be taken into consideration when the beer duty, in common with other duties, is reviewed in connection with next year's Budget.

#### ABNORMAL IMPORTATIONS DUTY.

75. **Mr. SOPER** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is aware that officers of customs are demanding a duty of 50 per cent. on small metal ash-trays and numerous other fancy articles on the ground that they are furniture; and is he prepared to publish a detailed list of what is to be regarded as an article of furniture in order to limit the prevailing confusion?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** I am not aware that such demands are being made. As regards the last part of the question, I would refer the hon. Member to the second part of the Schedule to the Abnormal Importations No. 2 Order, 1931, which names the descriptions of metal furniture liable to duty.

77. **Mr. HARRIS** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is aware that officers of customs are demanding, under abnormal imports duties, wrapping paper, a duty of 50 per cent. on toy picture books and other fancy articles and toys made of paper; and, in order to remove the confusion and delays, will he give



[Mr. Harris.]  
instructions that the wrapping-paper duty shall be levied only on wrapping paper and not on manufactured articles?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** My hon. Friend seems to be under some misapprehension as to the scope of the duty. The Board of Trade Order mentions specifically not only paper but articles made from paper.

78. **Mr. HARRIS** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if, under the Abnormal Imports (Customs Duties) Act, British materials sent abroad to undergo a process of work will be charged a duty of 50 per cent. on the full value on re-entry or only on the value of the work performed on the material?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** The Abnormal Importations Duty will not be charged on British materials brought back to this country after being sent abroad for processing, provided that the process has not changed their form or character, or destroyed their identity, and that the Customs formalities as to identification at exportation and importation are duly observed. Any foreign dutiable material added would in any case be charged.

#### TEA (DUTY).

76. **Lieut.-Colonel MAYHEW** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will now consider reimposing the duty on foreign-grown tea?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** I am unable to make any statement on this subject at present.

**Lieut.-Colonel MAYHEW:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that nearly every Empire tea company has been affected by the removal of the tax on foreign tea, and that not only have profits disappeared, but heavy losses have been incurred by the shareholders?

#### EMPIRE BRANDY (PREFERENCE).

79. **Mr. HANNON** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is aware of the improvement effected in the quality of brandy produced in various parts of the Empire during recent years; and if he will be prepared to make a substantial increase in the preference now enjoyed in Great Britain by Empire brandy as against brandy produced in foreign countries?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** I am glad to have my hon. Friend's testimony to the improvement which has been effected in the quality of Empire brandy, but, as regards the second part of the question, I am unable to make any statement at present.

**Mr. HANNON:** May I ask my right hon. Friend whether, on the face of my testimony, he is not prepared to take into consideration in his next Budget brandy produced in the Empire in competition with brandy produced in foreign countries?

#### FOREIGN CURRENCY (BRITISH HOLDERS).

89. **Mr. C. BROWN** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any steps have been taken to ensure that British nationals who sell goods abroad bring the money received for such goods back to this country, or whether they are permitted to retain such moneys abroad?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** No restrictions of the kind suggested in the question have been imposed or appear under present circumstances to be called for; but it is certainly in the national interest that holders of foreign currency, whether from exports or dividends or otherwise, should repatriate the proceeds in sterling, and I have no reason to believe that this practice is not being followed.

## PUBLIC HEALTH.

### IMPORTED MILK REGULATIONS.

49. **Brigadier - General CLIFTON BROWN** asked the Minister of Health whether he is aware of the importation last week of milk churns containing foreign imported liquid milk; and what are the medical regulations under which this milk is allowed into this country?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** Yes Sir. The regulations in question are the Public Health (Imported Milk) Regulations, and these provide for registration of consignees by the Port Sanitary Authority, and require that imported milk shall not contain more than 100,000 bacteria per cubic centimetre, and shall be free from tubercle bacilli. I may add that samples of the milk referred to by my hon. and gallant Friend are being taken under the regulations.

**Brigadier-General BROWN:** How do they decide the number of bacteria in the milk if pasteurized milk is allowed to come in? How do they detect them?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** As I have stated, the actual samples of the milk are taken, and from them the number of bacilli in the milk is ascertained.

**Brigadier-General BROWN:** Are these not taken at the port of landing, or where the milk is delivered?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** They are taken at the place of landing.

#### FOREIGN FOOD IMPORTS.

50. **Captain RAMSAY** asked the Minister of Health what articles of food imported from foreign countries are allowed to be put on the market here without undergoing the health tests imposed on the corresponding British products?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** None, Sir.

**Captain RAMSAY:** Will the right hon. Gentleman consider making butter and margarine that are imported into this country undergo some sort of test?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** Every consideration of the sort will be taken into consideration.

**Captain RAMSAY:** In the meantime will the right hon. Gentleman take some steps to find out to what addresses this butter and margarine are consigned, so that the public may know who is selling untested food?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** That, as a matter of fact, would require special powers, of which I am not possessed.

#### FLOODING, WANDSWORTH.

61. **Miss RATHBONE** asked the Minister of Health whether his attention has been drawn to the repeated flooding of houses in and near Lyddon Grove, Wandsworth, by the River Wandle; whether he is aware that the River Wandle is a public sewer and therefore under the care of the London County Council; whether he has drawn the attention of the London County Council to this matter; and with what result?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** My attention has been drawn to this matter. I have been in communication with the London County

Council and am informed that they are considering what remedial action can be taken.

#### HOSPITAL ACCOMMODATION, LINCOLN.

63. **Mr. TINKER** asked the Minister of Health whether his attention has been drawn to the serious overcrowding at the Lincoln county hospital; and whether he is taking any steps in the matter?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** I have not received any recent information but I have, in any case, no authority to interfere with the administration of a voluntary hospital.

64. **Mr. C. BROWN** asked the Minister of Health if there is any co-ordination between the public and the voluntary hospitals in Lincoln; and if he can state the number of beds vacant in the public hospital or infirmary during each week in the month of October and the month of November?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** I understand that five members of the city council have been co-opted on to the committee of the voluntary hospital. I have no information as to the second part of the question.

#### LOCAL AUTHORITIES (PUBLICITY) ACT.

55. **Mr. HUTCHISON** asked the Minister of Health how many organisations and/or local authorities (and, if so, which) have applied for approval under the Local Authorities (Publicity) Act, 1931, since its introduction; and what has been the official answer in each case?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** Thirteen applications for approval have been received, three of which were from local authorities on behalf of existing or projected organisations. Approval has hitherto been given only to the Travel Association of Great Britain and Ireland. The other applications have been refused, except in one case where I am awaiting further information, but means for securing co-operation between the Travel Association and local bodies are now being investigated.

#### NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE.

56. **Dr. HILLMAN** asked the Minister of Health if he is aware that the new

[Dr. Hillman.]  
regulation recently made under the National Health Insurance Acts merely regularises a practice which has been in existence for many years of permitting a doctor to charge a fee for treating an insured person if such person declares in writing that he does not desire treatment under the Insurance Acts, and that this new regulation was discussed so long ago as September, 1930; and whether its proposal originated from the Ministry of Health or from representatives of the medical profession?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** The position is stated with substantial accuracy in the first part of my hon. Friend's question, subject to the qualifications that no new regulation has yet been actually made or even published in draft, and that the requirement of a written request is a new requirement which was designed as a further safeguard for the interests of insured persons. The answer to the second part of the question is that the provision referred to was proposed by the Ministry of Health itself for inclusion in a general redraft of certain parts of the Medical Benefit Regulations designed to make them clearer and easier to administer in regard to fee charging and other matters.

**Dr. HILLMAN:** Are there any grounds for the suggestion that the doctors will make large sums of money out of the new regulation and so recoup themselves for their losses on the economy proposals?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** Certainly, I have no information to that effect.

### POOR LAW.

RELIEVING OFFICER, LLANLLYFNI,  
CAERNARVON.

57. **Major OWEN** asked the Minister of Health on what ground the Ministry refused to confirm the appointment of the relieving officer at Llanllyfni, in the county of Caernarvon, recently made by the Caernarvonshire County Council on the advice of the public assistance committee?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** The candidate chosen by the council does not possess the qualifications required for a person to be appointed as relieving officer which are laid down in Article 159 of the Public

Assistance Order, 1930, nor has he experience of the administration of relief. Accordingly, I do not feel justified in consenting to the appointment.

**Major OWEN:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the clerk to the County Council has definitely stated that this man has had experience of local government work and that in the past the Ministry has appointed men who have had no qualifications whatsoever? Why is it that special action has been taken by the Ministry in this case?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** With regard to the first part of the supplementary question, the suggestion of my hon. and gallant Friend is certainly not in accordance with my information. With regard to the second part, I will say that two blacks do not make a white, and it is essential that these appointments should be made from experienced persons.

58. **Major OWEN** asked the Minister of Health whether he has yet replied to the second letter received by him from the Caernarvonshire County Council asking for an explanation of the qualifications deemed to be necessary in an applicant for the post of relieving officer, in order to comply with the requirements of Order 159 of the Public Assistance Order, 1930, dated 20th March, 1930?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** I am sending the hon. Member a copy of my reply to the county council.

**Major OWEN:** Is this the reply to the second letter, and has the right hon. Gentleman in that letter given an explanation of the Ministry's explanation of a particular paragraph in the Order?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** The reply to which I refer is dated the 2nd December. I think it is the letter which my hon. and gallant Friend has in mind.

### RELIEF (EX-SERVICE MEN).

65. **Lord EUSTACE PERCY** asked the Minister of Health whether a public assistance authority in administering poor relief are bound to take into account a disability pension?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** The public assistance authority must not make it a rule to disregard disability pensions. But, in considering the needs of a pensioner, they

must have regard to his disability, and it is entirely within their discretion to make an increase of award on the ground of that disability and the increase of need that results from it.

**Captain FRASER** (*by Private Notice*) asked the Minister of Health whether public assistance committees in assessing the means of an ex-service man applying for relief are entitled, after taking into account a disability pension, to increase the relief given in consideration of the greater need due to the disability?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** The answer is, Yes, Sir.

**Captain FRASER:** May I ask, then, whether the public assistance committee is not, in effect, entitled to disregard the pension, either a part of it or even altogether?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** The actual process could not be legally described as disregarding the pension, but the effect in these cases is practically much the same.

**Captain FRASER:** Will my right hon. Friend inform public assistance committees of this?

**Mr. THORNE:** May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he was in the House when the Minister of Labour gave his reply, and whether the same sympathetic consideration will be given to disabled workmen as far as workmen's compensation is concerned?

**Mr. LAWSON:** Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the answer given by the Minister of Labour this afternoon and the answer given by himself will increase the confusion of the public assistance committees?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** If the hon. Gentleman will be so good as to give careful consideration to the two answers given today, I can assure him that he will discover that they have relieved a considerable part of the misapprehension.

**Mr. T. WILLIAMS:** Is it not the case that the effect of the reply originally given by the right hon. Gentleman merely means that while the public assistance committees are called upon to take into consideration the disability pension they may supplement any unemployment bene-

fit granted by poor relief, and is not that, as my hon. Friend has suggested, creating more instead of less confusion?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** I do not think that implication is justified. The terms on the question and of the reply are precise. A public assistance committee is entitled after taking into account the disability pension to increase the relief given in consideration of the greater need due to the disability.

**Mr. N. MACLEAN:** Does the right hon. Gentleman mean that the amount can be exceeded over the amount allowed by the Ministry of Labour?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** All these implications are quite unjustified and may be dangerous, and I would ask careful consideration for the actual terms of the question and answer.

**Mr. MACLEAN** *rose*—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** We cannot have a debate on this question now.

#### GOVERNMENT BUILDING CONTRACTS.

82. **Sir J. WALKER SMITH** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in the interests of economy, he will arrange that all Government Departments entering into building and constructional works shall use the standard forms and conditions of contract as agreed in the case of building contracts between the Royal Institute of British Architects and the National Federation of Building Trades Employers and recommended by them for general use, and in the case of constructional works the form of agreement and general conditions of contract for use in connection with works of civil engineering construction, as agreed by the Association of Consulting Engineers in agreement with the Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors and recommended by them for general use, with such additional clauses as may be necessary dealing with the standard rates of wages and other matters, if any, peculiar to Government contracts?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** The matter will be carefully considered by the Departments concerned.

GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS  
(STAFF AND ADMINISTRATION).

83. **Sir J. WALKER SMITH** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in the interests of economy and of those already in the Government service, he will see that no further appointments are made in the Board of Trade for the administration of the Abnormal Imports (Customs Duties) Act and in the Board of Agriculture until it has been ascertained whether or not all of those competent to assist in the administration of these Departments can be seconded or transferred for this purpose; and generally if he will review, preferably with the aid of a committee of business men, the administration of all Government Departments with a view to reducing the staff and establishment charges wherever it is found to be practicable?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** It is not at present necessary to appoint any additional staff in the Board of Trade or the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries for the work in question, and should such additional staff become necessary in the future the possibility of providing it from within the service will of course be first considered. The staff and administration of Government Departments are under continuous review by the Treasury with a view to economy, and have been specially reviewed recently both by the Royal Commission on the Civil Service and by the Committee on National Expenditure which reported last July. I see no occasion for any such further review as that suggested in the last part of the question.

**Sir J. WALKER SMITH:** Does the right hon. Gentleman appreciate the fact that on account of the depression in industry, especially during the last two years, business men have been compelled to revise their overhead charges, and would it not be an assistance—

**Mr. SPEAKER:** That is all a matter of opinion.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

**Mr. LANSBURY:** Will the right hon. Gentleman tell us what is the business for next week?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** Monday: Horticultural Products (Emergency Customs Duties) Bill, Second Reading.

Tuesday: Horticultural Products Bill, Committee Stage.

Wednesday: Horticultural Products Bill, Third Reading.

Thursday: Debate on Opposition Vote of Censure on the Government relating to unemployment.

I hope that on Friday it will be possible to take the Motion for the Christmas Adjournment.

During the week any other business which it may be necessary to dispose of before the Adjournment will be taken, including any Amendments which may come from another place to the Statute of Westminster Bill, or to other Bills.

**Mr. MAXTON:** Does the Prime Minister anticipate that the whole of Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday will be taken up discussing the Horticultural Products (Emergency Customs Duties) Bill?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** We are giving the House that time in order to discuss the Horticultural Products Bill. If any arrangement can be made through the usual channels for shortening the time, we shall be very glad indeed.

**Mr. AMERY:** Can the Prime Minister tell us whether, on the Motion for the Adjournment, he will be able to make any statement indicating the policy of the Government with respect to either industry or agriculture?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** It is not usual for the Government to make a statement on the Motion for the Adjournment.

**Mr. AMERY:** Are the Government going to give us on any occasion before we separate any indication of what their policy is in respect of any of the matters on which they went to the country?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** The Government have done a great deal in that respect.

**Mr. BUCHANAN:** In view of the fact that already two days have been devoted to discussing issues arising in relation to monetary policy, would it not be possible for the Government to take a Motion on one day on the question of trade and particularly the monetary position.

**The PRIME MINISTER:** I think that the business put down for any one of those days could be discussed on the Motion for the Adjournment if the business lapsed before Eleven o'clock.

**Mr. MAXTON:** In substance, the House cannot demand or expect the services of a responsible Minister of the Crown to deal with business in the way which the House expects him to deal with it, unless definite arrangements are made in advance. I ask the Government and the Leader of the official Opposition if they do not think that this House could spend one day next week to a better purpose than discussing the question of a tariff on asparagus?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** The Government have to accept the rules of the House, and we are carrying out those rules in arranging the business. Hon. Members ought not to forget that Thursday is to be devoted to a Vote of Censure, which covers a good deal of the ground that has been mentioned.

**Mr. BOOTHBY:** May I ask the Prime Minister whether it would not be possible to arrange, through the usual channel, that two days should be given to the Horticultural Products Bill and two days to a general discussion on industry and unemployment.

**The PRIME MINISTER:** If the Horticultural Products Bill takes two days, there will be one day free. I am not prepared to say that it is possible to do that, but we are prepared to give the House an assurance to that effect. After that the House will practically have three days on the Motion for the Adjournment to discuss anything else.

**Mr. HANNON:** Cannot the Prime Minister before the House rises, in view of the strong feeling in the country, make any statement in relation to the policy of the Government with regard to the iron and steel industry?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** That has been covered by the answer I have already given. Any of those opportunities can be taken for a Debate on the Adjournment to enable those questions to be discussed.

**Captain HOPE:** Can the right hon. Gentleman give any indication when the House will resume after Christmas?

**The PRIME MINISTER:** No, not just now.

#### MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to,  
Kilmarnock Gas Provisional Order  
Bill, without Amendment.  
Statute of Westminster Bill, with an  
Amendment.

### WRITTEN ANSWERS.

#### LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

##### PERMANENT COURT OF INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE.

**Mr. MANDER** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Cuban Government has now withdrawn its reservation to the ratification of the revision of the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice?

**Sir J. SIMON:** Not yet, so far as I am aware.

##### AGRICULTURAL CREDIT CONVENTION.

**Mr. MANDER** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs when it is proposed to ratify the convention with reference to the establishment under the League of Nations of the International Agricultural Mortgage Credit Company; and what States have ratified it up to the present time?

**Sir J. SIMON:** I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply returned to my hon. Friend the Member for Thirsk and Malton (Mr. Turton) on 23rd September last. According to the latest information in my possession, only Greece has so far ratified.

##### ARMAMENTS.

**Mr. MANDER** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what countries have complied with the request of the Council of the League of Nations for the supply of information with regard to their armaments for the information of the Disarmament Conference?

**Sir J. SIMON:** According to the latest information from Geneva, the following countries have now furnished returns regarding their armaments in accordance with the request of the Council of the

League of Nations: Albania, United States of America, Austria, Belgium, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Irish Free State, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Rumania, Siam,\* Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics,† Yugoslavia.

\* Only communicated to States who have also furnished returns.

† Not published—only to be sent privately to States who will supply the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with their figures in return.

**Mr. MANDER** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what countries have not accepted the invitation to the Disarmament Conference?

**Sir J. SIMON:** I am not aware what countries, if any, have not accepted the invitation of the League of Nations to attend the Disarmament Conference.

**Mr. MANDER** asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what countries have not accepted the armaments truce?

**Sir J. SIMON:** As far as I am aware, none of the States approached have hitherto refused to accept the armaments truce.

## TRADE AND COMMERCE.

### IMPORTS.

**Mr. G. BRAITHWAITE** asked the President of the Board of Trade the amount by which the imports of iron and steel exceeded the exports thereof for November, 1931?

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA:** I regret that the desired information will not be available until 11th December.

**Mr. LAW** asked the President of the Board of Trade how many tons of wet fish were landed at Newcastle from Bergen between 2nd November and 19th November last; and the corresponding figures for the same period of last year?

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA:** I regret that the desired information is not available, as the imports into this country are re-

corded according to the country of consignment and not the port of shipment.

**Sir C. CAYZER** asked the President of the Board of Trade the volume and value of the imports of fresh milk in each of the weeks since September of which he has a record?

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA:** The statistics are compiled on a monthly basis only. The imports of fresh milk into the United Kingdom during the months of September and October last amounted to 3,330 cwt., valued at £2,086 and 4,589 cwt., valued at £2,797<sup>f</sup>, respectively, all of which was consigned from the Irish Free State, mostly over the land boundary into Northern Ireland.

**Lord SCONE** asked the President of the Board of Trade the imports of raspberry pulp during each of the years 1929, 1930, and 1931?

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA:** The imports of raspberry pulp are not separately recorded in the trade returns of the United Kingdom.

**Mr. REMER** asked the President of the Board of Trade what were the imports in the first 20 days of November, in square yards, of silk manufactured piece goods, wholly of silk and those manufactured of silk mixed with other materials if known as silk piece goods; and the amount, in tons weight, of tissues of artificial silk, wholly or artificial silk or mixed with other materials?

**Mr. RUNCIMAN:** I would refer my hon. Friend to the reply given on 24th November to my hon. Friend the Member for Rotherham (Mr. Herbert) respecting statistics for shorter periods than one month. Particulars of the imports of silk piece goods and of artificial silk tissues during the month of November will be published on 11th December in the "Accounts relating to Trade and Navigation of the United Kingdom."

**Mr. HARRIS** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that officers of Customs are demanding a duty of 50 per cent. on imports of mica on the ground that mica can be used in connection with wireless instruments; and will he give instructions that this duty is not to be levied on any raw materials required for use by British manufacturers?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** If the hon. Member will give me particulars of the cases he has in mind, I will have inquiry made.

#### COASTAL TRADE.

**Sir C. RAWSON** asked the President of the Board of Trade if His Majesty's Government contemplate taking any steps to protect the British coastal shipping trade against the competition of foreign coasters?

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA:** I would refer my hon. Friend to the replies which my right hon. Friend gave on 17th November and 1st December in answer to questions by my hon. Friends the Member for Newport (Mr. Clarry) and Colchester (Mr. Lewis) respectively.

#### ABNORMAL IMPORTATIONS (CUSTOMS DUTIES) ACT.

**Major MILNER** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that woollen felt and woven paper used for woollen slippers and basket-ware, respectively, are subject to duty under the Abnormal Importations (Customs Duties) Act, 1931, whilst the imported finished slippers and basket-ware are not so subject; and whether he will give reasons for the distinction and say what action he proposes to take?

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA:** I would refer the hon. and gallant Member to the answer which I gave to him and other hon. Members on 25th November last.

**Marquess of CLYDESDALE** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether, in view of the fact that in the month of October the imports of jute carpets were four times as great as those of the month of January and more than 50 per cent. in excess of those of the month of September, he will consider including jute carpets in the next Order made under the Abnormal Importations (Customs Duties) Act?

**Mr. RUNCIMAN:** As my Noble Friend will see from the Schedule of the Order which was made on Monday last, the provisions of the Abnormal Importations (Customs Duties) Act have been applied to imports of jute carpets.

**Captain BULLOCK** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the

abnormally large quantities of planed flooring now being imported from abroad; and whether he proposes to extend to this material the measure of protection afforded by the Abnormal Importations (Customs Duties) Act, 1931, to articles in Class III of the Board of Trade Returns?

**Mr. RUNCIMAN:** Planed flooring is not included among the articles in Class III of the Import and Export List. It is only Class III to which the powers under the Abnormal Importations (Customs Duties) Act apply.

#### UNITED KINGDOM AND UNITED STATES.

**Mr. L. SMITH** asked the President of the Board of Trade the value of imports into this country from the United States of America and the value of exports from this country to the United States of America in the last 12 months; and whether either set of imports shows an abnormal increase?

**Mr. RUNCIMAN:** During the 12 months ended 30th September, 1931, the total declared value of merchandise imported into the United Kingdom and consigned from the United States of America, was £114,000,000, while the total exports consigned to the United States amounted to £28,000,000. Both of these figures show a considerable decline compared with the previous 12 months.

#### FACTORIES, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.

**Mr. PERKINS** asked the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that there are a large number of small factories for sale in the Stroud (Glos.) valleys; and whether he will take steps to make known to any foreign firms desirous of securing factories in England that these factories are available?

**Mr. RUNCIMAN:** This matter does not lend itself very well to treatment by way of answer to a Parliamentary Question, but I am writing to my hon. Friend on the subject.<sup>b</sup>

#### FISHING INDUSTRY.

**Mr. PETHERICK** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether, in view of the anxiety of certain foreign nations to enter into negotiations with this country regarding tariffs, he can assure the House that the Government will, during the course of any such negotiations, take



advantage of the opportunity for protecting the British fishing industry?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** I can assure my hon. Friend that in any such negotiations into which the Government may enter, the interests of the British fishing industry will be borne in mind.

**Mr. LAW** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether any of the vessels which landed cargoes of wet fish at Grimsby during the months of October and November last were chartered for that purpose by the Government of Iceland?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** I am informed that two vessels, chartered in the name of the Icelandic Government on behalf of a federation of Icelandic fishermen, landed at Grimsby a total of about 12,000 cwts. of fresh fish from Iceland at various dates during the period 21st September to 14th November, inclusive. I understand that the Icelandic Government have guaranteed the freight, and that the cost of freight is deducted from the proceeds of the sale of the fish before the balance is paid to the fishermen.

#### FOODSTUFFS (SUPPLY AND PRICE).

**Lieut.-Colonel MOORE:** asked the President of the Board of Trade if, in view of the recent rapid depreciation in the value of the pound, he is satisfied that the efforts being made to arrange for the future food requirements of this country are adequate; and if these requirements can be maintained without any appreciable increase in the cost of living?

The following are the required figures in regard to vessels piloted by the Trinity House Pilots of the London District for the years 1928, 1929, 1930 and the nine months ended 30th September, 1931:

	Total amount* received for pilotage services by licensed pilots.	Net tonnage of vessels piloted by licensed pilots inwards and outwards.		
		British.	Foreign.	Total.
	£			
Year ended 31st December, 1928 ...	354,545	67,368,084	26,446,529	93,814,613
Year ended 31st December, 1929 ...	365,287	68,836,751	28,491,849	97,328,600
Year ended 31st December, 1930 ...	360,560	66,845,139	30,907,750	97,752,889
Nine months ended 30th September, 1931.	250,552	47,381,303	22,261,060	69,642,363

\* These amounts include pilotage earned in Deep Sea Waters outside the district, which amount to about £9,000 per annum.

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA:** I have no reason to suppose that the requirements of the country in the matter of foodstuffs cannot be met without difficulty in the future as in the past through the normal channels of trade. Food prices are under the constant review of my Department in order to prevent unjustifiable increases. For the rest, I would refer my hon. and gallant Friend to the replies given on 1st December by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury to the hon. Member for Southampton. I am sending my hon. and gallant Friend copies of these replies.

#### PILOTAGE, LONDON.

**Mr. HUTCHISON** asked the President of the Board of Trade the total amount received for pilotage services in the district under the jurisdiction of London Trinity House for each of the past three years and for the first 11 months of the present year, together with the total net tonnage for vessels piloted in and out for the same periods, distinguishing between British and foreign vessels; and what was the net tonnage of vessels entering and leaving during these periods which were not piloted by licensed British pilots?

**Mr. RUNCIMAN:** I am informed by the Trinity House, who are the Pilotage Authority for the London district, that particulars in respect of the months of October and November, 1931, are not yet available, and that they have no information regarding the net tonnage of vessels entering or leaving the district which are not piloted by licensed British pilots.

## GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

### COMPULSORY LIQUIDATION DEPARTMENT.

**Mr. BRIANT** asked the President of the Board of Trade if there has been any alteration in the class of officers appointed as examiners in the compulsory liquidation department?

**Mr. HORE-BELISHA:** No, Sir.

### LAND VALUATION, MAIDSTONE.

**Captain BALFOUR** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether new staff have been engaged for the Land Tax Valuation Department, Maidstone office, since 1st November; and, if so, how many and on what terms are such personnel engaged?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** One officer appointed before 1st November took up duty at Maidstone on 16th November and another, who was previously employed on other duties, has been transferred to land valuation work as from 3rd November. The rates of pay are in each case £4 17s. 6d. a week, and the appointments are terminable at a month's notice.

### EX-SERVICE CIVIL SERVANTS.

**Lieut.-Colonel MOORE** asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury whether the number of ex-service civil servants now employed shows any reduction in numbers as compared with three years ago?

**Major ELLIOT:** As regards non-industrial staffs, the numbers of ex-service civil servants employed on 1st October, 1931, show an increase of approximately 9,700 over the corresponding numbers on 1st October, 1928. No statistics are kept of the numbers of ex-service industrial civil servants.

### LOCAL ELECTIONS (CANDIDATES, DEPOSITS).

**Mr. LEWIS** asked the Home Secretary whether he will consider the desirability of promoting legislation to provide that in municipal elections a candidate shall be required to make a deposit at the time of nomination, such deposit to be forfeited if the candidate fails to secure a certain proportion of the total votes cast at the election?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** The question has been considered more than once, but there is much difference of opinion as to the desirability of requiring deposits by candidates at local elections, and I cannot promise legislation on the subject.

### FIREARMS (CRIMINALS, PENALTIES).

**Mr. LEWIS** asked the Home Secretary if he will cause inquiry to be made into the law relating to penalties for criminals who, at the time of their arrest, are found to be carrying firearms, with a view to considering whether such penalties should be increased?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** There is already a maximum penalty of 20 years' penal servitude for the possession of a firearm or ammunition with intent to endanger life or cause serious injury to property. It is for the judge to apply in each case such penalty as he may think suitable in the circumstances.

### BURGLAR-ALARM BELLS (BY-LAWS, LONDON).

**Captain ELLISTON** asked the Home Secretary whether, in view of the annoyance caused by the prolonged ringing of burglar-alarm bells, started by traffic vibration or accidental contacts, especially during the night hours in the City of London, he will issue model by-laws, based on police requirements, for adoption by local authorities who wish to deal with this nuisance?

**Sir H. SAMUEL:** My Department has been for some time in consultation with the London County Council on the subject of a by-law to deal with this matter. The form of by-law has now been settled, subject to minor details of drafting, and I have intimated that if the London County Council decide to adopt it, I am willing to approve it, in due course, subject to the consideration of any objections or representations which may be received, after statutory notice of the by-law has been given.

### COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES.

**Lieut.-Colonel MOORE** asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury

whether he will furnish a return of all Royal Commissions and committees of inquiry which are still in being, together with their terms of reference; the date of their appointment; the approximate date on which their report may be expected; and their cost to date?

**Major ELLIOT:** I am arranging to circulate an up-to-date table on the lines of that circulated in the OFFICIAL REPORT on 30th April last in reply to a similar question. Where possible, this table will indicate the probable date of reporting. I regret that it is not possible without a disproportionate amount of labour to give the total cost to date of committees still in being.

#### SEAHAM HARBOUR DOCK COMPANY (COSTS OF ACTION).

**Major SALMON** asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury what is the total cost to the country of the action against the Seaham Harbour Dock Company in connection with a claim for Income Tax on a Government grant, which was decided against the Crown on an appeal to the House of Lords?

**Major ELLIOT:** The costs of the action are not yet ascertainable, but I will communicate the amount to the hon. and gallant Member in due course.

#### MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (RAILWAY VOUCHERS).

**Miss HORSBRUGH** asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury whether arrangements can be made for the railway vouchers of Members when travelling third class to be used to cover third class sleeping-car supplement on long-distance journeys by night, in view of the fact that the cost involved would result in actual economy as compared with the ordinary first class fare?

**Major ELLIOT:** To meet the convenience of Members who travel by night to and from distant constituencies, I am arranging that, providing the total cost does not exceed the first class ordinary fare, the travel vouchers may be used to cover third class travel plus third class sleeping car accommodation where the latter is available. It should be noted that the concession is strictly limited to third class, and that in no

circumstances may the vouchers be used to cover sleeping car expenses in addition to a first class fare. The precise details will be available at the Fees Office as soon as the necessary arrangements have been made with the railway companies.

### BRITISH ARMY

#### BANDS (CIVILIAN ENGAGEMENTS).

**Mr. T. GRIFFITHS** asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether, in view of the fact that there are at present approximately 75 per cent. of civilian professional musicians unemployed, many of whom are unable to obtain unemployment benefit, he will arrange for the discontinuance of the practice of permitting the employment by outside persons and authorities of bands and musicians of the Army?

**Mr. COOPER:** As regards the acceptance of civil engagements by military bands, I would refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave on 1st December to my hon. Friend the Member for South-East St. Pancras (Sir A. Beit). As regards individual bandmen, existing instructions make it clear that any engagements which a soldier accepts in his spare time are purely of a private nature, that such engagements must not interfere with his military duties and that advertising in any shape or form is forbidden. It is not proposed to interfere with this practice.

#### OFFICERS (RESERVE).

**Mr. McENTEE** asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office what percentage reductions in the reserve pay of commissioned officers of each rank have been imposed during the past three months; and whether such percentage is the same as in the case of non-commissioned officers and privates?

**Mr. COOPER:** Officers of the Regular Army do not receive any pay in respect of their service in the Reserve.

#### RANKER OFFICERS (PENSION CLAIM).

**Lieut.-Colonel MOORE** asked the Financial Secretary to the War Office what is the present estimated additional annual cost of implementing the pension claim put forward by the organisation of Army-pensioned ranker officers; and whether it is the intention of the Government to reconsider this claim?

**Mr. COOPER:** I am not in a position to give the information asked for in the first part of the question, and, as it is not proposed to reconsider the claims of these officers, I should not feel justified in obtaining a figure, in view of the large amount of labour involved.

## UNEMPLOYMENT.

### STATISTICS.

**Major MILNER** asked the Minister of Labour the figures of those wholly unemployed in the city of Leeds during the past four weeks, distinguishing between those changes due to alterations in the real volume of unemployment and those due to administrative action; and will he publish figures weekly for the whole country on that basis in order that the real position may be ascertained?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** The effect of administrative action on the unemployment totals cannot be estimated with any sufficient degree of reliability either for short intervals of time or for individual places. I hope in due course to be in a position to publish in the Ministry of Labour Gazette figures relating to the effect of the Anomalies Regulations and the Transitional Payments Order in Council in this connection. The total numbers of wholly unemployed persons on the registers of the Leeds Employment Exchanges for the past four weeks are as follow:

Numbers of persons wholly unemployed on the registers of Employment Exchanges in Leeds on certain dates.

2nd November	...	...	29,242
9th November	...	...	29,080
16th November	...	...	28,505
23rd November	...	...	27,934

### ISLE OF ARRAN.

**Mr. D. GRAHAM** asked the Minister of Labour whether, in view of the long distance which unemployed workers living on the Isle of Arran have to travel and the delay which occurs in the settlement of their claims, he will make arrangements for a local officer to be stationed on the island?

**Sir H. BETTERTON:** These matters had already been brought to my notice by my hon. and gallant Friend the Mem-

ber for Buteshire and North Ayrshire (Sir A. Hunter-Weston) and inquiries are being made into the working of the present arrangements. I will communicate with the hon. Member in due course.

### CHIMNEY EMISSIONS.

**Mr. BOSSOM** asked the Minister of Transport whether any decision has yet been taken as to the Government's intentions regarding the dust and fume nuisance from the power stations; and when it is expected to receive the report from the Chimney Emissions Committee, which was set up to inquire into the matter?

**Mr. PYBUS:** With regard to the emission of sulphur fumes, I would refer my hon. Friend to the Second Report of the Committee presided over by the Government chemist which was laid before Parliament in November, 1930. The Electricity Commissioners inform me that good progress has been made by the committee to which he refers, but that they are not yet in a position to say when it will be able to present its report.

### ROAD AND BRIDGE SCHEMES (EXPENDITURE).

**Mr. THORNE** asked the Minister of Transport the number of local authorities which have discontinued road and other schemes for relief of the unemployed; and the approximate value of the schemes which have been abandoned since 21st September, 1931?

**Mr. PYBUS:** I am only able to deal in my reply with road and bridge schemes. With the object of reducing expenditure from the Road Fund, all schemes of road and bridge construction and improvement, which form the subject of commitments from the fund, are now being reviewed, and not merely those which had been expedited for the relief of unemployment. I have in all cases endeavoured to proceed in consultation with the local authorities and, while my survey of the position is still incomplete, I have arranged, up to the present, for a reduction in the commitments of the Road Fund over the next few years in respect of an estimated total expenditure of approximately £15,750,000.

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (BLACK LIST).

**Mr. GROVES** asked the President of the Board of Education the number of elementary schools still on the black list, showing the various grades of such schools; and what steps he proposes to take to effect a change in this state of affairs?

**Sir D. MACLEAN:** There are still 1,527 elementary schools on the black list. Of these, 295 are in Division A of the list, 981 in Division B, and 251 in Division C. I am sending the hon. Member a copy of Circular 1413, showing that it is hoped that the Board will be able to approve for grant some expenditure for dealing with these schools.

### SCOTLAND.

#### HOUSE REPAIRS (RENT).

**Mr. N. MACLEAN** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland if he is prepared to institute an inquiry to obtain from owners of house property a statement of the amount received by them from the imposition of the 25 per cent. increase of rent for the purpose of executing repairs to house property and of the amount spent by them in carrying out repairs since the operation of this section of the Rent Restrictions Acts?

**Sir A. SINCLAIR:** I regret that I cannot entertain the proposal as the inquiry suggested would not be practicable.

#### POINDED GOODS.

**Mr. N. MACLEAN** asked the Secretary of State for Scotland whether his attention has been drawn to the practice of sheriffs' officers fixing the value of house-furniture and effects poinded by them for arrears of rent below their proper value; whether he is aware that in a recent case two kitchen chairs were valued at 1½d. each, a kitchen table and dishes, cutlery, and mantelshelf ornaments at a total of 1s., an oval table 6d. and an oval mirror 6d.; that the total value placed upon the furniture, etc., was 2s. 3d., and the expenses of poinding were 17s. 8d.; and whether he is prepared to institute an inquiry into this practice, with a view to safeguarding the tenant whose goods are being poinded?

**Sir A. SINCLAIR:** The answer to the first part of the question is in the negative, and I would point out to the hon. Member that whether the poinding proceeds under the Small Debt (Scotland) Act, 1837, or the Debtors (Scotland) Act, 1838, the officer is required to have the poinded goods appraised or valued by two persons. If, however, the hon. Member will supply me with particulars regarding any cases where poinded goods were not properly valued, I shall have inquiry made.

### AUTOMATIC TELEPHONE EXCHANGES.

**Mr. HUTCHISON** asked the Postmaster-General whether, in view of the dissatisfaction which is being expressed with the working of the automatic telephone exchanges throughout the country, he will consider the introduction of a system for recording the number of verbal complaints in addition to written complaints made in respect of each exchange?

**Mr. WHITE:** I have no evidence of any general dissatisfaction with the working of automatic telephone exchanges throughout the country. Records are made of oral complaints and inquiries, but the labour and cost of analysis and tabulation would, I am advised, be disproportionate to any value the statistics might possess.

### INDIA (MR. FIMMEN, VISA).

**Mr. HICKS** asked the Secretary of State for India for what reasons the Government of India has refused an Indian visa for Mr. Edo Fimmen, secretary of the International Transport Workers' Federation, seeing that Mr. Fimmen is visiting the Far East solely for his federation and has no intention of taking any part whatever in political affairs in India; and whether, in view of the definite undertaking given by Mr. Fimmen to abstain from all part in political affairs in India if granted an Indian visa, he will represent to the Government of India the granting of an Indian visa to Mr. Fimmen?

**Sir S. HOARE:** In view of the present economic situation, the Government of

India consider that Mr. Fimmen's proposed visit to India would be a source of embarrassment, quite apart from political considerations. The matter has been given the most careful consideration, and I regret that I am unable, in present circumstances, to modify the decision which has been given.

## ROYAL NAVY.

### ROYAL MARINES (RE-ENGAGEMENT).

**Sir B. FALLE** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he will amend Admiralty Fleet Order 2410 to permit Royal Marines who have completed 10 years' service, and who desire to re-engage to complete time for pension, to do so before 1st January, 1932, and secure the rates of pay shown in column 2 of the schedule to Fleet Order 2410?

**Lord STANLEY:** The general rule governing the re-engagements of Royal Marines, laid down by the Royal Marines Act, 1847, is that they may apply to re-engage after 11½ years of their first engagement, whereas the seaman may apply after 10 years' service. The question of reducing this disparity wholly or in some degree is under consideration and is a complicated one. I am unable, therefore, at the moment to give any further assurances or promises in this matter than have already been given in A.F.O. 2729/31.

### PETTY OFFICERS (REVERSION FOR UNSUITABILITY).

**Sir B. FALLE** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he will consider amending paragraph 2 of Article 561 of King's Regulations, Admiralty Instructions, so that before a petty officer can be reverted for unsuitability to a lower rating he should be the subject of a court of inquiry?

**Lord STANLEY:** Reversion for unsuitability of a confirmed petty officer rating has to be referred by the Captain to the Commander-in-Chief or Senior Naval Officer. The numbers thus reverted are at present so few that the necessity for further checks is not apparent.

### OFFICERS' STEWARDS AND COOKS.

**Sir B. FALLE** asked the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that

Admiralty Fleet Order 2678, of 13th November, 1931, is contrary to the reply given by the Financial Secretary to the Admiralty on 18th February, 1931, that non-continuous service officers' stewards and cooks on transfer to continuous service might count all their non-continuous time for advancement and pension; and will he have this order amended accordingly?

**Lord STANLEY:** With regard to the first part of the question, non-continuous service officers' stewards and cooks who were transferred to continuous service prior to 17th December, 1924, normally count all their previous non-continuous service time for advancement and pension, but those who transferred after that date are eligible to count their previous time for pension, but not beyond the 3rd class rating for advancement. Since the great majority of such men transferred before 17th December, 1924, it is the case that, as stated in the reply given on 18th February last, generally speaking, these ratings are allowed to count their previous non-continuous service time, but it is regretted if this reply has given the impression that the 1924 rule had been or would be altered. As regards the second part of the question, the Fleet Order quoted was issued to reaffirm the existing position under the Regulations, and no reason is seen to alter it.

## AGRICULTURE.

### FLOUR (IMPORT).

**Sir N. STEWART SANDEMAN** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether it is intended to exclude flour from importation and only to permit the importation of grain for milling in this country?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** The answer is in the negative.

### FOOT-AND-MOUTH DISEASE.

**Mr. HURD** asked the Minister of Agriculture if his Department has discovered any indications of the source of origin of last summer's outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in county Armagh?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** My Department has no jurisdiction in Northern Ireland as regards animal diseases, but I am informed that the Ministry of Agriculture,

Northern Ireland, after exhaustive investigation, reached the conclusion that the only apparent source of infection on the farm in County Down on which the disease first appeared was cauliflowers from the Continent.

**Mr. HURD** asked the Minister of Agriculture what progress the Foot-and-Mouth Disease Research Committee has made with its further tests under trade conditions of foreign dried milk and other milk products to ascertain whether they are carriers of foot-and-mouth disease; and when a report may be expected?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** I have communicated with my hon. Friend on this matter. The practicability of securing tests under trade conditions is being explored, and I will inform my hon. Friend of the results as soon as they are available.

**Sir C. CAYZER** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether his attention has been called to the recent report of the Foot-and-Mouth Disease Research Committee as to the possibility of the disease being carried into this country in imports of dried milk and to the experiments of the committee definitely proving that dried foreign milk contaminated with foot-and-mouth virus can remain infective for a month; and what action he proposes to take to meet this danger?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** I am not in a position at present to add to the reply which I gave on 16th November last to a similar question by my hon. Friend the Member for Devides (Mr. Hurd).

#### WHEAT QUOTA.

**Mr. MANDER** asked the Minister of Agriculture if he can form any estimate as to the increase in the price of bread that would be caused by the Government's wheat quota proposals?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** Pending decision by the Government as to the maximum price to be secured by farmers for milling wheat in the quota plan, it is not possible to make estimates except upon a hypothetical basis. It is estimated that a quota of 15 per cent. and a premium of 18s. per quarter for British wheat in excess of the United Kingdom price of comparable imported wheat should not add more than one-eighth of a penny to the production cost of the 2 lb. loaf of

bread. As world wheat prices rise or fall, the element of production cost due to the British wheat quota will diminish or increase.

#### FLOWER SEEDS (IMPORT).

**Mr. LEWIS** asked the Minister of Agriculture if he will take into consideration the question of imported flower seeds when considering the application of import duties to agricultural and horticultural produce?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** Flower seeds do not come within the scope of the Horticultural Products Bill now before the House, but my hon. Friend's suggestion will be borne in mind in connection with other aspects of the Government's policy.

#### UNMARKED IMPORTED EGGS.

**Mr. POTTER** asked the Minister of Agriculture if he is aware that eggs are being imported into this country bearing no indication as to origin; and if he will take steps to see that the provisions of the Marking of Imported Goods Act are complied with?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** The attention of my Department was recently drawn to the exhibition of some unmarked imported eggs and inquiries are being made into the matter.

**Mr. G. MACDONALD** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether his attention has been called to the evasion of the provisions of the Merchandise Marks Acts by the importation of unmarked eggs into this country; and whether he will see that the law with regard to the marking of imported eggs is carried out?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** I would refer the hon. Member to the reply given to-day to a similar question by my hon. Friend the Member for Eccles (Mr. Potter).

#### EMERGENCY CUSTOMS DUTIES (CHANNEL ISLANDS).

**Brigadier-General SPEARS** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether he will consider including vegetables, fruit, and flowers from the Channel Islands in the Emergency Customs Duties unless it is possible to secure from the estates of the islands a contribution to the Treasury equal to the advantage they will obtain if their products are imported into this country free of duty?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** It would not be practicable to carry out my hon. and gallant Friend's suggestion in connection with the Horticultural Products Bill now before the House.

#### FOREIGN BEEF AND MUTTON (DUTY).

**Mr. McEWEN** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether, in view of the plight of farmers, especially in the south-eastern parts of Scotland, owing to the recent fall in the price of sheep, he would be prepared to recommend as a temporary measure a nominal duty on all foreign beef and mutton entering this country?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** I am not in a position to add to the statement of policy which I made on 26th November last. As I stated on Monday last in reply to questions by my Noble Friend the Member for Perth (Lord Scone) and others, I can hold out no hope of being in a position to make any further announcement before the House rises for the Christmas Recess.

#### CATTLE AND SHEEP (PRICES).

**Lieut. - Colonel WINDSOR - CLIVE** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether he is aware of the recent fall in the prices of cattle and sheep; and whether he will give an assurance that the interests of this branch of the agricultural industry will receive the fullest consideration when the Government's agricultural policy is framed?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** I am aware of the facts stated in the first part of the question. I can assure my hon. and gallant Friend that the interests of this branch of the agricultural industry, in common with others, will receive the Government's fullest consideration.

#### ALLOTMENTS.

**Mr. PRICE** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether he is prepared to carry out the scheme of the last Government which was intended to give to unemployed allotment and garden holders fertilisers and seed free, with a view to encouraging agricultural products?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** I would refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave on Monday last to a question on this subject by the hon. Member for the Don Valley (Mr. T. Williams).

**Mr. COCKS** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether, in view of the importance of increasing the supply of home-grown foodstuffs, he will consider the restoration of the War-time facilities whereby urban dwellers in particular were able to obtain allotments in the parks, commons, by the side of railway tracks, and other places?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** I do not think the circumstances at the present time are such as to justify recourse to emergency measures of the kind suggested.

#### LAND DRAINAGE.

**Mr. de ROTHSCHILD** asked the Minister of Agriculture whether, in view of the hardship which is being caused in many quarters, he will receive a deputation from the East Anglian counties of those affected by the provision of the Land Drainage Act, 1930, which establishes the collection of drainage rates on a basis of annual value instead of an acreage basis?

**Sir J. GILMOUR:** As I indicated in the answer given to the Noble Lord the Member for Peterborough (Lord Burghley) on 23rd November, I am fully aware of the difficulties referred to by my hon. Friend. It would only be possible to adjust the matter by an amendment of the Land Drainage Act, 1930, and in these circumstances I do not think that at the present time any useful purpose would be served by my receiving a deputation as suggested.

#### HOUSING.

##### VACANT HOUSES (CONVERSION).

**Lord APSLEY** asked the Minister of Health whether, in view of the large number of middle-class houses to let or for sale as a result of the economic depression, he will issue a circular to the local authorities as to the desirability of using such powers as they possess for the purpose of reconditioning and adapting such dwellings for the occupation of several families?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** Local authorities have already under Section 57 of the Housing Act, 1925, powers of taking the action suggested, but I am not myself aware of any large increase in the number of



vacant houses which are suitable for conversion, and past experience does not suggest that conversion of this kind is generally economical or otherwise satisfactory.

#### RECONDITIONING.

**Lord APSLEY** asked the Minister of Health whether he can give any statistics as to unofficial schemes of reconditioning houses in slum areas for working-class families which are carried on at the present time on an economic basis; and if he will issue a circular to local authorities as to the desirability of stimulating such movements in their own districts as an adjunct to any council operations in respect of new houses building?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** I regret that I cannot give any statistics of this kind of work done by private bodies as particulars are not furnished to me. In a general housing circular issued last year local authorities were reminded of their power to promote the formation of and to give assistance to public utility societies whose objects include the improvement of dwelling-houses for the working classes.

#### BRITISH MATERIALS.

**Mrs. WARD** asked the Minister of Health if he is aware that many local authorities use foreign roofing tiles on municipal houses; and if, in view of the unemployment in the brick and tile industry and the mining industry, he will issue a circular to all local authorities urging that they should use British roofing tiles and bricks for municipal and council houses?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** I am sending my hon. Friend a copy of a circular letter already issued for the purpose which she has in view.

#### CONSTRUCTION (Cost).

**Captain ERSKINE-BOLST** asked the Minister of Health the present cost of construction of the average subsidy council house, with parlour and without, at the present time as compared with the corresponding period for each of the last three years; the cheapest type of house which has been erected at an economic rate; and whether, in view of the still existing shortage of houses, he can bring to the notice of other local authorities the full facts of cheap construction in this particular case?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** The following statement shows the average cost of non-parlour and parlour houses (excluding flats and small houses for aged persons) in contracts let by, or in direct labour schemes of, local authorities (other than the London County Council):

Year ended 31st December.	Cost of building exclusive of land, roads and sewers.	
	Non-parlour houses.	Parlour houses.
1927 ... ..	£ 413	£ 481
1928 ... ..	361	429
1929 ... ..	344	409
1930 ... ..	339	404

I am not certain to what type of house my hon. Friend refers as having been erected at an economic rate, but I am always willing to investigate economies in building and would in suitable cases bring any particular building methods to the notice of all local authorities who might be assisted thereby.

#### POOR LAW.

##### BRISTOL.

**Sir S. CRIPPS** asked the Minister of Health (1) whether he is aware that the Bristol public assistance committee have made a practice of taking into account benefits under the National Health Insurance and not disregarding the first 7s. 6d., as required by Section 48 of the Poor Law Act, 1930, in assessing the needs of able-bodied applicants for out-door relief; and whether he will take immediate steps to see that this practice is discontinued;

(2) whether he is aware that the Bristol public assistance committee, in the assessment of means of applicants for transitional benefit, are taking into account benefits under the National Health Insurance and not disregarding the first 7s. 6d., as required by the Poor Law Act, 1930; and whether he will take immediate steps to see that this practice is discontinued?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** I am informed on inquiry that the Bristol public assistance committee have no such practice. In one case they took into consideration

7s. 6d. National Health Insurance benefit payable to the wife of the applicant in assessing the amount of transitional payment for the applicant. I am advised that this procedure is correct, since the special provisions of Section 48 of the Poor Law Act, 1930, only apply to National Health Insurance benefits to which the applicant himself is entitled.

**PUBLIC ASSISTANCE COMMITTEES (EX-SERVICE MEN).**

**Mr. ALLEN** asked the Minister of Health whether he is aware that ex-service men have no representation on many public assistance committees; and whether he will take steps to secure that they shall have representation on all such committees?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** Under Section 4 of the Poor Law Act, 1930, the public assistance committee consists of members of the council, with or without the addition of a limited number of co-opted members, according to the provisions of the approved administrative scheme. I have no power to interfere either in the election or in the co-option of members of the committee.

**NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE.**

**Dr. O'DONOVAN** asked the Minister of Health whether he can give statistics to show to what extent the special conditions which provide that a panel practitioner may accept fees in respect of treatment given to an insured patient not on the practitioner's list are still being taken advantage of?

**Sir H. YOUNG:** I regret that I am not in possession of any statistics on the point raised in the question.

**"BUY BRITISH" CAMPAIGN.**

**Major CARVER** asked the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs what use is being made of the services of women in connection with the "Buy British" Campaign of the Empire Marketing Board?

**Mr. THOMAS:** No paid appointments, either of men or of women, have been made in connection with the "Buy British" Campaign, but I am happy to say that women throughout the Kingdom, both individually and through various associations, are co-operating enthusiastically with the Empire Marketing Board. Notable instances of such co-operation are the Girl Guides, who have undertaken the local distribution of posters in many areas; the National Federation of Women's Institutes, who have sent a special letter, with posters and special literature, to all women's institutes in England and Wales; and the Scottish Women's Rural Institutes, who have given special facilities for the direct despatch of posters to all their branches.

**MILITARY AND CIVIL PAY  
(DOMINIONS AND FOREIGN  
COUNTRIES).**

**Captain FRASER** asked the Financial Secretary to the Treasury if consideration has been given to the position of British military, naval, and Air Force officers and other ranks and civil servants who are serving in the Dominions or foreign countries whose incomes are adversely affected by the drop in the value of sterling and in some cases also by the fact that they have to pay increased British taxation; and, if so, can he make a statement as to what steps he intends to take to improve their position?

**Major ELLIOT:** This question is receiving consideration. I have myself received a deputation on the subject.

**CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES  
(INCOME TAX).**

**Captain CAZALET** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in view of the lowering of the figure at which Income Tax is now paid, he will consider the question of the taxation of the profits of co-operative societies?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** I would refer the hon. and gallant Member to the answer given on 24th November last to the hon. and gallant Member for Hertford (Rear-Admiral Sueter).

## EXCHANGE DEALINGS.

**Major HILLS** asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he will now take steps to withdraw all restrictions on dealings in exchange, so that traders who have to buy or sell exchange forward for legitimate business purposes can have the advantage of an open market?

**Mr. CHAMBERLAIN:** There are no restrictions on the purchase of foreign exchange for normal trading requirements, and I am advised that the withdrawal of the existing restrictions on speculative purchases of exchange would not assist the market for forward exchange for ordinary business purposes.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY.

### INDIAN POLICY.

Order read for resuming adjourned Debate on Question [2nd December].

"That this House approves the India Policy of His Majesty's Government as set out in Command Paper, No. 3972 (Indian Round Table Conference), presented to Parliament on 1st December, 1931."—[*The Prime Minister.*]

Question again proposed.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** I beg to move, in line 3, at the end, to add the words:

"Provided that nothing in the said policy shall commit this House to the establishment in India of a Dominion constitution as defined by the Statute of Westminster; provided also that the said policy shall effectively safeguard British trade in and with India from adverse or prejudicial discrimination; and provided further that no extensions of self-government in India at this juncture shall impair the ultimate responsibility of Parliament for the peace, order, and good government of the Indian Empire."

I cordially agree with what was said by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and echoed by the Secretary of State for India yesterday about the disadvantage of phrases and generalities upon the Indian problem. I would almost say it is a pity that this observation was not made before, because I am sure that many of the generalities and wide, loose, equivocal statements which have been made from time to time during the Indian Conference must have been very galling to the Prime Minister who is a master of terse and pithy statements. However, I gladly agree with him that both here and in India we have become at times the victims of phrases, and we have been obsessed by and entangled in our own terminology. Take the hackneyed phrase "Dominion status." During the Great War India obtained Dominion status so far as rank, honour and ceremony was concerned. The representatives of the Government of India attended the Imperial War Conference, they attended the Peace Conference, and they are included among the British Dominions who serve on the League of Nations.

Most of the leading public men of whom I was one in those days made speeches. I certainly did about Dominion status, but I did not contemplate India having

the same constitutional rights and system as Canada in any period which we could foresee. I did, and I do, contemplate our Indian fellow countrymen and fellow subjects enjoying equal rank with us and all other subjects of His Majesty's Government without distinction of race, creed or colour. Moreover, it was obviously inherent in the nature of things that we could not carry on the Government of India for a day except through the administrative abilities and the co-operation of very large and increasing numbers of educated Indians rising steadily to positions of greater responsibility and discretion. Therefore, I accept the statement made by the Secretary of State for India in his admirable speech last night in which he said:

"We have to reconcile the obligations of this long British partnership with India with the legitimate aspirations of Indians to take a greater part in their own Government."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 2nd December, 1931; col. 1209, Vol. 260.]

I accept that, and I think that the right hon. Gentleman has stated accurately the problem which is before us. All this is common ground. I am tired

4.0 p.m. of it being suggested that those who differ in this or that from the policy of His Majesty's Government are mere obscurantists and obstructionists who have no idea or policy but the denial of all progress in India and the arrest of constitutional development. I do not admit that the sense in which the expression "Dominion status" was used 10 or 15 years ago implied Dominion structure or Dominion rights. I looked up the word "status" in the dictionary, as you would say, Sir, for greater accuracy. I do not admit that it means structure or rights. The word "status" means rank—not necessarily rights or structure. Let me take an instance which will be familiar to everyone. Take the Privy Council. There are a large number of Privy Counsellors who are all of equal rank and some are privy to all the secrets of the State, and actually conduct the Government of the country. Others are not privy to any of the secrets of the State, and have only a remote chance of conducting the Government of the country, but there is no legal bar to their doing so, and all are equal. As Mr. Fox once said in a Debate on property and the inequalities of property:

[Mr. Churchill.]

"Men have equal rights to unequal things."

I think that that is a very profound observation upon the actual state of the world in which we live, and it has its bearings upon the question of Dominion status. Ten or 15 years ago there was a great deal of talk of the offence caused to Indians by the idea that they occupied a lower rank and status than the people of this island. We were assured that once this slur was cleared away, once there was no further suggestion of what they call in India "Nordic superiority" an immense boon would be afforded to our brave Indian fellow-soldiers who fought in the War and to Indian collaborators in building up the British Empire, that it would afford a sensible relief and encouragement and an enhanced sense of dignity, and no practical or serious difficulties would arise. We were told that what India wanted was a recognition and the form of equality of status. No one ever suggested then even in the most haggard moments of the War or the most expansive hours of victory that the Indian proletariat with its vast masses, its almost innumerable peoples of India would be likely to live in peace, happiness and decency under the same polity, and the same forms of government which prevail among the British, Canadian or Australian democracies. The idea is preposterous, and is well known to be preposterous. It is not preposterous, assuredly, because the natives of India are inherently incapable of working modern democratic institutions, or that they are inherently unfit to enjoy any form of autonomy. It is impossible because the conditions of India, of the country in which they live, the political, social, cultural, racial, religious conditions of that country are such that any attempt to apply the democratic institutions of Australia and Canada rigidly and pedantically to India, would produce measureless tyranny and misery, ending in bloodshed and probably utter confusion. That is why it is our duty at once to concede status as we have conceded it, and to reserve and withhold structure in our dealings with the Indian problem.

I have given, I think, a very fair account of the opinion in governing

dominant circles in this country at the time of the Montagu reforms on this point. Certainly, I have stated my own recollections. I was not directly brought into these matters, but I have stated my own recollection of what the general view was. Side by side with this desire to confer equality of rank upon our Indian fellow-subjects, there were earnest and practical efforts to associate Indians even more directly with the responsibilities of Government and administration. But the whole position was defined and set out with the utmost clarity in the Preamble and in the Sections of the Act of 1919. The Prime Minister referred to the Preamble yesterday, but he did not refer to Section 41, which must be read with the Preamble. That Section is the one which gives us the power to regulate, limit or restrict the pace at which the constitutional reforms should proceed in India, and the two must be read in conjunction, one with the other. Read together they proclaim at once the sincerity of our purpose, and the plenary, and, as I hold, inalienable authority of Parliament to control, regulate, restrict or alter the character, extent and direction of Indian constitutional progress. I take my stand upon that Act of Parliament. Until it is superseded by another Act of Parliament, it embodies and expresses the whole constitutional relation between Great Britain and all the nations, races and tribes of India.

There are many who hold that the Statute of 1919 went too far. I sometimes meet people who have given up all hope or interest in the Indian situation, and when they are invited to consider a new and dangerous position, they merely say, "Oh, well, all that was settled in 1919." There are many who contend that serious evils flowed from the Act of 1919, and certainly that no good was done either to the wellbeing of the people of India or to their loyalty to the King-Emperor. These critics point to the increasingly vociferous discontent of the Indian political classes for which this Act was largely passed, and the increasing administrative deterioration of all the scientific and cultural departments which have been handed over, or, as I would prefer to say, experimentally delegated to Indian control. I must admit the force of these assertions, but

I say, nevertheless, let us take our stand upon the Government of India Act, 1919. That is our only starting point for any new departure or advance in the Indian problem which is now, or may now be open to us. I do not recognise the validity of some of the declarations which have been made in the interval. I may deplore their consequences, but I do not recognise the validity of individual declarations. Here is the Statute, the Act of 1919, and here is the Parliament which can alone, when it chooses, alter it in any direction it pleases.

The Statutory Commission arose directly out of the 1919 Act. I am going to make some demand upon the good will of the House, and, basing myself on the gravity of the problem, I am going to follow for a few minutes the Prime Minister in his historical review, but I shall, perhaps, touch on some points which he omitted, no doubt through want of time, and perhaps I shall place my emphasis with different weight upon others. The Statutory Commission, as I said, arose out of the Act of 1919. Lord Birkenhead, taking time by the forelock, not waiting until the 10 years' period had run out, anticipated the date prescribed in the Act for a Commission to review the workings of the Montague reforms, and he set up the Commission known in history as the Simon Commission. That Commission was set up, I must remind the House, with the utmost formality. No simple Order brought it into being. It was based upon a special Act of Parliament passed through this House with the names of the Commissioners duly chosen from the three political parties.

The Commission presented their report. All—Liberals, Conservatives and Socialists—were unanimously agreed. I do not pretend—I have never pretended—that every word of that report was right, or that all its recommendations are applicable. Obviously, they are not. But I have always ventured to urge that here was the true Parliamentary foundation for action, and here should have been the basis upon which all our discussions should have begun. I must say that a grave responsibility at the bar of history rests upon those who have incontinently, and with much presumption and levity, cast aside the recommendations of this Commission, and have departed from the

orderly, recognised, constitutional procedure which had been prescribed by law, and, having done that, having brushed aside the whole of the plan on which the three parties were proceeding in unison, have embarked, almost at a night's notice, upon all kinds of airy and adventurous excursions of their own.

Ten years pass rapidly. I have several times been connected with public matters where all difficulties have been satisfied by saying, "Oh, well, let this be reviewed in 10 years." I have lived long enough to sit in a Government which found that 10 years' period come to an end, and saw the evil of putting off difficulties merely by so brief a term as 10 years. But before the 10 years' period prescribed in the 1919 Act was completed, it was clear to almost everyone who knew India that this idea of Dominion status, into which had been read the idea of a Dominion constitution, could not be helpful in any way to any British or to any Indian interest. The Statutory Commission, after a profound study—two years of their lives they gave up to the matter; no one knows a quarter about the subject that these men know from their vast work—the Statutory Commission, after their profound study, deliberately excluded the expression "Dominion status" from their unanimous report—a tremendous fact, when you remember the atmosphere at the time; a great august decision, which has never received the weight and attention which it deserves from Parliament.

Nowadays everyone, I suppose, can see how unwise it was of the late Government and of their Viceroy to revive and renew the idea of Dominion status at a time when such a declaration could only prejudice the Report of the Statutory Commission for which Parliament was waiting, and also at a time when this idea had received a new connotation, and had become a symbol of hostile propaganda. Moreover, as we have been pertinently, and even pointedly reminded in the last few weeks, the whole character and definition of Dominion status has been fundamentally altered by the declarations of the Imperial Conference of 1926. Read now your Statute of Westminster when it comes to you from another place, and let any man, I do not care where he sits, ask himself whether he would take the personal responsibility of extending the rights and authorities conferred and

[Mr. Churchill.]

described in that Act to the peoples of India in any period which can be foreseen. I call to account those who were responsible, first, for the departure from constitutional procedure as prescribed by law, and, secondly, for this declaration of the Viceroy, which prejudiced, and, indeed, destroyed, the whole vast work of the Simon Commission. Other grave mistakes have no doubt been committed in Indian affairs, but these are the parent mistakes—these are the parents of all the evils which have flowed upon us since, and are still flowing upon us in a rising tide.

The Prime Minister yesterday spoke to us about the origin of the Round Table Conference. I do not quarrel with his description. There were no Indian representatives on the Statutory Commission. Discontent was caused; the Indians demanded admission; they were refused admission. To satisfy them it was proposed by the Foreign Secretary himself that there should be a Consultative Conference, a kind of collateral consultative conference. So, when the time came for this conference to meet—it was a very sensible thing to do—the question was, who should be the British representative? One would have imagined from the speech of the Prime Minister that he was most eager to carry all parties with him in the matter. I am afraid his historical recollection is at fault in that respect. As a matter of fact, great concern was caused among Conservatives, for fear that a declaration would be made at this consultative conference by the Socialist Government of the day which would have a binding effect and tie the hands of Parliament in the future.

The Conservatives accordingly demanded, and so did the Liberals, who at that time were working in accord upon this question—it was one of those periods when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George) was in a highly patriotic mood; unhappily, the mood did not last very long on that occasion—the Conservatives and the Liberals demanded representation. The Government resisted. They objected, and so did the Indian Congress. They thought it would alter the whole character, and so did the other people who were likely to be invited. They objected. However, in the end a joint

representation was insisted upon, and a joint representation was effected. I am bound to say that I do not think the Indian Congress and the others need have worried very much about it, because there is no doubt that the fact that the representatives of all these three parties were gathered there has enabled this conference to play a vast, and it may well be a fatal, part in the whole of the development of our Indian policy.

When the Conference met, in view of the Viceroy's declaration, in view of a great many foolish speeches which were being made, and in view of the general feeling of weakness and despondency which spreads throughout the British Empire when a minority Government, and a Socialist minority Government, is in power, the Indian Princes, not knowing where to turn, came forward and offered to join in a federal system. Immediately there followed this landslide to which I have always drawn attention. In a night, in a day, the whole situation was transformed. The Consultative Conference, which was to lie alongside the Statutory Report, converted itself into a quite unauthorised kind of informal constituent assembly, and immediately set to work to fabricate and manufacture federal constitutions of every kind in every direction. This process was accompanied by speeches and perorations which might well have justified the assumption that the United States of India and full Dominion status were actually at hand, or very close to our hands. I do not at all wonder that great hopes and expectations were excited over India, and great disappointment, naturally, has followed as those expectations have gradually, but steadily and remorselessly, been contracted.

The Conference, I say, went on its path, and, when it separated in January, the Prime Minister made the declaration which is repeated in Paragraph 2 of the White Paper which is now before us. The House is familiar with it, and has read it with attention, and, therefore, I will not re-read it. There was the new declaration—there was the declaration which side-tracked the Simon Commission, which committed us to an altogether different departure and different mode of action. I, from the very first, have protested against this violent change, but

hitherto I have never been asked by the Leaders of my party to become committed to it in any way. This is the first time we are asked to take upon ourselves responsibility for the declaration made by the Prime Minister at the head of the Socialist Government in January last. Otherwise we have been free. I will return to that in a minute.

The consequence of these events was, of course, an attempt to procure the assent of the Indian Congress. Mr. Gandhi and other leaders were all in prison. They had to be released to induce them to take part in this great new settlement. Then followed their release, and immediately upon that we saw the spectacle of Mr. Gandhi and some of his leading lieutenants negotiating almost on equal terms with the Viceroy and arranging the celebrated Gandhi-Irwin Pact. There followed upon that the attempt to set up two parallel Governments in India—a Government of the Congress, which was to be in close, harmonious touch with His Majesty's Imperial Government, and was to be, as it were, an agent and a co-operator in the work of governing India. I say that that was a most profoundly injurious blow struck at British authority, not only in India, but throughout the globe.

My right hon. Friend the Lord President of the Council said before the General Election that he and the Prime Minister were a pair of brothers. The discovery of their brotherhood dates from an earlier period than the difficulties of the pound sterling. They came together upon this Indian matter. The close association between the Prime Minister and the Lord President of the Council, and the great friendship which my right hon. Friend has for Lord Irwin, led to all the forces of the Conservative party machine, all the enormous influence which they possess throughout the country, in this House and in the Press, and all the loyalties of a great party looking forward to a victorious General Election, being turned against those who protested against this sudden, unconstitutional and novel twist that had been given to Indian affairs. The result of this has been that no fair or adequate expression has been given to the deep sense of alarm and of repulsion, I may say, felt throughout the country, and especially by all those

British folk who have a real knowledge of India and are brought in actual contact with Indian affairs. Their alarm at these events was completely overlaid, and they were virtually extinguished as a political force. There seemed to be no Conservative point of view; there seemed to be no resistance at all to this swift drift of events, heedless, almost, of the direction in which it was going.

That was harmful to our world reputation. All that the world could see was an apparent complete absence of backbone in our Imperial affairs. It was freely said on the Continent, "England will always give way to whoever shouts the loudest." It was said, that England had lost her capacity for leading, guiding, and, I would add, ruling Oriental countries; that, just as she gave up her naval rights without any real need, so she would give up her rights and her enormous interests in India if pressed far enough. Invoke certain principles, it was said, repeat certain formulas and phrases, and England will submit as if she were under a spell of witchcraft. That is what was said and believed almost universally throughout the world. Believe me, Mr. Speaker, this had as much to do with the collapse of British credit as any speculations of acceptance houses in the City of London. England, apart from her Empire in India, ceases for ever to exist at a Great Power. Strip this Island of her appanage of interest and sovereignty in tropical lands, and you would indeed have a plain explanation of the collapse of the pound sterling.

The pound sterling is based on many things, but among them, indispensable and almost prime, is the gigantic historical position of Britain in the East; and when it was widely believed, and when it was actually part of the British Government's policy not to deny, that in a time which might be short or long, but whether long or short we did not dare to say—it could not be stated—that in a time which might be short or long we should be ready, if the Indians wished, to evacuate India; when that was the world opinion, which we did not contradict, and could not, in virtue of the argumentative position taken up by the Government, contradict, naturally the confidence of the world in our general strength was undermined.



[Mr. Churchill.]

The negotiations with Mr. Gandhi, coupled with all the flowery speeches about the United States of India and the currency of this phrase "Dominion status," together with the new definitions which were being imparted to it—the whole of these things were interpreted, by people who do not understand our ways or our resources, or our power of recovery, as a complete collapse in national and Imperial moral. Foreign countries could not understand it at all. They could not understand it any more than the Germans could understand that England might become a great military Power. They could not understand that England is much stronger than she looks. They did not, do not, and will not believe what we cannot bring ourselves to doubt, namely, that we have only to make a sustained effort of national will-power to recover our entire position.

The results were disastrous in India, as well as to our position here. British authority was for a time brought into unparalleled contempt. All classes in this teeming population who had the slightest capacity for thought above their homes, their daily bread, and their religion, were led to expect some vast impending, gleaming change in the whole foundation of life and Government. That was a terribly unsettling element to bring about, working its way in tremors through these enormous, vast populations, carried from mouth to mouth—"The British Raj is going to depart; there will be a new Raj to take its place before long." All classes in India were feeling this unsettling, undermining, shattering influence in their lives. In India, constitutional and political matters affect only a tithe, perhaps, of the people. The

great mass are interested in  
4.30 p.m. the technical apparatus of government, which secures them some protection of health and some of the facilities of science, but 999 out of every 1,000 at least are absorbed in the struggle for life in this world or the next. All are being unsettled, all are being taught to regard the proceedings of the ruling power as a mere winding up of their affairs, as a preliminary to abdication and exit. Naturally they look about. Who would not be unsettled? Naturally, in the face of this astonishing threatened desertion, they look out for

something to take hold of. They turn from side to side seeking an anchor that will hold. As the British authority passed for a time into collapse, the old hatred between the Moslems and the Hindus revived and acquired new life and malignity. We cannot easily conceive what these hatreds are. There are mobs of neighbours, people who have dwelt together in the closest propinquity all their lives, who, when held and dominated by these passions, will tear each other to pieces, men, women and children, with their fingers. Not for a hundred years have the relations between Moslems and Hindus been so poisoned as they have been since England was deemed to be losing her grip and was believed to be ready to quit the scene if told to go.

I make some apology to the House for this historical survey. Others may state it in a different way, but that is the sequence of events which, in my judgment, has led us to the present position, and you cannot discuss the present position without comprehending the chain of causation by which we have reached it. I now come to immediate history. I listened yesterday to the speeches of the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State, and I must confess that I am completely mystified about the policy of the Government. The Secretary of State, addressing me amicably but pointedly, said, "Do we mean the same thing?" I was very tempted to say, "Do he and the Prime Minister mean the same thing?" At any rate, I would gladly answer his question when I could get a satisfactory answer to mine. No one would be more pleased than I should be to feel that he and I were agreed. It has been very painful to me to separate myself from friends and colleagues with whom I have had much pleasure in working and with whom it was most agreeable to discuss the common action that we could take in political affairs. Glad should I be indeed if we mean the same thing. I must try, therefore, to clarify the position a little, and I will do so before I sit down.

Let me say, however, in the first place that there are serious objections in my opinion to making a speech delivered on a valedictory occasion, with all the generalities and civilities appropriate to

speeding the parting guest and with all the agreeable sentiments naturally aroused in the breast of the host when he takes leave of those with whom he has long collaborated, the right hon. Gentleman bidding farewell to "My dear Mahatma." A speech delivered in these circumstances may well play its part in the regular and agreeable and decorous conduct of administration, but it does not and ought not to serve as the foundation for a solemn declaration of policy by the House of Commons. However, the speech has been elevated into a State paper. Obviously, it is a report of a speech largely extemporaneous, with all the loosenesses of phrase and unprecision of sentences which unhappily we are all led into when we are speaking in these conditions. This is a State paper which has superseded the massive report of the Statutory Commission. This is a State paper which is now the foundation of our future action, and we are to give a vote of confidence, a vote of approval, to this speech whatever it may mean, and I conceive it to be designed to mean different things to different people.

There is one part of the paper, however, which is certainly not at all ambiguous, and that is paragraph 2. That is the vital, operative part. There is the new declaration, and that is what we are now asked to make ourselves responsible for. That is a grave and far-reaching decision for us to be asked to take. In January, when this statement of the Prime Minister was made at the Round Table Conference, it was only a statement of a Socialist minority Government. The Conservative party was repeatedly assured that it was wholly uncommitted. Most important deputations visited the party leader and received from him an assurance, and my right hon. Friend dropped the word "implement" into which by his enthusiasm he had been incautiously betrayed. In December the Conservative party is invited to bind itself to the acceptance, not only of the provincial autonomy recommended by the Simon Commission, but to responsible government at the centre and the establishment of a federal system. The whole of these changes are only the preliminaries which, after a transitional period, are to give way to what I presume must be what is called

full responsibility for her own Government, what I presume must be Dominion status or Dominion constitution as now defined by the Statute of Westminster.

What has happened to induce us to make this change? What has happened in the interval to induce us to make this tremendous advance in Conservative opinion? What has happened to make us commit ourselves to the full Socialist policy as formerly promulgated by the Prime Minister and Mr. Wedgwood Benn? Certainly not any agreement that has been reached at the Round Table Conference. On no one single disputed point has there been any agreement. Public order, defence, trade, finance, representation of States, protection of minorities—on none of these topics has there been any agreement. There have been some advances towards agreement in matters in which Indians have united to demand concessions and the British have conceded, not as much, but a good deal of what they asked, but there has been absolutely no agreement of any kind in the differences between one set of Indians and another except these various minority agreements which are largely in the nature of mutual protection. On the contrary, there has been a marked sharpening and hardening of all these during the progress of this Conference.

Last January Lord Reading postulated a number of conditions without which he declared he would not support a responsible federal Government. I remember well that his speech was at that time thought to be extreme by the Conservative delegates on the Conference. Yet, now that there is no agreement on any of the disputed points, both he and the Conservative delegates are ready to go the whole way together, and we are to be compelled to accompany them on that perilous voyage. Last January it was urged that much larger concessions as to self-government might well be made to India for the sake of getting, and on the basis of, an agreed settlement; that you could make much larger concessions than could be given in a scheme which was simply imposed by the spontaneous act of the Imperial Parliament. Good will, we were told—the assent of the Indian political classes, the co-operation of Congress and of Mr. Gandhi—would make a basis upon which we would go much further than if we had to act

[Mr. Churchill.]  
alone. In the last Parliament, as I must remind my friends here, it was part of the innocent Lobby propaganda of the Conservative Whips that there was no need for Conservative apprehension about the Prime Minister's declaration or about the Round Table Conference proceedings, because, it was said, all depended on agreement between Indians themselves and this agreement would certainly not be obtained. It has not been obtained, but the policy that was dependent upon agreement is now to go forward in the teeth of disagreement, and the Conservative party, which was not committed even on the basis of agreement, is now to be committed on the basis of disagreement.

That is what has happened, and again I ask what is it that has occurred in the interval to produce this surprising change that we are now going to be compelled to make? Consider what has happened in India. There has been the massacre of Cawnpore, the most terrible episode that has happened since the mutiny, there has been a long and increasing succession of assassinations, there has been a movement of boycott which has largely ruined the trade of Lancashire. We had only the other day Lord Lothian's speech showing that the lives of officials and Europeans in Bengal are held only on tenure from minute to minute. There have been the stern ordinances which the Government have thought it their duty to impose. There is nothing in the state of India which justifies the Conservative party in committing itself to-day to a position in this matter that it was not asked to commit itself to, that it was solemnly free from responsibility for, in the beginning of the present year.

**Mr. W. THORNE:** National Government.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** Although it is a National Government, Conservatives still exist. They may be proud to serve, but still they live, and have a right to live. I think I have thus shown that there has been an immense change in the position of the Conservative party, involving the whole of this new Parliament. All are being committed to the Socialist policy of the Prime Minister and the late Secretary of State, without even that

measure of agreement or acceptance on behalf of the Indian political classes which less than a year ago the Socialist leaders themselves thought indispensable to this scheme. This step we are asked to take irrevocably at 48 hours' notice without the slightest examination worthy of the name by Parliament of the merits and character of the Round Table Conference scheme or still less of the scheme of the Statutory Commission. Those who were in the last Parliament will remember how rigorously the provisions of constitutional change were always excluded from our Debates. I was myself on several occasions prevented from making even an indirect reference to them—a reference necessary to render the discussion intelligible—because it was said, "No, we are only on the administrative points upon the Secretary of State's salary."

The whole of these matters were ruled out of the last Parliament, and this is the first opportunity upon which the House of Commons has ever been allowed to discuss questions like, well, say, whether it is a good thing—I do not say it may not be—at this juncture to make a federal system before the communities out of which it is to be made have been created? That is an absolute departure from all that has ever been known of Imperial construction. Another question is whether it is wise to merge the fortunes of the Indian States with those of British India? It may be, I do not say it is not, but it is the first opportunity that it has been possible for us to mention that since the 26th January last. We might also discuss whether 450 roadless constituencies as large as Scotland, each containing half-a-million illiterate voters, can be a satisfactory basis for what the Prime Minister in his speech calls:

"the democratic principle expressing itself solely through majority power."

We might discuss whether it is prudent to hand over—if this is what we are going to do, and I confess I do not know whether it is so or not—the responsibility for law and order, that is to say, the police and secret services, shall we say, in Bengal, Bombay, the North-West Provinces, the Frontier Provinces, to hand over those responsibilities to Indian provincial cabinets enjoying plenary authority and elected upon a franchise whose working no human being can value

or measure. We might discuss whether it is prudent at the same time and by the same operation to create a brand new federal system for a continent nearly as large as Europe, inhabited by nearly as many human beings, the vast majority of whom are in a primitive state, with more national, racial and religious divisions than Europe, and far more bitter and far more bloody feuds rampant and rife within it. And having created this United States of India you endow this federal system with the responsible powers or a large measure of the responsible powers hitherto exercised by Parliament. That is a tremendous issue to which, surely, some time and thought might be given by Parliament to consider before it takes a decision to which you will for ever afterwards be told "you are bound irrevocably."

There was much in the Simon scheme. I know he will forgive me mentioning his name in this way. That is the penalty of being an historical person. There was much in the Simon scheme which caused anxiety. The full provincial autonomy of countries as large as France and Germany, including peace and order, was to be confided to utterly unproved men upon what I believe to be an utterly unrepresentative basis and chosen by methods unnatural in the East. That was a most audacious and temerarious departure recommended by the Simon scheme. That was supposed to be so reactionary that no one dare even mention it since it was penned and signed. At any rate, the Simon scheme proceeded upon a practical argument. It strove to get rid of diarchy and dualism in the provinces. It took the line of making a bold experiment in the provinces, giving self-government in its integrity with full responsibility, but keeping the supreme control, the supreme central organism of government and the ultimate authority of Parliament integral, intact and inviolate. If anything went wrong in the provinces, if abuses, disasters, confusion, retrogression, massacre and pillage occurred in the provinces, then there would be an organism of supreme power, absolutely integral, one unbroken unit which could come to the rescue of the province which had gone into disorder or confusion, could put the coaches on the line again, and come to the aid of, and give peace and order again to a population which was

suffering the horrors of anarchy. That is the Simon scheme in a nutshell, if I am not taking his name in vain. That was a plan and a policy.

But what have we got now? When loyalty and order in India have sunk far lower than when the Simon Commission penned their report, we are to undermine simultaneously by a double convulsion all the local foundations of British rule and many of the central foundations as well. I am not saying I refuse to associate myself with such a policy, but to say that without discussion we should be committed to it is a terrible abuse to be imposed by a Government of the House of Commons. I can conceive variants of this scheme which might be an improvement of what is put forward in the Simon Report, but it is a risky thing. These are matters of enormous consequences and complications, and at the very moment when the aid and action of the central Power may be more needed than ever before on account of the provincial experiments and on account of the state of the country, the central Power is to be hampered by that very diarchy which has already been found so injurious in the provinces to good government that the Statutory Commission advised its abandonment even at a great risk of having to hand over law and order to the provinces. All this scheme is inherent in paragraph 2. Paragraph 2 is the operative part of this document which sets out and commits us to that scheme.

All that is but the prelude, is but a period of transition which nobody dare say will be a long one. It is against your policy to say it is a long one. It is a mere prelude before the inauguration of full Dominion status as defined by the Statute of Westminster, with control by an Indian Legislature of police, army and finance, and power to abrogate any Imperial law, even the law which calls it into being, power to discriminate against British trade, the right to which Privy Councillor Sastri has attached so much importance, to secede from the British Empire, and by an effort of volition to cast off the sovereignty of the King-Emperor. I have not over-stated by one hair's-breadth the issues hanging upon the decision to which we are now asked to

[Mr. Churchill.]

commit ourselves, and which we never knew anything about until the day before yesterday.

What did the Government want to demand this vote of confidence for? We were perfectly content to have a Debate on the Motion for the Adjournment. Why did they wish to seize this vote of confidence from the House at this juncture on a policy which they admit themselves is all in a state of flux? We have to commit ourselves to-night within six or seven hours from now, without examining these proposals in detail, without giving them a tithe of the time and attention which are given to the most ordinary Acts of domestic legislation. I say that it is astounding that we should be placed in that position. We shall be told that nothing can be done without the Act of Parliament, and that all the reserves and defences of Parliamentary procedure—the First Reading, Second Reading, Committee, Report, Third Reading—all these will be at our disposal when the time comes. Several years must pass before such an Act can even be introduced. Why worry? Let us get rapidly on to other business and pass the vote of confidence in the Prime Minister's Indian scheme for which he now asks.

We have only to look back to last week. Short as memories are nowadays, we have not yet forgotten the arguments by which His Majesty's Government—I do not blame them; they were the arguments which were alone available—secured the passage of the Statute of Westminster Bill. We had committed ourselves, we were bound in honour. We had committed ourselves by the decisions of 1926. We had no choice but to ratify them and to implement them, heavy as our hearts might be, and as their hearts were as they told us. Still, we all had to go through with it. That is your protection of an Act of Parliament when you have already committed yourselves in advance to some vague affirmation of principle. Now we are being drawn and entangled in the same kind of gradual, imperceptible procedure. We might almost say that the operation is proceeding according to plan. In a few years these vague, indefinite and obscurely stated principles in the speech of the Prime Minister, with all their ambiguity, and whatever they may mean or may not mean, may come

before us in a Statute, and we shall be told, "You have already bound yourselves. Read the Prime Minister's speech. Read your own solemn affirmation of it given on the third day of December, 1931. You have no choice." We are giving ourselves over, bound hand and foot, without knowing in the least what concession may be made.

I would sit down at once if the Government would be content with the adjournment of the Debate. While we are asked at this juncture to take this decision, I am bound to press my case to a conclusion. I say that it is not fair to the House, and may be woefully injurious to the State. Can you wonder that some of us who do not agree with the general tendency of Socialist policy in India feel that we must make some rugged affirmations of our own such as are contained in the Amendment we have thought it our duty to put upon the Paper before we can assent to a vote of approval of the general policy of the Government? I say that I would not vote against the Government at this stage on the difference between a whole-hearted measure of autonomy in the Provinces on the one hand, or some compromise between autonomy in the Provinces and central autonomy. I would like to see the scheme and consider it. My prepossession is against the latter scheme. At any rate, it is a matter we should consider at leisure and with precise information before us, but that we should now have to commit ourselves to the whole of this policy without being permitted to assert some of the indispensable requirements to which the British Government are entitled to attach importance is most oppressive.

We have postulated in this Amendment three conditions. I hoped that it might be accepted by His Majesty's Government. The Prime Minister's speech showed me, at any rate, one thing. I was very sorry to see it. It showed me that the Amendment would not be accepted, but I was left in doubt whether it would not be accepted because he did not agree with it, or because he agreed with it so much that he considered it superfluous. It was not clear whether he regarded it as an honest assertion of British requirements, or whether he regarded it merely as an effort on my part to gild refined gold and paint the lily. Then, late at night, there

came the speech of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for India, our Secretary of State for the Department which is charged with these events, the responsible Secretary of State upon this subject. There was no equivocation about that. I sat here and listened without the slightest difficulty in deciding what was the intention and purpose of the Secretary of State's speech, for my right hon. Friend said, quoting my reference to the Statute of Westminster, that the Government policy has no more to do with the Statute of Westminster than the man in the moon. The Statute of Westminster, at any rate, defines

5.0 p.m. the present position of Dominion status. Therefore,

Dominion status, apparently, has no more to do with the policy of His Majesty's Government than the man in the moon. Certainly, there is no difference between what we have put in our Amendment and the excellent and clear-cut statement of the responsible Secretary of State. My right hon. Friend went on to detail safeguards, and not for the first time. It has always fallen to his lot to dwell upon the safeguards, and he has always done so very faithfully. He carries a great measure of confidence, even from those who have not agreed with him, because of his inflexible adherence to certain positions which he outlined at the outset. I hope the House will read that speech; it is most important. He spoke of the Army. That must be reserved. Foreign affairs must be reserved. Financial stability, that is to say, the balancing of the Budget, currency, the banking system—all these must be reserved. Not much will be left for the Chancellor of the Exchequer when all these subjects have been reserved. Internal order and police must be reserved, in the ultimate issue.

**The SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir Samuel Hoare):** The phrase that I used was "internal security." I said nothing about the police.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** I beg my right hon. Friend's pardon. Internal security, in the ultimate issue, must be reserved. The protection of minorities must be reserved. The minorities in India, added together, are majorities, substantial majorities. They are entangled at every stage with the Hindus. There is to be no discrimination against British trade,

and the interests of the Services are to be properly safeguarded. Here, instead of the three points which we have put forward in our Amendment, the Secretary of State has put forward eight points, including the three which have been mentioned by us. I will not take up the time of the House in arguing how much will be left of responsible Government, or what will be the meaning attached to the phrase "responsible Government" when all these safeguards have been given full and loyal effect to. The Secretary of State quarrelled, in the most courteous manner, with my Amendment only on one ground: it does not go far enough. It only states three desiderata of the eight or nine which my right hon. Friend put forward with so much force to the House. If that is the only dispute and difference between us, I will gladly do my best to remove the difference that is outstanding. If that is the only difference, I am sure that it can easily be got rid of. I told my right hon. Friend this morning that I should be quite willing to withdraw the Amendment. I have been in consultation with hon. Friends associated with me, and we should be quite willing to withdraw our Amendment if the Government would agree to substitute for certain words at the end of the Motion:

"That this House approves the India policy of His Majesty's Government as set out in Command Paper, No. 3972 presented to Parliament on 1st December, 1931, and also in the speech of the Secretary of State for India of the 2nd December."

Now I address myself to the Prime Minister, and I ask him publicly a question. I am authorised by those who are associated with me, no doubt, a forlorn and scanty band, to withdraw the Amendment if the Government will merely add to their Motion the speech of their own Secretary of State—the statement of policy made by him, not merely an enumeration of the safeguards but the whole of the statement he made, including his resolve to persevere with the policy of self-government and with the erection of a federal system. If he will include that speech in the Motion which he is asking us to pass this evening, he will have a unanimous vote so far as his supporters are concerned. I pause for a reply.

The **PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Ramsay MacDonald)**: It is perfectly plain that everything that was in the Secretary of State's speech is in the White Paper.

**Mr. CHURCHILL**: Then I take it that the offer is refused. The Government, supported by the Liberal party—[**HON. MEMBERS**: "And the Conservative party!"]—will use their Whips against the incorporation in the Resolution of Confidence to them of the speech delivered by their own Secretary of State on this subject last night. I say that that is an oppressive use of the machinery of Parliament. I would like to know the explanation. I can see perfectly well the explanation. The right hon. Gentleman is wishing to speak with two voices to two audiences. Here is what he has said to the Indian delegates, which they have taken away with them to encourage them, honeyed words, only saying the things that please them, leaving out a firm insistence on British rights and a blunt expression of what belongs to us, and merely dwelling on what we wish to give to them. They are to take that away with them, to be encouraged by false hopes and to be misled by a wrong impression of the actualities and the verities of British opinion. There are verities and resistances in British opinion.

We in this House are to be induced to consent to a policy and a White Paper by the speech—the most reassuring speech—which the Secretary of State for India made to us for domestic consumption, which is not to be incorporated in the Resolution which we are to pass, and when legislation is presented to us, a few years hence, that will be the only operative fact of which the House will be able to take cognisance. When the Resolution comes forward and we say: "Look at what the Secretary of State said in regard to safeguards," it will be said to us that what we voted on was the Prime Minister's statement. When we say that there are some things in that statement which show that he bore those safeguards in mind, we shall be told: "The operative thing is the solemn declaration made by the Prime Minister in January, 1931, from which he has never swerved and which we are carrying into force to-day." That is the condition in which we find ourselves. What is the value of the declarations made by the

Secretary of State if they are not to play their full part in the decision to which the House is to come? The Government Whips are to be put on to resist the application of the Government's own policy in order that a false impression may be given in India, or that we may ourselves be entrapped into a loss of our liberties and discretion at some future date.

This shows that the Government, with all their able men, with all the good wishes and the good will which they command have been paralysed from birth by internal weaknesses. They have lost in height what they have gained in breadth, they have lost in stature what they have gained in girth and they have lost in fibre what they have gained in bulk. That is what the people are saying all over the country. Things of this kind are more likely to injure the Administration than the most firm action, even if in some respects it were mistaken action in the handling of a great public problem. What are we to do? We are to send out committees to India. They are to roam around India, large parts of which may be under something like martial law. They will roam around India in places where the ordinary constitutional rights are superseded by measures of enforced protection. They are to be subjected to the same sort of ill-usage as that to which the Simon Commission were subjected by the adherents of the Congress party. India is to be kept in this state of unsettlement, perhaps for two or three years, with these hopes and fears of some great change that is going to take place.

Five years have past since we began unsettling the pathetic content of the people of India. It is five years since the Simon Commission was appointed, and three years since it reported. All the time there has been change, perpetual friction and disturbances, raising every kind of grave question and every type of discussion. That is to go on for another two or three years *pari passu* with the repressive measures, the stern repressive measures, which, I believe, have largely arisen out of our foolish policy of fermenting this feeling of unsettlement. All the time our officials in India, officers of all kinds, will have to go on with their enormously difficult work, with this haunting feeling behind

them that nothing is settled, that there is nothing to stand on. Meanwhile the committees will be roaming up and down the country. There will be the feeling all the time that some great development is sure to occur, and there will be this horrible undermining impression that they are the representatives only of a rearguard which is edging off, shuffling off responsibilities and ultimately out of the country altogether. The people of India as well as the people of Great Britain are entitled to better treatment than that.

I have finished, and I am most grateful to the House for permitting me to intrude for so long upon their attention. What can we do but persevere with our Amendment? It is not a vote of want of confidence in His Majesty's Government. On the contrary, it merely asserts the principles which they themselves affirm, and which both the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State have affirmed. It can only be made a Vote of want of confidence by what I think is the abusive action on the part of the Whips, to which the leader of the Conservative party had no right to lend himself. Let me tell the House, seeing that there are so many new Members, how this matter will be put to the Vote. The Amendment will be put first as a positive Motion, the Question being,

"That the words proposed to be added stand part."

Therefore, the House will vote upon the words of the Amendment:

"Provided that nothing in the said policy shall commit this House to the establishment in India of a Dominion Constitution as defined by the Statute of Westminster, etc."

The House will vote upon that for or against the Amendment, and hon. Members will consider the implication of voting against. It would mean a reversal of these proposals. If they put it in that way, hon. Members will be able to see what it is they are asked to vote against. If the Amendment be defeated, it will still be open to any hon. Member who has voted for it to vote for a general Vote of Confidence in the Government. There is no inconsistency in that; because any hon. Member may say that he would rather have the Government Motion with the Amendment, but that if he cannot get it with the Amendment, nevertheless he must go on. There is no

reason why we should not have a free vote on the Amendment, and afterwards a Vote of Confidence in the Government can be given. The Amendment affords the one sure foundation upon which those who take their stand, who believe it is their duty not only to advance the cause of Indian self-government but to uphold the rights of Britain and tell the truth to India.

**The SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS, (Sir John Simon):**

I make it no matter of complaint that the right hon. Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) should have occupied an hour and a-half in the course of his most brilliant and interesting speech, and I am sure I shall have the sympathy of the House in following him immediately, and, I hope, at less length, because it naturally involves a strain upon the attention of the House in a very grave matter. Let me state what I believe to be two or three misunderstandings under which the right hon. Member for Epping is labouring. He spoke of the White Paper as though it were merely a shorthand note of the impromptu and almost ill-considered observations of the Prime Minister as head of the Government, and suitable, therefore, to be the subject of further editing and emendation and improvement by other Members of the Government who may speak from this bench and by other hon. Members of the House. Whatever may be the decision to which the House comes, let there be no misunderstanding as to the origin of this White Paper. For good or ill, it is a document which has been prepared not by the individual who is at the head of the Government but by the united and deliberate decision of the whole Cabinet, and, consequently, great as its authority would undoubtedly be, and well deserving of consideration if it came from the Prime Minister; let there be no misunderstanding as to what the House is asked to do. This new House of Commons, the vast majority of whose Members were elected on the solemn assurance to their constituents that they would support a united Government—

**Brigadier-General Sir HENRY CROFT:** May I ask the right hon. and learned Gentleman a question—

**Sir J. SIMON:** I am sure the hon. and gallant Member will allow me to finish the



[Sir J. Simon.]

sentence. I was saying that the House must clearly understand the issue which is to be decided here. Whatever the decision is, the issue is whether or not the House of Commons is prepared, at the invitation of the Government, to affirm this statement representative of the views of the united Government. The right hon. Member for Epping is under a further misapprehension. He has endeavoured to institute some contrast between the speech made at the end of the Debate yesterday, a most admirable speech, by the Secretary of State for India, and the contents of this White Paper, and although I am sure the right hon. Member for Epping would be the last to make the insinuation if he knew the facts, the actual insinuation involved in his comparison is that the Secretary of State for India in the Cabinet is prepared to agree to one thing, and as Secretary of State for India in this House to another. Let me point this out. This document having been prepared as the result of most careful deliberations in the Cabinet, containing sentences dealing with various matters which were most elaborately reviewed and most solemnly determined, contains the statement that its contents are, by the decision of the Government, going to be placed before both Houses of Parliament, and that the Government will ask the approval of Parliament to them.

It must be obvious to every hon. Member in the House, even a new Member who requires a little guidance as to the way in which the Question is put, that there is a world of difference between the House of Commons affirming, as I trust it will, the contents of this White Paper, and the House of Commons setting to work at the instigation of this Member or that to add or subtract, to annotate or gloss, to explain or explain away this phrase or that phrase. There is a world of difference between the emendations of an Act of Parliament, taken sentence by sentence and Clause by Clause, a matter entirely within the province and function of the House, and the question which arises here. It is entirely for hon. Members to decide; but the one question that has to be decided is whether this deliberate declaration will or will not receive the approval of the House of Commons. I say this, with the Prime Minister at my side and with his autho-

rity, that we are bound in this matter to ask that the Vote taken this evening is a decision as to whether they approve of this declaration or not.

**Sir WILLIAM DAVISON:** Every sentence?

**Sir H. CROFT:** May I take it that the right hon. and learned Gentleman was not trying to suggest that at the time of the General Election, when the national verdict was given for the Prime Minister and the leader of the Conservative party, the country was asked to vote for central government for India?

**Sir J. SIMON:** I do not believe there was any candidate, however confident of his own powers, who was prepared to make a list of everything that the National Government were to do, and I think it would be a difficult thing for any of us to make such a list at this moment. I am bound to say that the speech of the right hon. Member for Epping, elaborate and forcible as we all recognise it to be, far from convincing me that we ought not to affirm this Declaration, makes me the more confident that affirmation from the House is needed. The right hon. Gentleman has reminded the House of some of the history of this matter. He has referred—and quite rightly—as the source of much that has since occurred, to the Montagu-Chelmsford Declaration. The House will forgive me when I say that the real cleavage, the real division of attitude and outlook and view, is this: There are those who really mean actively to promote the achievement of responsible Government in India, and there are those who do not. I am as ready as any man to admit the difficulties. The right hon. Gentleman referred in most courteous terms to the part which I and my colleagues have taken in this matter. I do not know anything whatever in our description of the general situation and of the difficulties in India which is an exaggeration. But the real question is this: Is the achievement of responsible Government in and for India an object which we set eagerly before ourselves as the definite purpose of British policy, or are we keeping in our minds a reservation—some people would say a consoling thought—that when it comes to facing the business, they are confident that it is impossible to accomplish?

The hon. Member for the English Universities (Sir R. Craddock) in his speech yesterday expressed bluntly a view which is held; and I am not quarrelling with it being held by any private citizen. His view is that the Montagu-Chelmsford Declaration was a great mistake. Probably that attitude of mind reflects a view which is held by many persons of great experience and knowledge, that, broadly speaking, Orientals are best governed by other people, and that responsible government is not fitted to the East. I have no quarrel at all with any private citizen holding that view, and stating it bluntly and fearlessly, but I am bound to say that that is not a position which can be taken up by any British statesman who was a party to a Declaration of 1917; it is not a position which can be taken up by anybody who believes in the continuity of Parliamentary policy.

**Sir REGINALD CRADDOCK:** The right hon. and learned Gentleman has not exactly represented my view when he says that I believe that Oriental peoples are best governed by others. I did not imply that in my speech. What I said was that I thought the pledge most unfortunate because it was a pledge which it was impossible to fulfil.

**Sir J. SIMON:** I accept the hon. Member's correction. The House will observe this, because it is fundamental to the argument.

I know that the hon. Gentleman will not think that there is anything personal against him in what I say, but there is a cleavage of view on it. Is it very surprising, when it is known

5.30 p.m. that that cleavage of view exists, that there should be in India and among those who are the statesmen and politicians of India, some consciousness that such a difference of view is to be found, and some doubt as to whether or not the Montagu Declaration is to be taken at its face value? That is the reason why to-night we ask that the House of Commons, at any rate, should state its position and let India know one way or another whether you do or do not stand by the Declaration. It is not fair that we should go on, any of us, thinking, at the back of the mind of some of us, that the obstacles are so manifestly overwhelming that the goal can never be reached. Therefore, for

my part I think that a decision of the House of Commons on this point is to be desired. As this House contains so many new Members added some time ago, may I be allowed to point out the peculiarly grave and solemn circumstances in which the Montagu Declaration was made? The late Mr. Montagu called it the most momentous utterance ever made in India's chequered history. Every circumstance was present which could add weight and authority to what was then said. We have reason to know that it was Lord Curzon's pen which helped to frame the actual language of the Declaration. The right hon. Member for Epping was a Member of the Government and of the Cabinet at that time.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** My right hon. Friend knows quite well that the War Cabinet prevailed then, and that only the Members of the War Cabinet had any responsibility for policy. The others were never summoned unless their Departments were concerned.

**Sir J. SIMON:** I do not wish for a moment to misrepresent the right hon. Gentleman, but, as a matter of fact, I think it is far too late for anyone who was associated with any Department of that Government to throw doubts on the validity of that Declaration. The British Parliament accepted it.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** Hear, hear!

**Sir J. SIMON:** Accepted it unanimously and as a statement not made by a particular Cabinet or a particular War Cabinet or a particular party, as indeed it was not, but they accepted it as a statement that was an assurance offered to India itself. So it was offered to India at a moment which would add, if anything could add, to the solemnity of the assurance. It was when we had our backs to the wall, when the Indian effort on the side of British in the War was of great importance to us. No challenge was issued from any quarter to what was then said. Indeed, when the Government of India Bill of 1919 came to be examined in Committee a change was made in the language of the Preamble for the express purpose of making sure that what would be found on our Statute Book corresponded exactly with the Declaration then made by the Secretary of State.

*See Simon's speech  
28 March, 1931 on the*

[Sir J. Simon.]

Therefore, we must start with this: That regarded as a statement of the goal it remained completely unchallenged and the only policy to be considered, inspired by the honest purpose of trying to carry it into effect. Admitting all that, it will be found to carry the right hon. Gentleman and others very far. The Declaration refers to self-government. It is wholly inaccurate to suppose that the Declaration was dealing only with the provinces. It is manifest from its terms that self-government is there mentioned. The projects of self-government were envisaged, undefined, but the projects were the projects of self-government at the centre of India. And for this reason: The Declaration went on to say, by way of contrast, that there was this distinction between the provinces and the centre—that the stage of approach to self-government could, it was thought, be first reached by dealing with the provinces.

I am willing to express my own personal feeling on that point at the moment. It is a point of method, of mode of treatment, which is of vast importance. It is not fundamental to the main question. I am bound to say quite frankly that my own view is the view of the right hon. Gentleman, that as a matter of fact the advance to more complete self-government in the provinces is an easier step, and I myself think it would be a wise step, in advance of those more ambitious projects. The reasons for it are elaborately set out in the report to which reference has been made. I would add this: I take that view, not because I think it would be putting an obstacle in the way of further advance, but because I believe that it would be a quicker way of clearing the ground of difficulty. But the House will observe how the Prime Minister in this Cabinet declaration refers to that and says that the Government had had before them the view that:

“The surest and speediest route to federation would be to get these Measures in train forthwith, and not to delay the assumption of full responsibility by the provinces a day longer than is necessary.”

That is a point on which there is some substantial difference of opinion. I think I am speaking my right hon. Friend's mind when I say that I do not regard the door as closed. The situation may change.

We may find that in point of fact there will be a desire on the part of this or that province to make a more rapid advance than may seem possible over the whole field. We are not shutting the door to that in the least. My point is that the Montagu Declaration itself, solemnly accepted and affirmed by this House and the other House and by every successive Viceroy since then, contains in it, not merely implicit but explicit, as the object for which we are bound to strive, not merely self-government in the provinces, but some system of responsible self-government at the centre.

If this present discussion was merely turning on question of pace—how fast can we go?—it would take a wholly different aspect. As a matter of fact, the Amendments put down by the right hon. Member for Epping have nothing to do with pace. You may examine the Amendments and they have nothing to do with pace. These are immensely difficult questions which only become important because, unhappily and undoubtedly, the impression has arisen, and has arisen in some quarters in India; that there are some who believe that the only pace is a pace so slow that it can never be seriously intended to get to the goal. The reason why we submit to the House that it is so necessary to have a declaration from the House as a whole, is that we desire to make it as plain as it can be put, that that is not the view of the British people represented in the British Parliament.

The right hon. Member referred, as speakers did yesterday, to “stubborn facts.” My hon. Friend on the Front Bench opposite mentioned them—the stubborn facts about India. Really, as far as a Western mind can, I have soaked myself in this question for some years, and nothing that can ever happen would make any difference to my own appreciation of the stubbornness and the complexity of those facts. Let no one suppose that I have forgotten them. Let us see what they are. The immense area and population of India makes it much more like a continent than a country. The diversity of race and creed and caste, and the operation of the special arrangements of Indian life upon all political divisions, the existence of the immense and powerful Indian States, the predominance of the numbers of the

rural population, the high percentage of illiteracy, the standing menace of the North-West Frontier—it would be perfectly foolish, perfectly ignorant and perfectly stupid for anyone, through any accession of zeal or emotion, to fail to make full allowance for them.

Those are very stubborn facts, but they are not all. There are two other facts just as important, just as irremovable, just as effective in their influence on what we are going to do, as this list of geographical and ethnological and social features. The first fact is this: The declarations that have been made in the name of the British Government. That is just as much a fact as any geographical fact in India. I think we do the gravest disservice to the whole cause which we are all trying to promote as we may, if we do not treat those declarations as just as much part of the sum total of essential facts as those tremendous geographical and social facts. There is another fact which, I think, we must not altogether overlook. There is the fact that there has grown up in India and exists in India to-day this Indian national movement. That is just as much a fact. A learned judge, Lord Bowen, on a famous occasion, observed, when there was some dispute as to what then was a question of fact, that the state of a man's mind was as much a question of fact as the state of his digestion. Here you have this tremendous fact, which cannot be measured, it is true, or photographed or presented as one of the physical features or other manifest characteristics of the land, but it is a tremendous fact which has in some way or other to be allowed for and met.

Therefore, if you take these facts altogether the real question that then emerges is this: You speak of these things, you point to these obstacles. Yes, but for what purpose and in what spirit? Are you pointing to them because you are determined to co-operate with Indian opinion in finding the best possible way to surmount them and circumvent them, or are you pointing to them because you think in your heart that these obstacles will be a permanent barrier to advancement? Anyone who takes the view that these tremendous facts are really permanent barriers on the road, turning the road to Indian self-government into a

*cul de sac*, has no right to take part in setting up or approving the Montagu reforms. Indian political opinion is waiting to know where this House stands. Here we are, a body gathered together in order to express the national view. It is vital, before this matter goes further, that there should be from Parliament as a whole, with our conjoint and freshly-gathered authority, a declaration as to the sense in which we regard these difficulties and seek to deal with them. Do we reiterate the Montagu Declaration with our hands on our hearts, or do we pronounce it with our tongues in our cheeks?

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** The right hon. and learned Gentleman must do justice to his country's case. Section 41 is an integral part of that position.

**Sir J. SIMON:** I am very well aware of that. It is perfectly true to say that the Government of India Act contemplates the possibility not merely of rapid advance or of slow advance but of reconsideration. That is perfectly true; but that does not alter the main test. The main test, the fundamental question is this: Can one say of the new Parliament which is now assembling that it is prepared to dedicate itself in a genuine and practical spirit to the pursuit, by every means in its power of the objective which has been declared so often to be in view? That, I think, is the justification for the course which we ask the House to take.

I am as conscious of these difficulties as any man alive. I am, if I may say so, the last man in this House to endeavour with smooth words to treat them as though they could be easily and rapidly swept away. Indeed, I do not mind adding that I believe them to be more formidable and more likely to be intractable than some other people do. It is ignorance and folly to ignore them. But the real question is not a question of exactly how high you rate the particular obstacles to be overcome but what is the underlying spirit and purpose of Parliament and the House of Commons now, when this Round Table Conference is returning to India, and its members are naturally anxious to know and we are anxious to show them, what is the actual attitude and temper of the British people?

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** Let them know the actual temper.

**Sir J. SIMON:** Certainly. Now I come to the actual words of the right hon. Gentleman's Amendment. He made, of course, a most brilliant speech, but for the most part it had very little to do with the Amendment. Let me deal, however, with the three points in his Amendment, and if he will allow me I propose to take them in the reverse order from that in which they are mentioned. He has suggested three conditions. Let us look at these conditions and see to what they come? I notice first of all that he is not challenging the objective of all-India Federation. He is not, as far as the Amendment is concerned, challenging what I may call the broad principle of responsibility with safeguards. He is not challenging the conception that you must build up this federation out of the provinces, which are self-conscious units, and the Indian States. But having passed those grave matters by, he has three points which are specially mentioned. The first point with which I wish to deal, though it is the last to be mentioned in the Amendment, is:

"that no extensions of self-government in India at this juncture shall impair the ultimate responsibility of Parliament for the peace, order and good government of the Indian Empire."

Let us see where we are. The right hon. Gentleman said some very nice things about the Statutory Commission's Report. It is quite a comfort to hear it referred to as though it were a work of reference and not used merely as a missile. What did the Statutory Commission propose about that point? It proposed that, as regards the administration of what is ordinarily called law and order, the very grave, the very important step should be taken of transferring that branch of Indian administration to Indian ministers. The House will appreciate that the subject of the police in India is not a central but a provincial subject. Some people have considered whether it should be made a central organisation. It seemed to me since I looked into it to be just about as easy to imagine policing Europe by a central police office at Geneva as it would be to imagine policing the continent of India by a purely centralised system of that

sort and for a very long time the administration of the police in India has been done, province by province—great areas it is true but areas in which already there is a very considerable measure of that transferred power. The Commission's report proposed, and we stand by the proposal, that under certain defined conditions police duties should be transferred to the responsible provincial government.

I know very well the argument against it. I understand clearly the risks which occur to any thoughtful mind when he contemplates it. But what is your alternative? If you want honestly to pursue the achievement of responsible government in India nothing is more certain than this. You must place the responsibility for departments of Government which are difficult, and which are open to criticism and attack, upon the shoulders of those to whom you wish responsibility to be given. Three-quarters of the trouble in India since the Montagu reforms has been due to this. We have given under our Act of Parliament a very wide opportunity of irresponsible criticism, and we have refused to put responsibility upon the shoulders of the critics. So far, I do not think that there is a wide distinction between the right hon. Gentleman and myself. Frankly, I look at that proposal as he does, not with misgiving but with the anxiety with which it ought to be regarded by anybody who understands the importance of law and order in India.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** The right hon. Gentleman will note the word "ultimate."

**Sir J. SIMON:** But the House will please observe and I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman has not overlooked it, that, as in the Commission's report, so in this statement which we are asking the House to approve, we have carefully insisted that there must be in reserve an ultimate authority for, without it, the risk that would be taken would be a risk which no sane man in the present circumstances would be prepared to face. If the House will look at paragraph 9 in the Prime Minister's statement they will see there the words:

"The powers entrusted to the Governor to safeguard the safety and tranquillity of the Province shall be real and effective."

If the question be asked, "Yes, but what about the centre," the answer is to be found in paragraph 4 in which in express terms it is stipulated:

"that the Governor-General must be granted the necessary powers to enable him . . . to fulfil his responsibility for ultimately maintaining the tranquillity of the State."

I put it to the House, apart from the fact that we are all draftsmen, that everybody thinks he can improve everybody else's language, that nobody is ever quite satisfied with any scheme of words but his own—I am not justified in saying that the first point to which the right hon. Gentleman has called attention in his Amendment is fairly dealt with in the Prime Minister's statement? We do contemplate the transfer of law and order. There cannot be provincial autonomy of any practical sort without it. But we do not contemplate that that shall be done without adequate safeguards in the Government and the Governor-General. I quite agree that the matter is left open for discussion and that much may happen to be considered hereafter, but, regarded as a declaration of intention, I say without fear of contradiction that it is perfectly plain and straightforward and does not require any addendum or gloss at all.

I take the second of the three points which the right hon. Gentleman has mentioned in his Amendment. He feels as I think we generally feel in this House that it is very important not to forget the position of British trade and British commerce in and with India in the working out of a new and more advanced Constitution. I agree with him in that. The only point on which I differ from him is that I believe it to be a most unwise course to pick out one particular instance in which you must secure the rights of a minority, and to elevate it, as though it was the only principle of interest to the British people and at the same time to pass in silence a number of other instances which, from their own point of view, are equally important. As a matter of fact this White Paper contains a perfectly clear statement as to the guarantees required by minorities to protect their rights. There has never been any doubt whatever as to the importance of securing in a new Constitution; a proper guarantee not only for British trading rights but for the rights of minorities of very different kinds, who look to us, for

exactly the same reasons as the British commercial community looks to us, but who expect us to be as much interested in their protection as we are in the protection of British trade.

I venture to advise the House if I may be allowed respectfully to do so: Do not let us make the mistake of imagining that the instance which is here brought to our notice, grave and critical and momentous as it is, ought to be regarded as standing apart from the general duty, under any new Constitution, of seeing that the rights of minorities are to be adequately safeguarded. India, says the right hon. Gentleman, is a land of minorities. I should think it was. The real difficulty about the Indian constitutional problem is this, and it is far better to state it boldly and bluntly than to use mere vague words. The real difficulty is that for very large masses of the Indian people the conception of self-government as we have it has not really yet been adopted and understood by them. It is understood, of course, by the intellectual leaders, but the real point is that self-government as we understand it in this House means that each citizen, whatever be his creed, or class, or origin, or his special interest, is prepared, in return for his share in the franchise and the like, to put himself, as a citizen, without distinction, under the rule and government of the majority of other citizens. India is not at a stage where it will do that.

It is exactly for that reason that my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has devoted all his skill, all his negotiating power, all his sympathy, to trying to help to get some solution of the various minority questions, but there is no ground whatever on which the House ought to take out this particular minority question and deal with it as though it were our special concern, and as though we were not equally concerned with every other minority question which arises. Lastly, comes the right hon. Gentleman's third point, his reference to the Statute of Westminster. I had rather hoped that he would have found a passage in this White Paper of which he would have approved. I should like to have his whole-hearted enthusiasm for, at any rate, one passage. May I direct his attention to paragraph 8 and ask him to read the second sentence? Here is a declaration which, as I have

[Sir J. Simon.]  
told the House, is not only a declaration of the Prime Minister but of the united Cabinet. The Prime Minister on our behalf has said:

"I want no more general declarations which carry us no further in our work."  
I think that must be of some satisfaction to my right hon. Friend.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** But the right hon. and learned Gentleman will see that the Prime Minister is repeating in paragraph 2 a very general declaration. In the very next sentence to that which has been quoted he says that

"the declarations already made and repeated to-day are enough."

They are.

**Sir J. SIMON:** I thought the right hon. Gentleman's anxiety had to do with still further embroidery or enlargement.

I would only say that this, which I regard as a very good maxim, "No more general declarations," really must apply both ways. It is a very sound thing to say that we have passed the stage of general declarations and are going

to get down to business—and

6:0 p.m. Heaven knows there is enough business to do—but it is a very different thing to get to the practical work of constitution making, if we are going to be challenged at each stage and invited to make yet another declaration, though it be of a negative character.

**Sir W. DAVISON:** Will the right hon. Gentleman proceed with this paragraph—"only a transitional period"?

**Sir J. SIMON:** Certainly. Everything in this world is transitional. I will take my hon. Friend's interposition, and make use of it in order to develop the point which I want to make. Is it really suggested as an act of statesmanship that in the year 1931 the House of Commons, without putting any limit of years or centuries upon what it says, is going to make, or ought to make, a positive, unlimited declaration for the whole future of the existence of this planet on a point of this sort? I cannot conceive that that is in the least consistent either with the contents or with the spirit of the Montagu declaration. The right hon. Member for Epping will have, I hope, a long

life, and I am quite sure he will have a merry one. Perhaps I may be allowed to repeat to him the words of one of the Eastern poets, who said:

"When you and I behind the Veil have past,

Oh, then, the long, long time the world shall last!"

Anyone with his extraordinary power of visualising the future, anyone who knows the past history of India for thousands of years, will not think it an act of statesmanship to endeavour to say, "Thus far and no farther can you ever go in any circumstances in the future."

The actual situation, of course, is as plain as possible. The Statute of Westminster ought not to be treated like King Charles' head and turned up in everybody's argument. It has literally got nothing to do with this point. The Statute of Westminster does not, in fact, define a sort of model Dominion constitution. It is a Statute, as we all realise, which makes provisions and declarations about a defined number of areas and populations, and I would commend to the right hon. Gentleman the passage of this statement which says that we do not want more general declarations one way or the other; we want to pass from that in order to enter upon the really difficult business of practical construction.

My last word is this: I have tried to point out to the House that there is in this matter an interest to be served over and above the satisfaction of our own minds as to the necessity of a particular declaration made on a particular day. It is beyond all possible doubt or dispute that there is, in many Indian minds, a perfectly sincere question as to whether or not British statesmanship intends to pursue, vigorously and to the best of its power, the goal that has been defined. I believe that it does. I know it is true of this Cabinet that we desire to do so. I do not shut my eyes for a moment to the difficulties, but I ask the House of Commons to authorise this message to go forth, that this declaration has been made on behalf of the whole Cabinet by the Prime Minister, and is a declaration which should receive the unanimous support of the House of Commons.

**Mr. MORGAN JONES:** We have listened this afternoon to the presentation of two points of view by speakers to

whom the House at all times listens with the greatest possible respect. Those two points of view are fundamentally opposed to each other, and I think the whole House is under a deep debt of gratitude to the right hon. Gentleman who has just preceded me for having stated so clearly a point of view which is so contrary to that entertained by the right hon. Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill). I do not feel called upon this afternoon to make many references to what the right hon. Member for Epping said, but there are one or two points which he made which I think are worthy of attention, mainly by reason of what we all know to be the right hon. Gentleman's previous association with government in this country. Indeed, as the right hon. Gentleman proceeded with his argument, and made certain references to the Indian people, I could not help ruminating upon what would have happened, say, to an Indian to-night in Bengal, supposing that Indian had committed himself to the same sort of references to the English people as the right hon. Gentleman did this afternoon to the Indian people. I rather imagine that he would have been in very grave danger of being hauled up before some tribunal on the ground that he had been uttering sentiments of sedition.

I observed in the course of the right hon. Gentleman's address to the House that he was at great pains to try to defend the proposition that in some way or other the issue with which we are immediately confronted dates from a comparatively recent time, and repeatedly the right hon. Gentleman turned back upon what he obviously regarded as a sort of anchor to which he ought to be attached, namely, Section 41 of the Government of India Act, 1919. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to desire to import into that Section a much narrower meaning than the Section in fact would bear. The right hon. Gentleman has presented us, for our convenience, in a book containing his own speeches on India, with an exact copy of that Section, and I would like to quote it verbatim. It states:

"The persons whose names are so submitted, if approved by His Majesty, shall be a commission for the purpose of inquiring into the working of the system of government, the growth of education, and the development of representative institutions, in British India, and matters connected therewith, and the commission shall report as to whether and to what extent it is

desirable to establish the principle of responsible government, or to extend, modify, or restrict the degree of responsible government then existing therein, including the question whether the establishment of second chambers of the local legislatures is or is not desirable."

In the course of his remarks, the right hon. Gentleman seemed to desire to underline particularly the word "restrict." It is quite true that the word "restrict" is there; it is quite true that it was possible and open to the Commission to make recommendation of a restrictive character, but it was equally possible for them to make recommendations expanding the area of representative government in India, and therefore, from that point of view, the right hon. Gentleman cannot exonerate himself from a share of responsibility for the actual wording of that Act of Parliament, carried at the instance of a Government of which he himself was a distinguished member. I know that the right hon. Gentleman has said elsewhere, by way of explanation of his share of responsibility, that there was a War Cabinet, of which he was not a member. That is true, but he was a member of the Government, and it is a well-understood rule in this country, I believe, that if a member of a Government cannot subscribe to the actions of his Cabinet, there is only one course open to him, and that is to resign and exonerate himself from all responsibility for them. But inasmuch as he did, in point of fact, remain in the Government, he cannot remove from himself a full share of responsibility for all that has followed upon the interpretation of that particular Section of the Act of 1919.

The right hon. Gentleman argues over and over in the course of his speeches upon India that the Indian people have been misled by reason of certain public announcements both in this House and outside. In my judgment, if the Indian people—and I say "if" advisedly—have been in the slightest degree misled, then the right hon. Member for Epping must himself take a share of the responsibility, in so far as the dawn of this conception of Dominion status came with the passing of the Act of Parliament to which I have briefly referred.

The right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues, or some of them, have presented an Amendment to the House this afternoon, and the right hon. Gentleman



[Mr. Jones.]

the Foreign Secretary dealt very capably, if I may be allowed to say so, with the three points to which the Amendment directs our attention. In order to test the effect of the Amendment, might I put it in this way? Suppose the House to-night were to carry this Amendment, what would be the inevitable result? I submit that the immediate consequences of the passing of such an Amendment to a proposal of the Government would be to put an end at once to any chance of continued co-operation between them and Indian representatives. In my judgment—and I think it is probably the view of the Government also—if that eventuality should take place, it would be one of the most disastrous things that could possibly happen in regard to the future relationships between ourselves and the Indian people.

The right hon. Gentleman who preceded me raised the fundamental issue which is involved in this controversy between the right hon. Member for Epping and the Government. I wonder what the right hon. Member for Epping and his friends really entertain in fact concerning the character of this which we now call the Commonwealth of Nations within the British Empire. Do they regard it from the old Imperialistic point of view of Empire, or from the point of view of a Commonwealth of Nations? If from the point of view of a commonwealth of nations, it is quite clear that the states which form the component elements of that commonwealth must be regarded as sister states equal in status and authority, equal in autonomous powers, and equal in the sight of this Parliament. If, on the other hand, the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues who are associated with him in this Amendment take the point of view of empire as distinct from commonwealth, the only deduction which we can make is that the empire which they visualise is an empire of white peoples from which the people of any other colour are to be rigorously and carefully excluded. If that be the point of view which is to be presented to the House, I can say without fear of contradiction that there is not one of my colleagues on this side who would subscribe to such a vision of the British Commonwealth.

Let us put it in this way. This business concerns Indians as well as ourselves, and we must have as careful regard for the feelings of the Indian people as for the feelings of Members of this House; and what must be the feelings of Indian people when reading speeches like those delivered by the right hon. Member for Epping and others, in which they repeat the point of view that Indian, because of their colour and for no other reason, are to be excluded from association with other citizens in the British Commonwealth on equal terms? The right hon. Gentleman feels very keenly undoubtedly, but if he is entitled to feel keenly concerning the permanence of British power in India, surely an Indian is entitled to feel keenly concerning the relation of his country to England. We are entitled to challenge the entirely new point of view which the right hon. Gentleman put before us when he said, "When I speak of Dominion status I do not mean status in the ordinary sense; I mean it in a more formal kind of way, a more ceremonial kind of way." There can be nothing more offensive to the Indian people than to pronounce such a theory at this late hour.

I would like to make one other observation upon the right hon. Gentleman's philosophy, if I may call it such, which is entertained by other people beside the right hon. Gentleman who no doubt will vote for the Government to-night. There are those who still entertain the notion that because of the immensity of the problem—and, God knows, it is an immense problem, and a man would indeed be a fool to deny it—that is some reason why we should deliberately and of set purpose mark time. The great thing that worries our friends in this matter so much is what they call the unpreparedness of the Indians for the enjoyment of all the powers of self-government. I have done my best within my limited opportunities to study the Indian problem, not I admit on the spot, but as best I can from all the documents that are available to me. I was interested the other day to read a book which has recently been published by a number of distinguished Indian ex-civil servants. In the chapter devoted to the status of the services in India on page 88, written by a Mr. O'Malley, an ex-Indian servant, it is shown that a very large proportion of

the civil servants now in India is made up in the lower reaches of the Service by Indians themselves. I was struck in connection with that passage to read a statement, quoted by the author, which Lord Curzon made as long ago as 1906:

“It reveals”—

said Lord Curzon—

“a European system of government entrusted largely to non-European hands, what is called a subject country, though I dislike the phrase, administered far less by the conquering power than by its own sons; and beyond all it testifies to a steady growth of loyalty and integrity on the one part and a willing recognition of those virtues on the other, which is rich with hope for the future.”

That was written nearly 30 years ago. Since then a rich experience has been acquired by these people. I therefore put it to those who take the view of unpreparedness that in view of this passage, which is testified to not by an extremist but by an ex-civil servant, and by an ex-Viceroy, in view of the obvious fact that such a large proportion of Indian people actually participate in the task of government day by day, is it not rather too much to say now, 30 years later, that these people are wholly unfitted for the task of self-government?

There was another observation of the right hon. Gentleman to which I attach some importance. He said, “Certainly, let the Indian people be recognised so far as possible for they collaborated with us in the Imperial War Cabinet.” They were represented, too, at the Imperial Conference; they represent India at the League of Nations Assembly; they have thus served in the most pivotal organisations of government, both national and international, and I have not heard that their service has been less than worthy. We are now told that, though they can perform these very onerous and highly important services to the nation and to the Commonwealth of Nations, they are not fit as yet for the responsibility of self-government at home.

I turn now to the White Paper which is the subject of our discussion. I confess that much that the right hon. Gentleman the Foreign Secretary has said this afternoon has allayed some of the fears which I entertained at the end of the Debate last night. I was a little disturbed when I saw that angling between the Prime Minister and the Secre-

tary of State for India and the right hon. Member for Epping for support in the Lobby to-night. I do not quite understand the enormous effort that is being made by the Government to prove to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping that there is after all no great difference between them. I can only say that if the Government can successfully prove to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping that there is so little difference between them that they can safely go into the same Lobby, it will be enough to determine me not to enter the Lobby with them. (What will suit the right hon. Member for Epping will certainly not suit me, for his philosophy is not mine, and my point of view is not his.

The question which we have to ask ourselves is: Has any advance really been registered through the medium of the Round Table Conference? This is important from the point of view not only of the House of Commons, but of India, for let the House recall that the delegates who came to the first Conference and again to the second took tremendous risks in coming. They have their constituencies to consider, as we have, and if they are obliged to return to their constituencies, be they elective or otherwise, empty-handed or with a consciousness that they are empty-handed, we have gone a long way to destroy their authority among their own people. Can these people return at the end of this week with a real conscious sense of achievement at the Conference? When they came to the first Round Table Conference every one was tremendously impressed with the statesmanship that they disclosed, and they on their part were so impressed by us and by our willingness to be fair and to be straight in our dealings, that when they returned, they proceeded at once, on the strength of the good faith generated at the first Conference, to bring pressure to bear upon the element in India's life which has deliberately refused to associate itself with the first Conference, namely, the Congress Party.

They set themselves the task of inviting Mr. Gandhi to co-operate with them in the approaching second Round Table Conference. In the interregnum between the first and second Conferences, Mr. Gandhi and Lord Irwin arrived at what

[Mr. Jones.]

was called the Irwin-Gandhi Pact. That Pact contained in general terms very largely what is contained in this conference record of to-day. When federation, responsibility to the centre, provincial self-government and safeguards were agreed to in principle, I understand that the phrase frequently used, in regard to safeguards particularly, was "safeguards demonstrably in India's interest." The result of the Pact was that the Congress Party, through the person of Mr. Gandhi himself, was represented at the second Conference. I have discussed the Conference with some people who were present, and I therefore speak with some knowledge when I say that one of the faults of the Conference procedure was that most of its time was devoted, I will not say to unimportant subjects—for that would be wrong—but to the less important subjects.

The more important and more fundamental subjects were relegated to discussions covering a shorter space of time. Now we are presented with this White Paper, which embodies the speech delivered by the Prime Minister on the last day of the Conference. When the usual formalities and courtesies were over, we are told that the right hon. Gentleman's mallet descended on the table and the proceedings closed. In my judgment that was rather, or I should say really, a great fault in tactics. The Conference having been closed in that way, there is just a risk of great difficulty in continuing the discussions and retaining the atmosphere of co-operation between now and some later stage in the proceedings.

I do not agree with much, indeed with most, of what was said by the right hon. Member for Epping, and I should find it harder still to agree with the speech of the junior Member for the English Universities (Sir R. Craddock), but in regard to one matter I am bound to confess I have a sneaking sort of sympathy with what they said. There is in this document rather more vagueness than I care to contemplate. It is undoubtedly possible for some of its phrases to be interpreted in one sense by some people and by other people in an almost entirely contrary sense. Vagueness of that kind is highly prejudicial to the retention of confidence and good faith.

I understand there is considerable difficulty in regard to one aspect of this document in particular. Reference is made over and over again to safeguards. Even on that one person can say, "Oh, this is safeguarded" and another can say, "It is not safeguarded." May I ask the right hon. Gentleman representing the Government this precise question, Has a detailed explanation and definition of the meaning of safeguards been presented to the Indian people? Do they know in real fact what we mean when we speak of safeguards concerning finance, the army, and so on?

I understand there is a complaint about too great a degree of nebulosity regarding the meaning of the word "safeguard." If we say to the Congress party, "You shall have self-government, but we must reserve the control of the army," then clearly the Congress party are entitled to say, "How far does that limit the realisation of the principle of self-government itself?" In my judgment, if we reserve wholly and completely the control of the army and reserve wholly and completely the control over finance, we have handed to the Indian people an offer which is only the semblance of self-government. If there is no control of taxation, then clearly there is no Dominion status, because I remember Mr. Sastri—I think it was he—when he was speaking in a committee room upstairs, saying very eloquently that when he spoke of Dominion status he meant that he requested for his country self-government to the same degree exactly as it has been, or may be hereafter, granted to Canada or any other among the Commonwealth of Nations.

I observe that the Prime Minister promised that four committees would be set up. There is to be the working committee, the franchise committee, the federal finance committee and, I understand, some committee for dealing with the states' finances as well. I would ask, when are those committees to be set up and when are they to get to work? Is it to be a leisurely business that may last a year or two years or three years, or is it to be made an urgent business, with a definite time limit, so that there shall be no dilatoriness, no excuse for prolonging the agony for either side? May I ask this further question? On 19th January the Prime Minister said:

"Now this work of drafting and investigation must not be left to the bureaucracy in either country, but must be conducted on the direct responsibility of the politicians."

Who are going to be on those committees? Are we to have a distinguished English gentleman presiding over a group of bureaucrats from England and from India? I am making no reflection on the *Civil Service*; all I am concerned to do is to point out that if we wish to continue co-operation we shall not get it if we exclude from hearty co-operation with those committees all who represent Nationalist opinion in India at this time. So I plead very earnestly with the right hon. Gentleman that every possible effort should be made, while these committees are in being, to maintain the closest possible association between the Government on one side and those who speak for various aspects of Indian life on the other side. Another thing I want to say is this. Civilians may be put on the committees. If so, let me urge that the civilians shall be people whose minds are not entirely closed to the ideas that agitate modern India. If we pack these committees with people whose minds are already made up, who have a hardened philosophy, which they will not abandon, we might as well give up the effort so far as co-operation is concerned.

Next, I wonder if the right hon. Gentleman could not do something, even at this late hour to safeguard—for that is vital—the continuation of the good will of the Indian representative bodies during this interregnum of further inquiry. I make this suggestion on my own authority, and commit nobody to it, but for my part I should like to see some gesture like the addition of more Indians to the Viceroy's Council in India and the further addition of representative Indians to the Secretary of State's Council here in London. An enlargement of that representation would be a gesture of good will and good faith and of a desire to co-operate with these people in the coming years.

My last observation on this matter must be this. The right hon. Gentleman has told us in this White Paper, and in speeches in this House made by himself and his colleagues, that the Government hope to secure the good will of the Indian people; and yet these delegates will return to India to an atmosphere which

will make every element of co-operation almost entirely impossible. I want to tell the House and the right hon. Gentleman that I can have no part or lot with terrorism or violence anywhere. I am absolutely and irrevocably against anything of that sort within the State, but with the continuance of the Ordinance now in operation in Bengal it will be in the highest degree difficult to secure a measure of good will and readiness to co-operate. I have in my possession a copy of the report of an official inquiry—not an unofficial inquiry—into the proceedings at Hijili and Chittagong. The report of that official inquiry, which was presided over by an Indian judge, declares that at least all the fault in those disturbances was not confined to one side. I would like to see the right hon. Gentleman take his courage in both hands and remove this instrument of oppression as speedily as possible; for the significant thing in regard to India at this moment is that we are losing not the older minds of India, but the young minds of India. If we lose young India it is not the problem of to-day that we shall have to contemplate, but the problem that must face us 10, 15 or 20 years hence. This is a poor foundation on which to build the edifice of co-operation. While I am prepared to vote for the Government on the limited principle contained in paragraph 2, and no more—I stand precisely where the Government stood in January of this year—I do not commit myself to any interpretations the Government may or may not hereafter place on some of these loose phrases. I stand on the broad principle enunciated in paragraph 2. Having said that I invite the Government, with all the earnestness at my command, to do what they can to remove this element of suspicion, doubt and bitterness in the minds of the Indian people and to go forward with them cordially towards the realisation of self-government in that distracted land.

**Colonel GRETTON:** I think it is important that I should try to place before the House the reasons why hon. Members are asked to accept the Amendment which has been proposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr Churchill). Nothing which has been said in the course of the Debate has shaken my belief in the points which are

[Colonel Gretton.]

put forward in this Amendment. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon) has attempted, with great forensic skill and legal subtleties, to explain away the three points which are set forth in the Amendment. On this question what can be more clear than the words which appear in the Command Paper issued by the Indian Round Table Conference, which says:

“The view of His Majesty’s Government is that responsibility for the government of India should be placed upon Legislatures, Central and Provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee, during a period of transition, the observance of certain obligations and to meet other special circumstances, and also with such guarantees as are required by minorities to protect their political liberties and rights.”

What could be more clear than that pronouncement? We are now told that everything is to be decided hereafter in some way or other, but this House has not been given much information on those points. We have been told, it is true, that there must be more inquiries and conferences in order to find some sort of solution, but we have had inquiries and conferences *ad nauseam* in the past. Surely, all the facts necessary to come to a decision are well known, and no one will deny that the inquiries which have been held up to the present have elicited everything that we wish to know. What is really needed—and I press this consideration on the Government—is a wise and statesmanlike decision and immediate action. We do not want any further inquiries, because we have all the facts before us, and the Government ought to be in a position to act. During the war period many Members of this House had no opportunity of concentrating on the Indian problem or of giving it that close examination which was necessary. I remember Mr. Montagu’s declaration, which was considered by Members of this House who had very little knowledge of the circumstances of India. That declaration was rushed through, and it went further than it would have gone if the facts had been investigated more fully.

There has been much hard thinking on the Indian problem for a considerable period. Many of us may have started our consideration of this problem from different points of view, but we have all

come to the conclusion that matters have gone so far that we must insist upon responsibility to this House being maintained. I am sure that, with the utmost good will and sympathy, and a desire to take the course which is right and best for India’s future, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley came to the conclusion that there must be Provincial Governments and some form of federation. The great model of federal government is the United States of America, but even America has gone through some very severe times in recent years. Things have also been very serious in Australia, and there are constitutional questions in that country of great magnitude which have not yet been settled.

I agree with what was said by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping that things would be very much more satisfactory if the statements which were made by the Secretary of State for India yesterday were embodied in the Resolution, because the position would then be understood more clearly both in this country and in India. With regard to safeguards, we are told that financial solvency and stability, the protection of minorities and political liberties are provided for. I wonder what all that means. Then there is the question of the rights of minorities and the control of the Army. I would like to ask if all those powers are to be reserved, and how are those safeguards to be exercised and enforced? The safeguard provided by the Statute of Westminster has been mentioned, but what is the use of paper safeguards if you cannot enforce them? How can you ensure that those safeguards will not be violated, and, if they are, how can you exercise powers to enforce them? The Governor-General, in the last resort, and the Viceroy must have control of such portion of the administration and Government of India as will enable them to carry out the decrees which they decide upon.

Let us be clear what we are doing. The Government are not clear. The Government shirk the issue. They could not put up a more skilful advocate than the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon) and he has never exercised his powers with such art as he did in the Debate to-night. As I listened to him, I heard echoes of

speeches which he made last year and on previous occasions, expressing the gravest doubts whether it was possible to have a federal legislature with a responsible executive. To-night, he was arguing in the opposite sense. Let us not make the mistake we made before. Let us not leave nebulous phrases to be explained away by their authors. If we cannot get it all down in black and white let us put down at any rate the most important things. Nothing has transpired in the Debate to-night, or can transpire, which will deter me from going into the Lobby to support the Amendment of my right hon. Friend.

**Mr. BERNAYS:** I hope the House will not think it presumptuous of me to take part in a Debate on India. I certainly would not attempt to do so if I had not been in the fortunate position, out of all the hon. Members in this House, of having visited India most recently. I do not pose for a moment as an expert. I believe that the notorious "Paget, M.P." was in India six weeks. I was in India six months, and it was little more than a cold weather visit, but during that time, as the special correspondent of a London newspaper, I did have facilities for seeing some of the leading personalities on all sides. Travelling as I did from Ceylon to the Khyber, I was able to get some rough and ready idea of what India looks like to-day. At any rate, I was there long enough to know how eagerly the Indian people read the Debates in this House and how dangerous a chance aside may be, which 6,000 miles away may be elevated to-morrow in the Congress papers into a flaming headline.

I know also how disastrous some of the speeches of the right hon. Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) are on the spirit and temper of the Indian people. His Amendment this afternoon, cleverly worded though it is, would surely, if carried, mean the end of all idea of immediate responsibility at the centre. The right hon. Gentleman has never disguised his views. He and his friends are against any real extension of self-government at the centre. Their position is perfectly logical and perfectly consistent. They say that India does not want it; they assert that we, who propose to give it

to them, are wantonly betraying our heritage, and that we are handing over India to a junta of irresponsible Hindu politicians. They assert that in those views they represent expert opinion. If they do represent expert opinion, why is it that their Amendment this afternoon is not backed by any member of the Simon Commission? It is backed by only one member, as far as I can discover, who has had any personal administrative experience in India, the hon. Member for the English Universities (Sir R. Craddock). He is a most distinguished servant of India, but I would say, with all respect to him, that it is many years since he was himself in India. He resigned from the Viceroy's Council in 1917.

Of all the people who are always trotted out in the "Daily Mail," the experts, the supporters of the right hon. Gentleman, hardly any of them have been in India recently. There is Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who left India 12 years ago, Lord Meston, who resigned his post 14 years ago, Lord Sydenham, who resigned his in Bombay 18 years ago. The only personal experience of the right hon. Member for Epping himself was, I believe, 33 years ago, more than four years before I was born. Lord Lloyd left India as long ago as 1926, and has not been there since as far as I am aware. Great though these hon. Gentlemen's experience of India is, and vast as is their knowledge, surely they would be the first to admit that, since they left India, there has been a gap, not of a decade, but of two centuries, in point of time and atmosphere. The unchanging East is changing at last. I do not for a moment put my own quite small experience against the experience of these gentlemen, but, if it is a matter of expert opinion, we on this side can point in our support to men like Lord Reading and Lord Irwin, the two most recent Viceroys, to say nothing of the right hon. Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon), upon whose Commission these right hon. Gentlemen were once proud to take their stand.

I admit fully that there is a good deal to be said for the old India that these hon. Gentlemen envisage, the old India that they remember, the old India directed from Whitehall through, the agency of the most efficient and the most incorruptible Civil Service in the world.

[Mr. Bernays.]

I was fortunate enough to see something of that old India this year and very impressive it was. In the wild districts of Baluchistan I saw ruling over those half civilised tribes a young Englishman, whom I had seen only a few years before keeping wicket for Oxford at Lords. As I watched him in court on a long Indian afternoon solving the tangles that were brought before him, admonishing some, punishing others, indifferently administering justice to all, I could not help thinking that no Round Table Conference in the world could produce a better system of government in that part of India. But one has to face the fact that such a government can only rest on the consent of the governed, and over a large part of Indian I suggest that that consent is being withdrawn.

I see my hon. Friend the Member for Finchley (Mr. Cadogan) in his place. He talked yesterday of the illiterate millions who supported our rule. I wonder if they are as illiterate as we think, if they are as dumb as we think. Surely, there are great changes going on. In hundreds of villages now there is the village schoolmaster, who reads the local papers and passes on the news to the village. I do not suggest for a moment that these villages understand the full implication of congress policy. They probably have a muddled idea that a Congress Raj will hasten the coming of the monsoon, but in some way they do feel that in a mysterious way Mr. Gandhi is on their side. I remember travelling back from the Karachi Conference last March in the same train with Mr. Gandhi from Karachi to Lahore. At every station we passed through the platform was packed to suffocation with men and women who had come to acclaim him. At every station it took us five or 10 minutes to get the train off, and in consequence we were hours late at Lahore. Yet, when one looked out of the window, there did not seem to be a habitation in sight. These men and women had come from the villages tens and scores of miles away. It was the dumb millions acclaiming a great national advocate.

I suggest, that the right hon. Member for Epping, if he went back to India, would be surprised at the little support he would have for his policy. He would

not even have the business men on his side. I am not in a position to speak for Calcutta, but I do know something about the business men in Bombay. We have heard a great deal of sneers about the Irwin policy of the withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement. There were no people in India who rejoiced more at the calling off of that Civil Disobedience Movement than the business men, because in India the Indian merchants are realists. They know that peace is the only foundation of trade. They were in an impossible position in Bombay. It was for many months like a besieged city. Day after day, several days a month, they would have to leave their businesses altogether, the younger men to go as special constables to maintain order, the older men to carry out the ghastly duty of magistrates and to wait all during the day at the police station in case through dire necessity they might be called upon to give the terrible order to fire on the crowds. You cannot carry on trade successfully in an atmosphere like that; you cannot do business with a cotton sample in one hand and a lathi in the other.

The central block of opinion, just as much in England as it is in India, is in favour of these declarations by the Prime Minister. We are all substantially agreed as to what shall be done. What we do want to know is when it will be done. I am sure that the Secretary of State for India will be the first to realise the dangers of delay in India. It is these delays in the past that have done so much to create an atmosphere of suspicion. If I might just give one instance, I believe it was in 1893 that, by Resolution of this House, it was decreed that examinations for the Civil Service should take place in India simultaneously with England. In actual fact that reform was not carried out until 1921. That is the kind of thing which is chalked up against us in India. I do hope the right hon. Gentleman, who replies this evening, will be able to give some kind of indication as to when this policy will be embodied in a Bill to be laid before the House of Commons. I do not want in a sense to ask any embarrassing questions. Will it be two years? Will it be three years? Will it take as long as five years? I fully realise the difficulties and complexities of creating this new constitution. You cannot get a new constitution by the next air

mail. I am sure that the Government will recognise the necessity for speed, and that all Liberals in this House will admire the way this National Government has stood by the declaration made by the Prime Minister last January. May I, in conclusion, express the hope that to this White Paper they will add a declaration that they propose to proceed to the goal with steps as swift and as firm as the difficult nature of the ground will allow.

**Mr. WARDLAW-MILNÉ:** It is my pleasing duty to say a word of congratulation to the right hon. Member for North Bristol (Mr. Bernays) on the speech which he has just delivered. I feel that he must be gratified at having got rid of the first difficult task of a Member of Parliament, and that his next effort will be easier for him to make. I know that the House will feel that, if he can do as well in the future as he has done on the first occasion, they will listen to him with great pleasure.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill), in moving his Amendment to-day, made so many statements with which I am in agreement that it would be pleasant if I could feel that the House would bear with me long enough to allow me to go over the points on which he and I are in entire agreement; but I am afraid that that might try the patience of the House, and that I should not be justified in asking for that indulgence. I therefore propose, while stating that with many of the right hon. Gentleman's statements I am in agreement, to deal with one or two points on which, from my point of view at any rate, I think he went wrong. There is one outstanding matter, however, with which I entirely agree, and which should be stated first of all, and that is that this Debate is the first real occasion since 1919 upon which the House of Commons has been asked to give an opinion in regard to the policy in India. I think I am right in saying that on no single occasion since that year has the House of Commons been asked to approve definitely of the policy of any Government in regard to India. I may be wrong, but certainly I know of none since 1922. We have had a few—not many—Debates on India during the past nine or ten years, but on no single occasion which I recollect has the House of Commons com-

mitted itself definitely to a policy in regard to India.

To me, therefore—and this is the first point that I want to emphasise to the House to-night—the position is that the House for the first time is debating a declaration which may or may not mean a change in the policy on which we have been working since the Act of 1919 was placed on the Statute Book. I think that that is a fact which every Member of the House should fully realise. This is a very momentous Debate on that account. The second point that was made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping was that in his view India had acquired Dominion status during the War. To my mind, that is a most remarkable statement. He said that India had acquired Dominion status so far as rank, honour and position were concerned. I differ totally from that statement. India has never acquired Dominion status at all, and I maintain that India has never actually been promised Dominion status. I want to make the position perfectly clear, because in all these Debates, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping said, it is perfectly true that we have never had an opportunity of dealing with the constitutional position. The House has never been committed up to this moment, whatever it may do to-night, to any question of Dominion status at all. I say that advisedly, because, whatever we may do, I think we should know exactly how we stand. I have here a list—I do not intend to read it to the House—of various statements, almost all of them made by statesmen of note, going back, however, to the Proclamation of 1917, and in no single one of those statements do I read of the words, "Dominion status" having been used. The only statement that I know of which contains these words was that of Lord Irwin, in the middle of 1930, in India.

The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping, having said that India had got Dominion status during the War period—and no one ought to know better than he, because he was Minister of Munitions at the time, and afterwards was Secretary of State for War when the 1919 Act was passed—went on to say that the same conditions which exist to-day in Australia, Canada and other Dominions was never contemplated in the



[Mr. Wardlaw-Milne.]  
 case of India. There again I fail to see that anything that has ever been published bears out that contention. It seems to me perfectly clear on the contrary that the aim in front of the people of this country, or, at any rate, of the Government of this country, when the famous declaration of 1917 was made, and again when the Act of 1919 was passed, was that a day would come when India would have self-government on exactly the same terms as Australia, Canada, or any other Dominion. The words "Dominion status" may not have been used, but to my mind there can be no question but that a condition of self-government quite equal to that of any of the Dominions was the eventual aim and object of the policy which the Government were laying down. I think that the first matter which the House has to consider to-night is whether it affirms and approves of that object and aim, however near or far off it may be, or whether it is going to alter the policy and say now that it is not going to carry out what was laid down in 1917 and 1919.

There is no doubt that in all these statements, although the words "Dominion status" were not used, and although no definite promise of Dominion status in the future was ever made, over and over again it is stated categorically that the object which the Government of that day, and the British people, had before them in regard to India, was that eventually there would be self-government within the Empire on the same terms as the other parts of the Empire. I think it would be the greatest pity if this House were for one moment to deviate from the policy which was laid down and has been understood since the year 1917. I say that advisedly, because I was one of those who opposed the Act of 1919 in the form in which it reached the Statute Book, and I am able, therefore, if I may with great respect do so, to advise the House that it cannot go back upon what was then done. I was, I think, the last witness before the Joint Standing Committee which considered the Bill of 1919, and, speaking on behalf of associated commercial opinion in India, I said quite frankly that the view then held by Europeans in India, who were anxious to see progress in self-government, was that the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals went at

that time too far and too fast. Having said that, I am the better able to say to the House that I do not think there is the smallest question that the policy to which we are committed by the Act of 1919 is the gradual, definite, and steady realisation of self-government in India, on the same basis as in the case of any of the other Dominions. But Parliament, and Parliament alone, is to be the judge as to when that time has arrived.

Let us again state clearly what our object is. I think it would be the greatest pity if anything that has been said to-night should give an impression in India that we in any way desire to deviate from the objects that we have had so long before us and from the course which we have followed. The next question that we have to consider is the question of the rate of progress. It has been very clearly stated—and again I suggest that the right attitude for this House to take is to follow clearly the lines which have been laid down over and over again—that the rate of progress towards that goal can only be measured by the extent of the co-operation that we receive and the conviction in the minds of people in this country as to whether India is ready, nearly ready, or not nearly ready for a further advance in self-government. In the White Paper which we are asked to approve, we are faced, first of all, with this question: Does the declaration in Paragraph 2 go beyond what Parliament laid down in the Act of 1919, and does it go beyond the policy in which the bulk of the people of this country believe and are prepared to confirm to-day? There is only one sentence that appears to me to be ambiguous. If that sentence were not there, I should say at once that the House could accept the declaration in the White Paper without the slightest hesitation, though I do not suggest that the wording is exactly the wording that all of us would have chosen. The words to which I specially refer are the words: "during a period of transition"—

in the fourth line of the quoted paragraph in Paragraph 2. That quoted paragraph reads:

"The view of His Majesty's Government is that responsibility for the government of India should be placed upon Legislatures, Central and Provincial, with such provisions as may be necessary to guarantee, during a period of transition, the observance of certain obligations"

and so on. I ask quite plainly, what do the words "during a period of transition" mean? If it means, as I understand it to mean, that it is in fact repeating what we all know to be the principles which we have followed for so long, i.e., that the period of transition is to be measured by the good will and the co-operation that we receive, and that Parliament is from time to time to be asked to decide what the next step should be and when we can go ahead, then what is meant by the period of transition is clear to me. But if the period of transition is considered to mean in India something very definite in the way of a short period—the hon. Member for North Bristol asked if it meant two years or five years—I say categorically that it does not necessarily mean two years, five years, 50 years, or five months, but that it depends entirely upon the amount of co-operation that we receive and upon our conviction that a further move forward will be in the interests of India, of this country and of the Empire. Therefore, if it is clear in the minds of those who drafted this White Paper that in repeating that declaration they maintain the principles on which Parliament has always worked, and that the period of transition is to be within the power of Parliament to decide at any given time or from time to time, I say that there is no objection to these words.

These words govern the whole of paragraph 2—the whole of the repeated declaration—and I think that it ought to be made clear that whether the period be short or long will depend entirely upon the conditions in India itself and upon the co-operation that we receive. There is another sentence of a very similar character in paragraph 3:

"The principle of responsibility was to be subject to the qualification that in existing circumstances Defence and External Affairs must be reserved to the Governor-General"

and so on. Again, I want to make it perfectly clear that these words "in existing circumstances" may not mean a matter of a day, but quite likely of some considerable period—we do not know how long or how short. I think the time has come when we in this House should make our position perfectly clear to India—that we are anxious to press on with the work to which this country

set its hand 10 or 12 years ago, that we do not deviate in the least from the goal which was then set before us, but that at the same time we maintain that this Parliament is supreme, and that Parliament, and Parliament alone, can decide as to the nature, the extent, and the time of each step that is to be taken. At this point may I say that I hope very much that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for India will try to enable the House to have some assurance to-night, before it is asked to vote, that these points which I have mentioned, and the detailed points to which he himself referred in his most admirable speech last night, are intended to be fully included in the terms of this White Paper?

**Sir S. HOARE:** Yes.

**Mr. WARDLAW-MILNE:** We have my right hon. Friend's assurance that that is so, and that is extremely satisfactory. I do not want to enter into details regarding the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping or the reply given by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, but I think it is clear to most of us in the House that this point had not been clarified in a manner which we could all understand.

As it is now quite definite 7.30 p.m. that the Government, in putting before us this White Paper, can assure us that all the conditions laid down in the right hon. Gentleman's speech last night are included in their policy and covered by it, I do not think we need have any further fears in approving the Prime Minister's statement.

**Sir S. HOARE:** I can assure my hon. Friend that there is no difference whatever between the two statements. Everything in my statement is included in the White Paper and everything in the White Paper is included in my statement.

**Mr. WARDLAW-MILNE:** In that case, the House may rest assured that they need have no fear in accepting the policy which the Government have put forward. It is on that point alone that I have felt a great deal of uneasiness. When we come to the words of the Amendment, I do not think, in view of what my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has just said, that there is anything in the first three parts of the Amendment, but the wording of the last line is of a

[Mr. Wardlaw-Milne.]  
character that I do not think the House has thoroughly appreciated. It begins by saying:

“No extensions of self-government in India at this juncture shall impair the ultimate responsibility of Parliament for the peace, order, and good government of the Indian Empire.”

It is surely perfectly clear that, if that means anything at all, it means that the framers of the Amendment do not contemplate a time when India will ever be herself responsible because they say nothing shall impair the ultimate responsibility of Parliament for the good government of the Indian Empire. It is surely clear that, when the day comes—and we have promised that it shall come at whatever time it is right and just—it must be the Government of India of that day which will be responsible for the good government of the Indian Empire and not this Parliament. I cannot see how the House could be asked to accept the Amendment in its present form unless in effect they desire to cancel and annul that definite promise made to India in the Act of 1919.

It ought to be clear to all of us that every reference here that is made to minorities—and there are several references—applies perfectly clearly to British as well as to other minorities. It is undesirable, as the Foreign Secretary said, and I believe it is unnecessary to elevate the British commercial situation above that of other interests in India. We do not want to do so for the simple reason that British traders in India have asked for nothing which is not freely granted to every other person. They want no special privilege or position, but they want it to be clear that they are not going to be in any way prejudiced by anything that may be done now or in the future, and that their position will in effect be just as good as that of other British citizens in any other part of the Empire.

The evils from which India is suffering, and some of those things which make the path of progress somewhat slow, are not things that we can deal with in this country, or by legislation in this House. They rest largely with the Indian people themselves. I have stated over and over again that the rate of progression cannot really be laid down by the British

Parliament, although in the end they must be the judges of the progress made. It depends very largely upon what happens in India itself. I agree with the last speaker that there have been immense changes in the last few years, but still the difficulties in the way of progress remain and can only be put right by the Indian people. There are certain social conditions which only they can remedy. It is easy to say that India is a place in which the population live very near to the edge of starvation. India is suffering to some extent from the results of our own good government. I do not know that hon. Members fully realise the extent to which the beneficial measures taken by different Governments of India in the last 50 years have led to a great increase in the population. That alone is one of the great problems of India and that, of course, is partly, if not largely, due to the success of our efforts in regard to famine relief and the like. It is also, of course, partly due to early or child marriage and other social conditions.

Our record in India is too long and too honourable a one for us to jeopardise by any action we can take here. India will prosper so long as the close connection with this country continues, until the day when we feel that she is ready to take up the burden herself. When that day comes, I do not think there will be in the mind of any Member of this House, or of our successors, the slightest doubt that the moment has come. The required conditions patent to every friend of India will have been fulfilled. I am only anxious to-night about these two points, firstly that the House should make it clear that there is no change in the ultimate policy, that there is no change in the intentions of the British people towards India, that we are not putting up conditions with the object of making them stumbling blocks. On the contrary, that our intention is to work steadily, whether Round Table Conferences succeed or fail, for the goal set out in the declaration of 1917. To that we are committed. For that we must honestly work. But the rate of progress must be laid down by this House, and we are not committed by accepting this White Paper in any way to anticipating what our decision may be when proposals regarding further steps are put

before us. In due course, I have no doubt, some further step, perhaps the whole advance to a Central Legislature and Provincial Legislatures in one Bill, will come before this House and, under the proper constitutional procedure of a Joint Committee of both Houses, an examination of the Bill will have to be undertaken. I hope very much that what was said by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon) will prove true and that India herself will realise that it is better in this matter to hasten slowly. It would be well, I think, if she reconsidered the decision which her spokesmen apparently have come to at present and if she started with provincial autonomy first of all, tried the experiment and learnt in the provinces—there is nothing derogatory in learning in a matter of this kind—made progress and found that these Measures were a success before they asked for an immediate transfer of power at the centre. I believe that would be the wiser way. However, as their spokesmen have decided that they do not want a move made at present on these terms, again we can only say that the goal we are aiming at remains and we want to clear the path. But it is for Parliament alone to decide when each step shall be taken and the extent of the move forward at each stage and to that we firmly adhere.

**Colonel GOODMAN:** The speeches that we have heard during this Debate and on other occasions show us that the problem of government in India can be approached from many angles. I have had some long experience in India, but I should not have the temerity to intervene in the Debate were it not for the fact that I am aware of the sympathy and indulgence which this House shows to a new Member making his first speech. With all humility, I crave that sympathy and indulgence. We have many different opinions about this problem, but I am sure we cannot conceal from ourselves the fact that we have gone a very long way on the road towards self-government. We are definitely committed to such an extent that it is no longer possible to go back.

The preamble to the Government of India Act, 1919, was a definite pledge from Great Britain to the people of India. The Foreign Secretary stressed that, and some other speakers have done

so as well. But I think quite a number of Members who advocate immediate self-government have overlooked the fact that that pledge, certainly as to time, was conditional, and that no great change should take place until those conditions are satisfied. Mr. Montagu's pronouncement was that it was the policy of the Government to increase the association of Indians in every branch of the administration and to bring about the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the realisation of responsible self-government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. I do not think the importance of those qualifications, "gradual" and "progressive," should be overlooked. Mr. Montagu went on to say that the progress of that policy could only be achieved by successive stages. The Government of Great Britain and the Government of India, on whom lies the responsibility for the welfare and advancement of the Indian peoples, can only be guided by the co-operation which is shown by those upon whom opportunities of service are conferred and by the extent to which they justify confidence being reposed in their sense of responsibility.

I am in this difficulty, and none of the speeches that I have heard have removed it. I am not satisfied that the amount of co-operation shown by those upon whom opportunities of office were conferred has justified confidence being reposed in them to the extent that entitles us to view any departure, or any new evolutions, with equanimity. History teaches us that it is folly to limit the aspirations of a nation for self-government, but it is folly also for people to aspire to great heights which they are unfitted to occupy, and the responsibility of those who give power where realisation of the duties which accompany it is lacking must be a very heavy one.

The Government of India Act, 1919, made provision for a Commission of Inquiry within 10 years. The Simon Commission was appointed. The appointment of that Commission was the redemption in part by Great Britain of her pledges. It spent over two years on this inquiry. It spent seven months in examining many thousands of witnesses, and it drew up a report which is almost unanimously acclaimed as being the finest and most comprehensive report on India that was

[Colonel Goodman.]  
 ever published. It was unanimous on all fundamental matters and without a single dissenting minute, and yet it was scrapped with scarcely as much as a reference in the House. I should like to know what were the good reasons for so contemptuously rejecting such a Report.

The White Paper goes for an All-India Federation. The Simon Commission was very definite on that point. It appears that that must be the ultimate end of all this discussion. The Prime Minister says in the White Paper that federation cannot be achieved in one month or two months. I think that is likely to be mischievous, because it may create the impression in India that we are going to have more speed even than that which was asked for by the gentleman who preceded the last speaker. It is not possible—and I do not think that anybody to-day can consider it possible—to begin federation from the top. After all, half of India is governed by Indian princes and rulers. It has a population of over 300,000,000, and there are considerably over 560 states. Some are large and some are very small. At the same time they all have rulers, and, before federation can be discussed properly, surely it is necessary that the Indian princes should agree among themselves that federation is desirable. And if they do so agree their agreement must be followed by a similar agreement between the provinces of British India.

Before the provinces of British India can be safely joined in federation, it is absolutely necessary that they should first give thorough evidence that they are able to govern themselves separately. If and when the provinces and the princes come to agreement, will it then be possible to give what I think was alluded to in this House this afternoon, a United States of India? Will it then be possible to give them full and complete responsibility at the centre? I think not. If a federated states of India comes to pass, —and I believe it will come to pass—when it comes to deciding officials, there is likely to be great difficulty among the rulers, if the responsibility is to be full and complete.

I am also convinced that the suspicion of Hindus by Moslems and of Moslems by Hindus is so deeply rooted that it will be generations before either will have any confidence in the other. The Hindu population, apart from the wide differences of caste between the Brahmin and the Sudra, and between the Kshatri and the Vaisya is divided. There are 60,000,000 untouchables, people who are considered not to be entitled to any of the rights of humanity by their co-religionists. Again, we have seen during the last few weeks at the Round Table Conference that the minorities could not even agree among themselves. The Prime Minister said yesterday that he had tried and tried to bring about a Hindu-Moslem settlement, but that he had failed. It seems almost certain that agreement between Hindus and Moslems cannot be accomplished, and yet Mr. Jinnah, Mr. Hosen and Sir Mahomet Shap'i have publicly declared that it is impossible to enact any constitution without an Hindu-Moslem settlement. In my view, the time is very premature for the complete government of India by Indians. Conditions in India itself and conditions for Indians themselves do not exist for immediate and complete self-government.

Before we come to any settlement of the Indian problem, two very vital considerations present themselves. In the first place, there must be full and effective Imperial safeguards. It is unthinkable that this House should hand over full control of business, finance, external affairs, and law and order to such people as compose the so-called National Congress, a Congress which, despite all assertions to the contrary, does not represent more than 5 per cent. of the Indian people. In the second place, before this House could agree to any new constitution in India it must be certain that it has the support of all the important sections of the Indian people, that it is acceptable to all creeds and all classes in India, and, what is most important, that in actual practice it will work. Many schemes may be brought forward which are workable on paper, but the human element must never be overlooked, particularly in India, with its population of 350,000,000, with its 206 dialects, its 2,000 castes and groups, not of

peoples but of nations, a sub-continent which holds perhaps one-fifth of the population of the globe.

I hope that the National Government will view the situation with courage and face stark realities. Why not admit now what everybody knows, that the Round Table Conference failed. There is no blame attaching to the failure of a policy when conditions to successful negotiations are impossible, but there is a great deal of blame attaching to any persons who try to force through an impractical scheme rather than stand up and face hard facts. Why not come down from the clouds to earth. The Secretary of State for India has said that it is not a question of whether this House will give India self-government. Britain always honours her pledges and the Indian people believe that she will. As the Secretary of State for India said, it is not a question of whether we shall give it or not. We know it cannot be done at once. Federation will take some time. Then why not say it plainly to the Indian people, that the time is not yet ripe for the self-government of India by Indians. Why not let them know that there could not be any self-government until all creeds and all classes unite in India with amity for the good government of the country. If you do this, then this heterogeneous mass of people, I should say group of nations, will be happier, more secure and more prosperous under the kindly and firm guidance of a nation which has kept them from anarchy and invasion for 150 years.

It has often been said that Great Britain owes a lot to India. India owes much to Great Britain. Great Britain has given India irrigation, education, all that it knows of law, order and justice, railways, factories, and, greatest of all, one of the finest medical services in the world. The day has gone by when we had famine, pestilence and epidemics. If the House agrees that speed is not necessary, but that the people who are set up to look after India or who hope to govern India, must give proof of their proficiency of government, then the present regime should continue until then. No scheme of self-government will make it better for a people who have been happy, although it has been said it was a pathetic happiness. They have been happy under the old regime except dur-

ing the last five years when discontent has been spread by Congress. Leave it at that, and let people know that we are going to keep our promise, and I think that India itself will be satisfied.

**Mr. BUCHANAN:** I do not want to detain the House very long, because I recognise that there are a number of old and new Members who, on this occasion, wish to make contributions to the Debate. I wish to congratulate the hon. and gallant Member for North Islington (Colonel Goodman) upon his maiden speech. If I may say so, he spoke with a good voice and one that was equal to his figure. As one who has been in India, he did not commit the mistake which, I am afraid, most people who have been in India commit, the mistake of lecturing those of us who are unfortunate enough never to have been outside Great Britain. I congratulate him both on the tone of his speech and upon the good sense he showed in not lecturing an unfortunate section of this House that is never likely to see India or India's shores.

I rise to make a contribution to a point of view which has not hitherto been put. I was interested in the Debate for two reasons. One was as to how far the official Opposition would differ from the Government, and the other as to how the Tory back benchers would act towards their Front Bench. I have this in common with back bench Tory Members, that I have very often acted in similar fashion in regard to the Labour Front Bench. I was wondering whether the Tory back benchers would seek to drive their Front Bench in the direction of being more reactionary, or in the direction of making a greater advance. I was interested to see the Tory back bench, differing from the Labour back bench, trying to drive their Front Bench in the direction of being even more reactionary than they are at the present time. We have put down an Amendment which disapproves of all that has so far been debated.

I would say to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Health (Mr. E. Brown), who is at present sitting on the Front Bench opposite, that the Secretary of State for India has not treated the House with decency and fairness. The Secretary of State for India was absent when the responsible spokesman on the

[Mr. Buchanan.]

Front Bench of the Labour party was putting the major portion of his questions. He has been absent a good deal. The speaker on the Labour Front Bench put certain important questions, and I think that the Secretary of State for India ought to be more frequently in his place than he has hitherto been.

I frankly say that I cannot see the position of the Labour Opposition. I intend to vote against the Motion of the Prime Minister. If I can get colleagues to go into the Lobby, I shall vote against the Prime Minister's declaration. I shall vote against it for three reasons. First of all, it must be apparent to everybody in this House that the declaration of the Prime Minister is typical of the Prime Minister, typical of him when he led the Labour party, and typical of him ever since he entered public life. What does it mean? It means "anything that the Prime Minister hereafter may say. He may stand at that box or this box three years hence and say, "What I meant was not what you said I meant. I meant something else." This document comes from a Cabinet whose differences are wide in the extreme. The document is drafted in such a fashion as to suit the Foreign Secretary, the Prime Minister, the President of the Board of Education, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, all of whom differ much more than the various groups in this House differ. The document is drafted mainly for one purpose, to allow the Prime Minister to come and say that the document may mean nothing at all in after days.

The Secretary of State for India, and indeed the Opposition, and the Government will say, "Oh, we cannot grant the Amendment of the hon. Member for Gorbals (Mr. Buchanan) and the hon. Member for Bridgeton (Mr. Maxton) in favour of complete independence." The previous speaker said that the Indians are not ready for it and are not capable of carrying it out. You have differences of creed and of caste, all manner of differences in India, and, above all, lack of intelligence. May I say,

8.0 p.m. without lecturing the last speaker, who talked about lack of knowledge on the part of the Indians, that the Indians had a civilisation long before we had a civilisation?

It is not fair for us to come here, with a certain superiority that we have arrogated to ourselves, and to say that the Indians cannot be made capable, and are not capable even now, of governing themselves if given the chance. The Secretary of State for India said yesterday:

"We have given to India peace and justice. We have driven away the spectre of famine, and we have provided opportunities of advance."—[OFFICIAL REPORT, 2nd December, 1931; col. 1208, Vol. 260.]

"We have driven away famine." What authority is therefore saying that? Has famine been driven away from Britain? To-night in Britain, within our own doors, in divisions represented by hon. Members, people cannot keep a roof over their heads. Then we are told that we have driven famine out of India. We may have made it less ugly than it formerly appeared, less noticeable, but that does not drive famine away. It may have a veneer over it, but nobody can tell me, after looking at the condition of Britain, that we have removed famine from India. There, we have diseases of all kinds, people working under the most cruel conditions, children working under the most miserable conditions in factories. We are told that we must not leave India. Did we go there because India wanted us? We went there not for the salvation of India, not for India's good, but for Great Britain's good. We are an imperial country and India offered us markets and wealth that could not be given by any other country. What is the use of saying that we have freed India from famine and given her justice and peace, when all the time we have been thinking of the commercial domination and prosperity of Britain, and not of India's good.

I was rather surprised at the Opposition that they have not noticed one point in the demand for freedom. What happened when Mr. Gandhi met the British Government? Every political prisoner was released. What about the prisoners at Meerut, who are still lying rotting in gaol? They have been rotting in gaol for 2½ years without trial. It is a shame, a disgrace, a most indefensible thing. The hon. Member for Caerphilly (Mr. Morgan Jones) said that the right hon. Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) must accept the responsibility for what was done. The Labour Government have

a terrible responsibility in that they kept those men in gaol for years, without trial. We are told that we have brought justice to India, and these men are lying in gaol. What is their crime? The working-classes begin to organise and make economic demands, and these men are not only put in gaol but they have been kept there. They are regarded as a danger to British commercialism and British Imperialism. The policy is to keep them from organising the working-classes of India in order that they may demand not merely political liberation but economic liberation.

The two or three colleagues who sit with me on this bench will vote against the White Paper, if we are given the opportunity, for three reasons. The first reason is that we are asked to debate a document which is ill-defined, ill-thought-out, and an insult to Parliamentary institutions. In the second place, I shall vote against it because I do not think that the Prime Minister is in the least bit sincere in his declaration. He is using India as a pawn to carry him a little further on in his political prestige and his political influence. He dare not tell us what he thinks, lest on the one side India disowns him, or, on the other side, the Conservatives fling him out from the office that he holds. Therefore, he clings to office, telling the Conservatives one thing and India another. The third reason why I shall vote against it is that I believe India is ripe for full independence. I think the Indian people are as capable of governing themselves as are the British people. There are no more deep-rooted differences among the religions of India than we have among the religions in Britain. One has seen religious fights in Britain that India could rarely equal, even at her worst. We in Britain are not superior, and the great hope for the future is that India will govern herself.

Is there one line of the White Paper that could not have been written before the Simon Commission was sent out to India? Why was the Round Table Conference brought here? Because the Indians had kicked up a row. The Simon Commission had to be set aside because the Indians had, to use a popular phrase in Glasgow, "Played hell with the Government." It was not because the

Commission was wrong, but because the Indians had got the Government on the run, that the Commission had to be thrown over. It was Ireland over again, Ireland forced the hands of the former Government. It was not until Ireland started to arm in her discontent that we conceded her demands. India is the same. Imperial Britain has never, with all its Imperialists, conceded anything to any democracy without the people having to fight and struggle for it. In India, the working-classes will have to organise, to fight, to demonstrate, and to use all the capacity and the knowledge they have against the will of Britain, so that one day India will be free. The great masses of the common people of India, who have the same aspirations as the masses of the common people of Britain, will one day be united, and we shall see both India and Britain economically free.

**Mr. WISE:** I must ask for the indulgence of the House in addressing it for the first time on an occasion of considerable importance. I feel curiously humble after hearing yesterday and to-day the speeches of many hon. Members who have so much more experience of the subject under discussion and so much more experience of life in general; but I hope that the measure of my diffidence will be taken as the measure of my simplicity in the remarks that I have to make. I am extremely grateful to the hon. Member for Gorbals (Mr. Buchanan), who has raised a point which I think has been neglected in the House, and that is that we are not in India solely for the good of the Indians. We have heard a great deal from time to time about our duties to the Indians, the benefits we have conferred upon them, and our future duty to stay in India and continue to confer those benefits. If that was the only reason for our staying in India we in this House could not conscientiously sacrifice one British life or one British ship for it.

I hold the view most strongly that we are in India for our own good as much as that of anyone else. We entered into our Indian Empire by two very sound legal methods of acquisition—the right of conquest and the right of purchase. The vast bulk of that Empire has been secured by one or other of those two means, and, having so secured it, we



[Mr. Wise.]

have developed it to our own advantage. If any people or any Government arrogates to itself any rights it, naturally, cannot avoid corresponding obligations. That is why we owe these duties to the people of India. Having exacted from them the rights of a market for our goods and a home for our trade, we owe them in return good government, sound administration, and as much prosperity as we can possibly bring to them. So long as we fulfil our part of that contract and nobody can fulfil it any better, that contract must, surely, remain valid. If it could be shown that India could perform those obligations better than we can, then India would be entitled to the right to do that. I do not believe, however, that that state of affairs has come about yet, and I have very grave doubts whether it will ever come about, and those doubts are borne out by historical happenings.

There is no need to go back into the mythical ages of Indian history. If we go back even a thousand years to Mahmud Ghazni, from that time onwards his successors, who held India by the strong hand as invaders, only relinquished India to another set of invaders. So on through the whole list of invaders—the Afghans from Ghor, the Afghans from Lodi and, eventually, the Persians of Nadir Shah. One after another tribes have come down from more vigorous regions to rule India, but when they have settled in India their hands have grown idle on the sword hilt, and they have lost it to a new stream of invaders. Therefore it would seem, according to history, that India is fated to be ruled by some form of outside race. The ideal outside race for that rule is one which is constantly recruited from overseas and which does not have to make its home in the country which it rules. In other words, Great Britain does seem to be almost intended by Providence to hold dominion over the Indian Empire, and Great Britain is more fitted to do that than is any other nation.

Until it can be clearly shown that there is no other nation capable of ruling that

peninsula to better advantage than Great Britain should remain in the position she has won for herself. It is easy to say that what our grandfathers won and our fathers held we should maintain; but there is a great deal more truth in that statement than is popularly imagined. We have earned certain rights in India, and we are loyally fulfilling the obligations which those rights entail. Until we cease to do so, it does not seem to me that the question of responsible self-government need arise at all. A degree of Indianisation of the services is reasonable as an experiment to see whether it is possible that the historical disability of being incapable of ruling has been removed by the introduction of a new civilisation, but there is no evidence yet before us to show that that has been done. We are now being asked to vote for a Government Measure largely because it is a Government Measure.

We have been reminded somewhat sharply by the Foreign Secretary that we were elected as a National Government, and that logically we are expected to vote for the National Government. Some of us have our own ideas about that and feel that at least our constituents knew that they were voting for Tories and not for some monstrous hybrid. It does not seem to me a fair request that we should vote for the Government because it is the Government. I am voicing the opinion of many hon. Members when I say that the one thing for which we are longing to-night is that the Government will give us some reason why we should vote for them. We recognise that to a great extent we are pledged to support the Government, and we want to do so, but I maintain that the Government have not yet answered the case which the supporters of the Amendment have put forward. I hope that the Lord President of the Council in the final speech to-night will enable us to do what we all want to do, and that is to support the Government in its task. Up to the present, no reason has been given why we should support the Government. The Foreign Secretary quoted some lines from a poem, and I should like to complete my speech by quoting a verse, which is applicable to the structure which the Round Table Conference is apparently putting before us. This is the verse:

" Ah, love, couldst thou and I with fate  
conspire,  
To grasp this scheme of sorry things  
entire,  
Would not we shatter it to bits, and  
then  
Remould it nearer to the heart's  
desire."

**Mr. HICKS:** It is my privilege to compliment the hon. Member for Smethwick (Mr. Wise) on his excellent speech. I am sure that the House will desire to hear him on subsequent occasions, and I trust that his constituency will be no impediment to his rising to the Front Bench. I desire to put before the House the trade union point of view in so far as responsible government in India is concerned. For a good many years I have been associated with the trade union movement in this country and I have served on its international committee. Through this international committee we have come into close touch with the representatives of Indian trade unions and have become familiar with many of their problems and difficulties, and on occasions have assisted them against the extremists who at various times have attempted to utilise the Indian labour movement in directions which in our opinion were not desirable. Those who have followed industrial conditions in India, and the requests that have been made for legitimate machinery through which to express their grievances, will recognise that there has been a lack of willingness to grant to Indian workers the machinery through which they might be able to advance their grievances and get them discussed.

A glance at the industrial history of India shows that it is only when there has been considerable industrial and political unrest that the Government have taken any action at all. Whenever requests have come from the working people of India to have their claims discussed, there has always been, from the evidence at our disposal, something that has prevented an opportunity of their meeting to discuss their grievances. I formed one of a deputation which waited upon the late Lord Birkenhead, when he was Secretary of State for India, to ask him if it was not possible to set up some general machinery which would give an opportunity for the trade union organisations and the workers of India through that organisation to be able to advance their claims. I have a reply to a question

which I put down to-day; it was not reached, but I presume I am in order in referring to it. My question was, why Mr. Edo Fimmen, Secretary of the International Workers' Federation, who has made request after request to get a visa for permission to enter India in order to approach the workers' transport organisation, which are already affiliated with the International Transport Workers' Federation, has been refused a visa. The applications for the visa have been backed by the Trade Union Council and the general secretary, Mr. Citrine, has attended the India Office and make special representations on behalf of our movement, to see if it was possible for the visa to be granted. The answer I have received suggests the reason why he has not been allowed to enter India.

If methods are not devised to allow the working-classes to make known their claims and get their grievances redressed the enemies of bona fide workers organisations will increase in strength and add to the forces of violence and disruption. We are constantly being asked, after the ordinary channels have been exhausted or denied of ventilating their grievances, to see what we could do to help to straighten out the position in India. The Royal Commission of June of this year made it plain that the bulk of the population of India is half-starved, or in more calm and judicial and official language the condition of the people and the workers is miserable and pathetic, in the main. The hon. Member for Ogmore (Mr. E. J. Williams) last night made specific references to the terrible distress that exists in India; but it is not my purpose to refer to them at this moment.

Great Britain is now directly faced with a very grave crisis in one of its great industries. There are representatives of the textile industry in the House, and they will be able to contradict or supplement any statement that I make. The employers in the textile industry of Lancashire are demanding a lengthening of the working week and a worsening of working conditions for at least 250,000 operatives. A monstrous attempt is being made to establish bad health conditions in the Lancashire mill towns, where the sound of the clogs shall resound through the streets at 5 o'clock in the morning. What is the reason for this demand? The Lancashire millowners

[Mr. Hicks.]

say that they must reduce the cost of production so as to meet outside competition, and especially the competition of Eastern countries like Japan and India. In India, in Bombay and Calcutta, and Cawnpore, the textile operatives, as the Royal Commission has indicated, are mercilessly exploited. There can be no other term that will adequately fit the facts. In the mills of Bombay the average earnings of the male operative are 2s. 2d., and of a woman, 1s. 2d. per day. The operatives have to work long hours. Moreover, the Hindus are rapidly becoming as efficient as their fellow workers elsewhere. With wages of that character in India how is it possible for the workers in Lancashire to compete? Unless the wages and working conditions of operatives in India can be improved the doom of the Lancashire operative is sealed. There can be no doubt about it. The Lancashire cotton operative cannot live in a loin-cloth, with a handful of rice for his food.

**Mr. DEPUTY - SPEAKER** (Captain Bourne): I do not see how the hon. Gentleman connects his argument with the Motion or the Amendment before the House.

**Mr. HICKS:** I was leading up to the point of getting adequate representation of the workers in any constitution that is set up for India. I am particularly anxious that the workers' side shall be known. At present, unfortunately, the workers' side is not well known, and our own Government has refused a visa for trade union organisers to go to India to assist in the organisation of the workers there. There appears to be a desire not to have that type of organisation. I appeal to the Government to make provision, when any committees are to be set up, whereby the workers have proper representation. In deference to the Chair's Ruling I must limit some of the matter that I was proposing to introduce into my speech, but I would say that if India is to be saved from violent revolution and to be placed on the way of orderly progress, it is absolutely necessary that provision be made in the future constitution of India for the

8.30 p.m. adequate representation of the workers. The communal problems are problems of the past, how-

ever much they may be obsessing the Government of to-day, and others. The real problems of the future in India will be economic and social problems. In the building up of a constitution for India special regard should be had to the realities of to-morrow while recognising some of the difficulties of to-day.

The demand for communal electorates has been made for years. Trade union organisation in India has demonstrated, whether the workers be Hindus or Moslems or Christians, the existence of a common cause. It is in that common organisation that the Indian workers have been best able to express their desires. I ask the Government to approve of the idea of joint electorates as against the communal electorates which have been urged. The demand for communal electorates comes from a small section of the educated classes. I can understand references being made to the illiteracy of millions of Indians. That charge ought not to be made against them, but against those who have denied those millions the chances of education. I ask the Government to take the broad view that there should be joint electorates in which all will have an opportunity of expressing themselves. If there is to be home rule for India I do not want it to be home rule for a few capitalists in India, but home rule for the people of India. I want the franchise to be extended to them according to their work and education, and as opportunities present themselves for it to be extended still further. British India covers about 61 per cent. of the total area of India and comprises about 78 per cent. of the population of India.

Then there is the question of the relationship of the Central Government to the provincial governments, and the relationship of all to the international conventions that affect labour. Out of 30 odd conventions that have been ratified by the International Labour Office at Geneva, 12 have been ratified in India. Whilst they have been ratified by the Indian legislatures, not one of them has been ratified in any of the States of the Princes. Improved conditions which the conventions bring about must reflect themselves in the cost of production, but those who adopt the conventions ought not to be at a disadvantage compared with the States of the Princes.

Whatever is ratified by the Central Government should not only be compulsorily adopted by the provincial legislatures, but also by the States of the Princes. I suggest that the co-operation of labour has not been adequately asked for. As to the poverty that exists in India here is a quotation from the Commission's Report of July. In regard to the representation of labour in India they say:

"There are several directions in which the adequate representation of Labour should benefit both itself and India. In the first place the presence of representatives able to voice the desires and aspirations of Labour and to translate these into concrete proposals is essential for the proper consideration of measures specially affecting Labour. But the welfare of Labour does not depend purely on what may be called Labour measures. It can depend on the whole trend of policy and legislation. More adequate representation of Labour is necessary for its protection in this respect, and, if given an opportunity organised Labour can make a valuable contribution to the wise government of the commonwealth. Further, the proper representation of Labour is itself educative. The recognition of its claim as part of the body politic will bring increased responsibility and a sense of unity with the community as a whole. Conversely, the exclusion of Labour from a fair share in the councils of the nation will inevitably drive it to rely unduly on other means of making itself felt to the injury of itself and of the nation. What we have said is applicable to Labour generally, both agricultural and industrial."

I am confident that the Commission which unanimously assented to that paragraph felt deeply the importance of recognising Labour's right to come into representative councils in India. To-night I make this special plea. I ask the Government not to wait until Labour, denied the legitimate opportunity of expressing itself openly and constitutionally, takes violent action, before giving consideration to this important question. The opportunity to accept responsibility for the good government of one's native land is an opportunity which makes a great appeal. It makes a very strong appeal to the emotions of the Indian. Those who have never had the experience of being a subject nation might not be able to appreciate the importance and significance of that appeal. I hope we shall do all we can to educate the people of India, to give them the opportunities of education, and to give them the chance of this work and this responsibility. I

hope that at no far distant date the people of India will be the proud possessors of those rights and responsibilities. I ask the Government in setting up the new Constitution to see that it will not be the privilege of a few Princes or landlords or capitalists to exercise those rights. I ask them to recognise the rights of industry in India, which is now firmly established and is now affecting economic tendencies and events in many parts of the world. It will do so in the future to an even larger degree and in the new India I hope it will have its proper place and be able to give adequate expression to its views.

**Major-General Sir ALFRED KNOX:**

There is much in the speech of the hon. Member for East Woolwich (Mr. Hicks) with which I am in hearty agreement. It is very difficult to see how the workers—perhaps not the industrial workers so much as the peasant agriculturists of India—are going to have proper representation under the scheme now put forward. But my object in rising is to support the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) with every word of whose speech I am in complete agreement. I pay my small tribute to him for having to-night, not for the first time, brought back a Debate on India in this House to realities. When he spoke on this subject last January, several members of the Round Table Conference were here. When asked afterwards which speech in that Debate appealed to him most, one of them said, without a moment's hesitation, that it was the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping, because he was the only speaker who would face the facts. That is what we have to do in dealing with India or else we are preparing unheard-of disaster for ourselves, for India and for the Empire.

The right hon. Gentleman was replied to by the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon) who began by warning new Members, so to speak, that they would vote for the Amendment at their own risk. I think his words were that they had been elected to support the National Government. I also was elected to support the National Government but, whatever Government I have been elected to support, I have always retained my

[Sir A. Knox.]

freedom of conscience. I support the Government generally, but, if they bring in proposals with which I do not agree, I will never, in order to save votes support them in a course which I believe to be wrong. As one who has heard many lawyers speak in this House I realise the facility and dexterity with which the right hon. and learned Gentleman argued that we should, all at once, give responsibility at the centre and complete autonomy in the provinces. But was not the right hon. and learned Gentleman the Chairman, of the Statutory Commission which after three years consultation published that admirable report which many speakers have described as one of the best reports ever published? Having collected evidence on every side did not that Commission state as its considered opinion that we should first give autonomy to the provinces—far too wide a measure in my opinion—and, only after that, some measure of central responsibility? To-night, the right hon. and learned Gentleman has forgotten all that.

I am only a bluff soldier. I cannot argue with a lawyer who argues first on one side and then on the other. But on this question of India I support the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping who, throughout, has taken a strong, straight and firm line and is facing realities. The right hon. and learned Member for Spen Valley sweeps aside with scorn the newly elected Member for the Combined English Universities (Sir R. Craddock). Is there another Member here with half the experience of the people of India of all classes possessed by the hon. Member for the English Universities. He was the home Member of the Government in Simla; he has been Governor of two provinces; he has spoken with Indians in some 7,000 villages. Is there another Member here, or another member of the Round Table Conference or the Statutory Commission, who is in a position to talk to the cultivator of the soil or the Indian soldier in his native language? Are his strong objections to this declaration to go for nothing?

I want to get back to realities. I do not admit that the Round Table Conference was representative of India. There were people on it prominent in political

life but where was the representative of the agricultural workers? There were big landlords on it but not a single small landlord, much less an agricultural worker. How are you going to get at the opinion of these people, that ought to be the opinion above all others of which we ought to think? Some 80 per cent. of the population of India consists of these peasants who earn their living on the soil. Selecting people from the political parties in this country to be members of the Round Table Conference, it seems to have been the design to pick out people who were capable politicians and fluent speakers, but not people with practical knowledge of the wants of the peasants of India, who are the people we want to get at.

The hon. Member who has just spoken rather laughed at the idea of communal dissension in India being any difficulty, but I would point out to him that it is a very real difficulty. I speak as one who served for about 11 years in India, and although it was some time ago, the East does not change so much. I have heard the right hon. Gentleman in this House say the East was changing now, but I would like to put it to him that it is not the East that is changing, but the minds of the people and the governors of this country, who have one eye on Geneva and the other on the American Middle West. They have forgotten how to govern, and the people in India are waiting for us to say what we want. Only two days ago I met an officer who has commanded, for the last four years, a native Indian battalion in India. I asked him "What do the men say?" He said, "The Indian officers come to me and say 'Sahib, what is the matter with the Sirkar? When is he going to begin to govern?'" These people are looking for a lead, and they know that our hand is paralysed.

Communal representation is really the crux of the whole problem. If you look at the past, nearly from the beginning of the last century, you find Norway and Sweden separating, and if they could not agree to stay together, what hope have you got of the Mahrattas, Mohammedans and Moslems throughout India coming into one organic whole? In my own country of Ireland we managed to make a temporary arrangement, but if you

look at the Ulstermen, who are a compact body in the north, they are cut off. In India you have Mohammedans scattered all over the country, and how can you give them proper freedom and protection? Again, look at Western Europe. You had in Austria many different races, all kept together in a firm hold by the old Austrian Imperial Government. You had in Russia many races, all kept together under the Imperial Russian Government. They have all split asunder. The whole tendency of the times is against this federation, and in the whole of history there has never been an instance of units, before they were separately formed, coming together in one federation.

A lot has been said about promises. The right hon. and learned Member for Spen Valley spoke of the promise made by Mr. Montagu in this House. We all know the sanctity of promises, but when these right hon. Gentlemen speak of promises, they always omit the qualification of that Section which said that any advance in self-government should only be granted on condition and in measure with the sense of responsibility and co-operation engendered by the Indian people themselves, and we know that there has not been much sign of that. After all, there is a limit to promises. I heard the case put very well the other day that promises are not always binding. If you are a fond parent and you have promised your little son a very big feed on Christmas Day, and on Christmas Eve he develops a severe attack of communal appendicitis, will you consider it your bounden duty on Christmas Day to drown his cries of pain by stuffing him with turkey and plum pudding? If the Indians have not shown any sense of responsibility, are we to go any farther? I speak not on behalf of ourselves so much as on behalf of those millions of Indians, some 80 per cent. of the people of India, who know nothing of all these political movements. Mr. Gandhi said the other day that 85 per cent. of the population of India were at his beck and call. There never was a more preposterous claim put forward by any leader.

Before sitting down, I would like to recall to the memory of this House some of the things that we have done for India, because I have never seen any

mention of them in these voluminous debates of the Round Table Conference. All our British representatives there stood up apologising for England, but the British nation has made India what it is to-day. We went there, a small trading community, and by the force of facts, by things over which we had no control, we were pushed into a prominent position. After all, we gave the Indians law and order; we gave protection to the common people of India who wanted to go about their business and do their work; we established the trade of India in jute, in tea, in coffee, in hides, in rice, in wheat—all from us. Then we gave them railways. At the time of the mutiny there were 30 miles of rails; to-day there are 40,000 miles, built by English engineers and English capital. We gave them irrigation. In the Punjab province alone there are 8,000,000 acres of land irrigated. By these two methods of railway construction and irrigation we have conquered famine in India. Just 300 years ago, in 1630-31, there was a famine that carried off the people over great stretches of the country and depopulated the countryside. Whole families took poison because they were not able to endure the misery of starvation. In the last big famine that I knew of in India, an area was affected with a population of 49,000,000, and only 11 people died of starvation.

What have we done, too, in the realm of medical science? We have half conquered malaria in the country. Ronald Ross, whom I knew when he was working there 33 years ago, has never received any proper Government recognition for his work in that respect. Then, in regard to cholera, it is no longer the scourge that it was years ago in India. I remember seeing tombstones to British regiments that lost as many as 1,000 men in a few years from a cholera epidemic in India. We do not see that now. Then bubonic plague was fought by our medical officers and our military officers, and where did they get any help from these emissaries of the Congress then, who told the people that we were poisoning the wells if we put in an antiseptic and that our inoculations would cause them illnesses? That is the sort of help that we got from them.

We have definite responsibilities in India, and it is time our people realised

[Sir A. Knox.]  
 what they are. We have duties and obligations, and the obligations on which I set most stress are our duties to the common people of India, who were not represented at the Round Table Conference, who want a square deal from their rulers, who trust the Britisher because he is neutral in the constant quarrels between Mohammedans and Hindus, who, when they want a Judge whom they can trust, ask for an Englishman to try their case. They want protection from the rapacious moneylender and the rapacious landlord too, and where can they get it except from an Englishman, who stands in their eyes as above all law, the only honourable person whom they have ever known? For these reasons, I look upon this Motion with the greatest suspicion, and I shall record my vote against it.

**Mr. MOLSON:** I feel that it is rather rash for me to venture to address this House so soon after I have been elected to it. My excuse, which I hope the House will accept, is that I have been engaged for the last five years in studying the subjects which are before the House at the present time, and particularly that one of commercial discrimination, which has been brought up in the Amendment. I was, from 1926 to 1929, political secretary to the chambers of commerce in India, and I have been secretary to the European delegates from India at the two Round Table Conferences. I do not claim to be an expert upon India, but my researches into the early life of the right hon. Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) show me that his experience of India as a cavalry subaltern was not any longer than mine as a political secretary. I am perhaps unduly sensitive of the criticisms that have been made of the Round Table Conference, but I feel that the gibe that on so many occasions it failed to obtain unanimity has been rather overdone. Of how many assemblies of between 80 and 100 people can it be said that they attain unanimity on many occasions? I suppose that the House of Commons gets nearer to unanimity than any of its predecessors.

There are, however, a few hon. Gentlemen sitting on those benches who do not agree with the vast majority of us on so obvious a question as the support of the National Government, and on those few issues on which they do agree with

us, the right hon. Member for Epping and a few of his Friends can generally be trusted to break up the happy unanimity. I whole-heartedly support this White Paper, and I want to protest against the argument that those of us who stood in support of the National Government are not expected to support them upon their Indian policy because it was not explicitly referred to by our Leaders in the election. We asked for a free hand and the Prime Minister asked for a doctor's mandate. If some of us are sorry when some of our Liberal Friends find it difficult to support the National Government on questions of tariffs, we can surely have no complaint against them if we are not prepared to support the National Government in matters which are of equal importance.

I understand that the principal argument of the right hon. Gentleman is that he demands that there shall be strong administration in India. There is no conflict between strong administration and a liberal policy. I hope the time will never come again when Mr. Gandhi, like some oriental Pied Piper of Hamelin, will lead a lot of boys and girls down to the beach to make salt, but, if that time came, I should agree with the right hon. Gentleman that the Government of India should enforce the law regardless of the consequences. If we are going to enforce the law, I hope that at the same time our policy with regard to India's aspirations will be as liberal as the obstinate facts of the situation allow.

May I refer especially to the question of commercial discrimination, upon which subject I speak, if I may say so with all modesty, with some degree of intimate knowledge. The experience of the working of the present reforms caused the chambers of commerce in India to be very apprehensive of discrimination against them when increased powers were given to the Indian Legislature. We represented that to the Simon Commission, who considered, after examining the evidence, that our apprehensions were well founded. When the Round Table Conference assembled, the representatives of the European community in India entered into negotiations with the Indian delegates, and for days and weeks on end we had intimate private negotiations

and public debates. We have at the present time a report upon 9.0 p.m. this subject, which has been accepted by the Round Table Conference, and if it does not represent quite that unanimity that we should have liked, it does at any rate represent a very great advance. I do not know whether the hon. Members who are responsible for this Amendment have read the report, but in any case I would like to quote the salient sentence from it:

"The committee are of opinion that no subject of the Crown, who may be ordinarily resident or carrying on trade or business in British India, should be subjected to any disability or discrimination, legislative or administrative, by reason of his race, descent, religion or place of birth in respect of taxation, the holding of property, the carrying on of any profession, trade or business, or in respect of residence or travel."

The European community in India were fairly satisfied with the amount of agreement which was reached at the Round Table Conference, and if anything more were required to give them reassurance, it was the speech of the Secretary of State for India last night. Trade is far more dependent upon good will than it ever can be upon any paper safeguards or upon any political force which this House might see fit to use, and I think that I am speaking for the European community in India when I say that to bring this matter up in the form of an Amendment to this Motion is calculated to prejudice good relations in India and to make more difficult that settlement by agreement which we have so very nearly attained.

There is one important matter to which I should like to refer. I am sorry to say that even since the Irwin-Gandhi Agreement, the Congress authorities in India have continued a policy of boycott of British mills. The whole of the boycott movement is in my opinion contrary to the spirit of the Irwin-Gandhi Agreement, but the condition, which I will quote, in an undertaking which is being imposed upon British mills in India by threats of a boycott, is clearly a flagrant contravention of the letter of the Agreement. In the undertaking there is a sub-clause which says:

"No person connected with the management of the mills will engage himself in

propaganda hostile to the National movement or participate in any activity organised voluntarily or at the instance or on behalf of the British Government in India in opposition to the movement."

In other words, should the Civil Disobedience campaign be started again, and should the Government of India adopt those firm measures to repress it, which I earnestly hope they will, then, under this undertaking, British mills would be under an obligation to support the Congress or, at any rate, not to support the Government. That is a clear contravention of the Irwin-Gandhi agreement, in which Mr. Gandhi said:

"It is accepted that a boycott of this character"—

that is, a political boycott—

"organised for this purpose will not be consistent with the participation of representatives of the Congress in a frank and friendly discussion of constitutional questions with the representatives of British India, the Indian States and His Majesty's Government."

I earnestly hope that Mr. Gandhi and Congress will see to it that that undertaking is carried out, that they discharge their honourable obligations. I further hope that the Government will insist that these obligations are observed, as they are entitled to do under the Irwin-Gandhi agreement.

In the Amendment there is a reference not only to British trade in India but to British trade with India. I think it is an unfortunate thing that the representatives of the three political parties did not bring up at the Round Table Conference the question of trade between this country and India. This is not a criticism of the Government; it is equally a criticism of the representatives of all three political parties. But let there be no mistake about one thing. If we desire that the trade between this country and India should flourish and increase, that must be brought about by agreement. There must be no idea that we in this country are trying to impose upon India a policy which will be solely to our own advantage. If the hon. Member for the English Universities (Sir R. Craddock) agrees with me upon nothing else, he will agree with me in this, that even to-day there is no more fruitful cause of ill-will in India than the fact that for so many years the cotton excise duties were imposed upon India in face



[Mr. Molson.]

of the opposition of the Indian people and of the European merchants established in India. I hope that something will be done in the course of the negotiations to make certain that the trade of this country with India does flourish. In particular I feel that the Lord President of the Council has not yet been able to carry out the pledge which he gave at Newton Abbot on 6th March this year when he said:

"We have all been gravely concerned by the boycott of British trade in India and by the methods employed. Suffice it to say that at the moment that as a party we intend to use our fullest influence in support of British traders, and to insist that in any future settlement of the Indian constitution there shall be a fundamental undertaking forbidding unfair discrimination against British trade."

In conclusion, may I repeat that that end will not be secured by proposing an Amendment of this kind, which is calculated to arouse all the animosity and all the bitterness of India, but rather by coming together and negotiating on equal and friendly terms. If this Amendment has been put forward with the idea of assisting British traders in India and British traders with India I earnestly hope that it will, even at the eleventh hour, be withdrawn. If, on the other hand, the British community in India is being used merely as a pawn for the purpose of embarrassing the Government and of prejudicing the chances of a happy and amicable settlement in India, then, no doubt, another policy will be followed.

**Sir H. CROFT:** I am very glad to have the privilege, on behalf of my fellow Members, of congratulating the hon. Member for Doncaster (Mr. Molson) on a most admirable speech, delivered with such good temper and with such a display of knowledge as I trust will be most helpful to this House on many other occasions when he takes part in our Debates. I am sure that all who have heard his speech, even if they disagree with very large parts of it, as I do, will admit that we shall often wish to hear the hon. Gentleman again. It is with great reluctance that I rise this evening. I particularly did not want to speak upon this question, and hoped to be in the North of England this evening. I felt satisfied that when the Conference

reached the point it did the Prime Minister's statement would have invited this House to get back to the solid ground of the Simon Commission. I am certainly of opinion myself, and I think a great many of my hon. Friends will agree, that we were led to expect that there would be no question of forcing the issue unless agreement had been arrived at. Certainly in the party to which I belong, which is not an inconsiderable section of the supporters of His Majesty's Government, we were led to understand that we as a party were not committed, and that in any event, unless there could be agreement, there was no likelihood of the matter being pressed.

Reading this document, issued the day before yesterday, we find we are asked to accept an entirely new policy—that is what it comes to from the point of view of those who agree that I have correctly described the situation in which hon. Members in our party found themselves before this Debate. In the space of 24 hours we are asked to decide upon this document, which is really vital to the whole future of India, and, therefore, of the British Empire. I want to protest that that is forcing the question through. I wish we could have debated the matter for several days in order that we might have more time to get into touch with the European population in India, because I think even the hon. Member has not been able to consult the whole of the European population for whom he spoke. I searched this remarkable document in vain for one single reference to British interests, and was in such a disturbed state of mind that I went to one of my hon. Friends who can usually be relied upon to explain the position of the Government and asked how this came about. After all, British interests in India are no small thing. We in this House are immensely proud of our wonderful partnership in India, to which tributes have been paid by every impartial observer, from the time of the late President Roosevelt down to the present day. I was told that if I looked carefully I would find these words in paragraph 2 on page 1:

"and also with such guarantees as are required by minorities to protect their political liberties and rights."

I was informed that the word "minorities" covered British interests in India.

It has come to this with the British Empire, that henceforth when we are discussing Indian questions we have to think of ourselves as one of the minorities, in company with the Untouchables and the various smaller minorities in India. That is a serious position. Nothing could be more dangerous than that we in this House, obsessed as we are with this grave crisis of finance and economics, should lightheartedly subscribe to this policy without seeing that every safeguard is included.

I would like to refer to a somewhat parallel situation on 20th August, 1917. At that time the House of Commons was jaded, war-weary, tired, and almost incapable of dealing with any great new problem. We were suddenly confronted, without ample time to consider the matter in all its implications, with what was described in the Montagu-Chelmsford Report as the most momentous utterance ever made in its chequered history. Right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Bench will remember when the late Mr. Montagu determined to stir the Indian people from their contentment in India, and he succeeded in doing that. What was so extraordinary was that we were moved to throw up our caps and say, "Splendid," because of the words of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George), who said, "Look at the wonderful things the great fighting men of India have done alongside our men in the War," and there was not a Member of this House who was not deeply moved. There was no mention at that time of self-government for India in any form. That demand did not come from the men who had been fighting in our Army. The contribution of Bengal, Bombay, and Madras to the Army at that time was only one-seventh of the total fighting men in the Indian Army. I can assure hon. Members that there were very few men in the Indian Expeditionary Force who took any interest in politics, or who knew what that magic word "vote" meant. Their minds at that time were on the trenches where our people were suffering. At that time we were not able to concentrate on this subject, and yet here to-day men's minds have been concentrating on these problems, and suddenly we are asked to assent to a policy upon which no Member of the Conservative party was aware that he

would be asked to give a vote. (We read in the White Paper:

"We must build like good craftsmen, well and truly; our duty to India demands that from all of us."

We also have our duties to the British Empire, and to those hundreds and thousands of people in this country whose whole livelihood is dependent upon their partnership in India which has been so fruitful in its results in the past. It is easy for the Prime Minister to state at the Round Table Conference that whatever is proposed will have to be brought before this House before anything is done. I remember, when we raised certain difficulties in regard to the Government of India on a previous occasion, we were told that "the white man's word must stand." Let us see to it to-night that the white man's word is understood, and that we leave no word unsaid to make the position absolutely clear. Let us deal with the realities of the situation. I believe that there is not a Member in this House who has studied the Simon Report and the other documents who will not agree that the co-operation of the people of the Indian Empire is absolutely essential if we are to win through the difficulties in which the Government of India have been plunged by so much good will and sentiment and so little reason, and so much utter disregard of the report of the Simon Commission, which was Parliament's own statutory commission.

Never before did I feel more sorrow for a great statesman in this House than when I listened to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Spen Valley (Sir J. Simon) trying to prove that all the conclusions which he and the Simon Commission had come to, after very long and wonderful labours, could be laid on one side, that we could jump all our fences, and go right through, and this after a solemn declaration that it was essential for us to move in India by successive stages step by step. I think it is essential for hon. Members to understand that India can never be a nation. I mention this because the Prime Minister said in his speech that he was unable to understand the Indian mind. On topics like this you might as well talk about a Russo-European nation as talk about an Indian nation. You might as well talk about a Chinese-American mind as talk about the Indian mind. When you con-

[Sir H. Croft.]  
sider the Punjabi, the Gurkhas and the men of Madras and the various types that you come across in India, they are just as different one from the other not only in their appearance but also in their habits and in their faith as any other nation in the world. Suppose that we were dealing with the question of a united Government for the whole of Europe, with headquarters in England, and we were unable to agree with, say, 40 nations as to communal representation, and we declared, "As you cannot agree, we shall be compelled to impose upon you a settlement." That would be very similar to what is happening now, because it is proposed to impose central government on India, not to-day or to-morrow, but if they cannot agree among themselves. All through the great Debates on the Montagu-Chelmsford proposals we were told that these great changes in India could only be achieved by successive stages.

I am going to ask my leader to realise that I am absolutely convinced that we cannot go back on the idea which we have expressed in regard to self-government for India. It may be a bad thing to raise those hopes so soon before you have given Provincial Government, and before you have given the Indian people an opportunity of gaining experience in government. The promise has been made, and we are violating in this document all our former decisions that self-government can only be achieved by successive stages. The Government of India Act passed by Parliament apparently is no longer a subject to which we ought to refer, and yet it stands. The Simon Commission, apparently, did not understand it. We have to take in one gulp what all these great authorities have advised us to take in very definite stages. The second great truth to which I want to refer is the fact that we are not dealing with a democracy, as we understand the word, but with great masses of people of utterly divergent views upon religion, and with utterly different outlooks upon life and who are utterly contemptuous of the ways and habits of one another. In the case of the Hindus, who form the large majority of the people of the Indian Empire, you are dealing with a people who are existing on an unshakeable basis of aristocracy—an aristocracy of many de-

grees, it is true. So extreme is that aristocracy that even if a well of the lower caste race dries up in a village, the men of that lower caste are not allowed to draw water out of the well of the higher caste. These are facts which you cannot neglect. Therefore, it is very wise of the right hon. Gentleman the Foreign Secretary to remind us that people who have these ideas in regard to civilisation do not yet understand self-government as we understand it in this country.

Are we quite sure we are doing wisely? I have seen some of the ill effects of political education in some of the distant parts of the world. Are we quite sure we are wise? Is democracy in the old world such a success when we cannot show remarkable achievements in bringing peace or preventing war, in learning how to balance our trade, in regulating currency, in lifting up the whole people of the world or in being able to stabilise the price of commodities, and so on? Are we wise to go in a hurry to the oldest civilisation of the world and say, "Lift yourselves out of your pathetic contentment and take our democratic medicine. Why should you, when we are suffering so terribly from our conception of democracy, stand out and not come in also? You must come in at once, and even though 94 per cent. of your people cannot read or write, you must have the same measures that the old world is suffering from." Are we wise—for the East which is still unchanging, in spite of what we may be told from the Front Bench—to go to the East and say, that there is a continent of people—I do not say they will be completely uneducated eventually—who must accept our democratic ideas?

If this full scheme is carried before there is a complete change in the customs and habits of the people of India, you will really be establishing a Brahmin oligarchy, and handing over the fate of 300,000,000 people to some very stern rulers—not to a democracy, for the best they can hope for is that the people of India are to be put in the hands of a bourgeoisie who have had a little education at a university here and there, where they are turned out like sausages. Because there are no jobs to go round—for they will not take anything but Government service—they have nothing

to do but to agitate and make trouble. These are the people to whom you are handing over the rights of India at the present time.

I want to say one word in regard to another astounding fact in this document. The reason why I want to see the statement of the Secretary of State—not a very immoral suggestion—added to the White Paper is this: Always before, we have looked to the Secretary of State, and not the Prime Minister, to make these pronouncements. Why should we not have that remarkable speech of the Secretary of State in explanation? There is not a word that he fears will go to India. How ridiculous to suggest it! Why should not the man responsible for the policy have his great speech embodied along with this White Paper as explanatory of what we really mean? The speech of the Secretary of State

9.30 p.m. made reference to several subjects which are not included here. I will refer to only one of them. There is not a word in this White Paper about the vital interests of our trade in Lancashire. The right hon. Gentleman who spoke this evening—and I want to thank him for this—did explain that these matters were his concern. It is a very terrible thing to hear what an hon. Member said earlier in the Debate, that this vital question of trade interests was never even discussed. Am I wrong when I say that the people of Lancashire have done more to create the building up of trade ideas in India, and brought riches to India than anything else? Hon. Gentlemen opposite will admit that imports are always paid for by exports, and as we have exported a great mass of goods into India, is it not clearly the fact that we have helped to build up her overseas trade?

I believe that the people of this country now realise that a great and fundamental error was made at the time of the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms when we did not insist that the whole basis of trade, at any rate in future, should be that of partnership and mutual advantage between Indian peoples and ourselves for our common good. I pray that we shall not make such a mistake again, and that we shall do everything in our power to see that it is made clear in the future. I lay especial stress on the words

“mutual preference,” because we believe that we shall do more to uplift India and bring happiness to her people by stimulating her primary products and various industries, than by any constitution-mongering we can think of. If we can hit on a great plan of economic unity between this country and the Indian Empire, we shall be doing a great deal to soften asperities and to make life happier for the people in India, and, to secure the interests of our people at home as well. We have invested more in India than any other country has ever invested in another country, and upon the basis of those investments there has been built up those wonderful railway systems and irrigation works, and we have stamped out famine and saved millions of lives. Instead of apologising, and not referring to British interests in this document, we should have started the document by saying how proud we are of what we have done in the past, and how much we hope to do for the future. I hope I have not spoken too warmly on this subject, but I feel very deeply that if we do not put in every possible safeguard, we are liable to have great suffering and great remorse in days to come. Some of us had relatives who were in the Khyber Pass in the defence of India, and many of our people have been there defending India on the frontier for six, eight or 10 months in the last year or two. That is service. There are some people who have fought since the War, and suffered to preserve the great thing which we call England, Britain or the British ideal, and who only knew that we were a people who have ruled wisely and well. After the War, the men who suffered were really amazed to see that everywhere we were overcome by a policy of softness, of trying to get out of our responsibilities and putting them on shoulders which were not able to bear them.

There is one more question I should like to ask. I want to say here and now that I am sure we can never go back, but before we go hastening unwisely on, may we not ask ourselves, as Christian people, whether the people of India are going to be better governed if we walk out before the allotted time? Are the people in the great continent of India going to be better governed when police control is no longer under the white man, and when no longer is there

[Sir H. Croft.]  
anything to stand between those who engage in terrible religious blood feuds? If we cannot answer that question decisively, if we have even a shadow of doubt in our minds, then we ought to do everything in our power to see that every possible safeguard is announced here and now, before we allow this question to go out of our hands.

**Sir AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN:** I should like to add my congratulations to those of my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Bournemouth (Sir H. Croft), to the hon. Member for Doncaster (Mr. Molson) on what I think was his maiden speech a short time ago. It was a remarkable contribution to this Debate, and I regret that it was heard neither by my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) nor by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, for I think it contained something that was worthy of the attention. My right hon. Friend the Member for Epping might have learned, perhaps, from the speech of the hon. Member, something of how the interests of Britishers in India can best be protected; and the Secretary of State will, I hope, look at his speech in order that his attention may be drawn to the clear case of a breach of the Irwin-Gandhi agreement about boycott, to which the hon. Member called attention. It is a very grave breach, and it certainly ought to receive the immediate attention of His Majesty's Government and of the Viceroy and Government of India.

My hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Bournemouth repeated with emphasis in his speech that he had no desire to go back on the resolution or decision which had been taken in the past. He was explicit, and I think he is almost the only hon. Member who has spoken in favour of the Amendment, who has been explicit on this point. If I criticised speeches in this Debate, it would be to say that many of them have dealt with things that are past, and cannot now be undone or altered, but are part of the stubborn facts of the situation which we have to face. There is no more useless occupation in politics than crying over spilt milk, or, to vary the phrase, "jobbing backwards" and considering how much better things might have been if this or that had

been done. For my part, I can play that game as well as anyone. I can express my regret that Lord Curzon altered the phraseology of the Montagu Declaration, and altered it, I think, very much for the worse. I can express my regret that Lord Irwin should have borrowed from my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping that unhappy phrase "Dominion status"; and I dare say, if Lord Irwin were still a Member of this House, he would explain that when he used it he used it as my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping says he used it—to indicate the position of India in the Empire, and not the internal structure of the Indian Constitution. But my objection to the phrase is that it is capable of an innocent meaning and it is capable of a very mischievous meaning, and you do not want to use phrases in this connection, or in your relations with other people, which are capable of two interpretations, and which, from the moment they are delivered, are interpreted in different ways by the parties who are interested in them.

These declarations have been made; they are part of the stubborn facts with which we have to deal. What, then, is there in the White Paper which is novel, which is new, which we have not assented to already? What is it that my right hon. Friend finds to object to in it? It is not the declaration in Paragraph 2. It cannot be, because he is perfectly ready to accept the declaration in Paragraph 2, and all the rest of the Paper, if the Government will do either one of two things—attach to it the Amendment which stands in his name, or attach to it the speech which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State delivered last night. It cannot be the declaration in Paragraph 2, or my right hon. Friend must not only move to add words at the end, but he must move to omit Paragraph 2. "Then," says my right hon. Friend, "at least attach the statement of the Secretary of State. What reason can there be for not attaching it except that there is some contradiction between it and the Prime Minister? If there is no contradiction, what objection can there be?" My right hon. Friend makes a proposition which sounds very reasonable, but, if he will permit me to say so, he is an old Parliamentary hand, and he knew perfectly well, when

he made that proposition, that it was impossible for any Government to accept it. The Government laid this statement as a Cabinet declaration before the Conference, and they said that they would take this statement to the House of Commons and ask them to approve of it. My right hon. Friend has conducted with great skill more than one negotiation with other Governments or peoples. Would he ever have consented, when he had made a particular statement to the one party and had said that he would seek the assent to it of the other party, to an alteration by the other party without consultation with the first party? As I said, my right hon. Friend knew that he was putting forward a suggestion which was extremely plausible, but which could not be accepted by any body of honourable men.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** My right hon. Friend has no right to say that. The House is asked to take a great decision and approve the policy of the Government, and I have asked that the policy of the Government should be the whole policy set out in its entirety both by the statement of the Prime Minister and by the speech of the Secretary of State.

**Sir A. CHAMBERLAIN:** That does not alter the justice of the statement which I have made, that my right hon. Friend is asking for something which, if he will allow me to say so, he would, if he had thought about it, have known that no honourable body of men could do. It is, in effect, to vary an agreement which they have made with another party without the assent of that party. It is open to the House—

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** My right hon. Friend is now talking of this document as if it were a treaty, an agreement which had been arrived at, as if it were a matter dictated and agreed line by line between two parties. It is nothing of the sort. It is not represented to be that. It is represented as the free utterance of the Prime Minister. What right has my right hon. Friend to say that it is a treaty which I am advising the House to break?

**Sir A. CHAMBERLAIN:** I say that it is a definite statement made on behalf of His Majesty's Ministers to the Conference. They told the Conference that

they would bring that statement, and not some other statement, for approval to this House. It is open to the House—it is not open to the Government—to alter their attitude or break the promise which they made. As I have only a very little time, I hope that I may be permitted to put the rest of the argument without interruption. My right hon. Friend thinks that he sees some contradiction between the statement of the Prime Minister and the statement of the Secretary of State. I can find no such contradiction. I find in the White Paper every condition laid down by the Secretary of State except perhaps the special safeguard for the relations of the Princes with their suzerain. I find all the safeguards to which my right hon. Friend referred within the four corners of the statement. I beg the House to consider what they would be doing if they added to that statement a special reservation, and were these three points mentioned in the Amendment picked out.

After listening to my right hon. Friend and to others, I cannot see what the Statute of Westminster has to do with what we are engaged upon. The Statute of Westminster, even in its very Clauses, was adjusted to the conditions of each individual Dominion, and, if at any time in some future which I shall not live to see another House of Commons should wish to adjust the Statute of Westminster to the India of that day, India will have to have its special Clause just as much as the other Dominions have theirs. But it is not in the picture. It does not arise here. There is no more reason for mentioning it than for mentioning Magna Charta.

My right hon. Friend is also anxious about law and order. The ultimate reservation to the Governor-General of the internal security of India is complete in the White Paper if the ordinary machinery breaks down. Finally, my right hon. Friend picks out British trade for a special reservation. I think, if he looks at paragraph 17, he will find the security that he wants in broader terms than his own. The British community in India is not concerned for its trade alone. It is concerned to secure the education that it desires for its children, and its cultural and its religious freedom. Those

[Sir A. Chamberlain.]  
are as important as more material things. In paragraph 17 of the White Paper the Prime Minister says:

"A decision of the communal problem which provides only for representation of the communities in the Legislatures is not enough to secure what I may call 'natural rights.'"

I hope the Prime Minister will not talk too often of "natural rights."

"When such provisions have been made, minorities will still remain minorities, and the constitution must, therefore contain provisions which will give all creeds and classes "a due sense of security, that the principle of majority government is not to be employed to their moral or material disadvantage in the body politic."

There is security, not merely for their trade, but for their cultural freedom, about which they will be quite as much concerned. To pick out these particular points for mention to the exclusion of others, if another old Member may give a word of advice, is one of the things that in the course of our Parliamentary experience we learn on the highest authority is extremely dangerous. The mention of one is interpreted as the exclusion of the rest, and I prefer the wider language of the Government statement to the narrower provisions of my right hon. Friend's Amendment.

The real difficulty that we confront in the problem of India is that we are trying to engraft Western institutions on to an Oriental civilisation. My right hon. Friend, the Member for Marylebone (Sir R. Rodd), on another occasion observed that self-government was not a right but a habit, and there are imitations of the British Constitution strewn among the wreckage of the world sufficient to show how true it is that, unless you have the habit of self-government, no particular constitution will bring safety. I was very glad to hear the Foreign Secretary repeat what the Prime Minister said in the White Paper, that the door is not closed to the advancement of provincial self-government and that that may yet take place in some part if not all over India. But I will ask the Government to go a little further. Because we are grafting Western institutions on to an Oriental civilisation, we are obliged to build from the top instead of from the bottom. I think the error of the past has been that we did not in

time strive to develop such local institutions as exist, so that the path of Indian constitutional development might be the same as our own. There is one local self-governing institution of native growth mentioned by the Prime Minister, the village *panchayat*. Cannot the Government set to work, apart from these big problems, without waiting for the larger solution, and try to develop that local institution, and thus to create the educated body politic without which no constitution will succeed?

**Mr. LANSBURY:** The right hon. Gentleman says that self-government is a habit. We must start that habit at some time or another before it becomes merely a habit. If self-government is a habit, before the practice of self-government becomes a habit, it must be commenced. I should like to say to the hon. Baronet the Member for Bournemouth (Sir H. Croft) that, if he is anxious for business in India, I think the first thing to be obtained is peace and confidence and trust in the Indian people, and by the Indians in ourselves. Someone has said that the greatest British interest is peace, and I think that to-day. I should like to say to the Prime Minister that we accept paragraph 2 as meaning that clear definite agreement has been reached on the question of the right of India to have self-government with responsibility at the centre so soon as details can be worked out. After this has come into operation, there will be a transition period with agreed safeguards. I should like the Lord President of the Council to tell us whether we are right in that understanding. There has been so much discussion about this matter, that I think it is important.

**Mr. CHURCHILL:** Would the right hon. Gentleman mind reading it out again, the words are so very important?

**Mr. LANSBURY:** We accept paragraph 2 as meaning that a clear, definite agreement has been reached on the question of the right of India to have self-government with responsibility at the centre so soon as details can be worked out. After this has come into operation, there will then be a transition period with agreed safeguards—all the safeguards which, I understand, the right hon. Gentleman requires. In

speaking to-night I do not claim any personal knowledge of India, but I do claim to have spent a good deal of time trying to think about India and to understand India ever since I was a boy. I am going to say some things to the House to-night which, I think, require saying, because of the sort of attitude of mind which some hon. Members seem to have taught the Indian people. It has been said during this particular Debate that we are discussing the affairs of a great country inhabited by a great people, a country which contains the descendants of nations, who, long before the Christian era, enjoyed the blessings of civilisation and religion, the ethical truths of which are still recognised as among the very highest and best in the world. Long before the Gospels were dreamed of, philosophers from the plains of India proclaimed the truth that the law of life was service, that life itself was sacred, and that to do unto others as we would they should do unto us was the one way by which peace and happiness could be brought into the world.

I recall these facts because it is impossible that any of us should understand the true feelings of Indians unless we also realise that we are dealing with the descendants of a cultured race. I would also remind the House of the opinion of one of the greatest students of the East, the late Professor Max Muller :

"If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, and has found solutions of some of them which will deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant, I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we here in Europe, we who have been nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greeks and Romans, and of one Semitic race, the Jewish, may draw that corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more universal, in fact, more truly human"—

[*Interruption.*] I dare say that it does not matter to many hon. Members what I am saying, but there are many Indians to whom it matters that this House should understand their position. I should have thought that in a House of Commons that starts with prayer, it might be fair to hear something about another country and their religion, and what one of the greatest writers of our time thought of that people. You are discuss-

ing their faith here to-night, and I have a right—anyone who cares for India has a right—to put their point of view as far as it is possible,

"a life not for this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life—again I should point to India."

This great people has been under the rule of British people for 150 years, that is, under the descendants of those who, while people in India were living as a civilised race, were wandering the forests of Britain without culture or any of the blessings which culture brings. Now at the end of 150 years, the question has arisen for how much longer shall our rule remain. From the start, when the affairs of India passed from the East India Company to the British Government, there have been repeated promises and pledges that we were in India only for the good of the Indians; that in the end we should hand back our trust, and leave India free to work out her own salvation. That was said at least 80 years ago. It is true that men like Lord Brentford have declared that this is not so; that we spent blood and treasure in securing India in order to make money. But I like to believe that, however mixed our motives may have been, the pledges given by Queen Victoria and her successors, and reaffirmed in the name of the British Parliament, were given in truth, and to be redeemed. Be this as it may, events have brought us to where we are to-night.

No one sitting on these benches wants to call in question the good will of the Prime Minister or his colleagues on this subject. We are willing to accept at

their face value the reiterated

10.0 p.m. pledges and the documents we are asked to accept this evening. This is, however, in my judgment, not enough. We wish to make it absolutely clear that the Indian nation, in our view, has the right to say when she herself desires to receive the rights and duties of nationhood. The British Labour movement has throughout its history always stood side by side with all nationalities, whether under our flag or anywhere else in the world struggling for freedom—in fact, men and women of all classes in this country have shown sympathy, and expressed it in word and deed with all nations struggling to be free.



[Mr. Lansbury.]

We believe that it is not for Great Britain alone to determine how India shall be governed. It is her right. We believe, once we concede to India the full, complete inalienable right of saying whether she will or will not become a partner in the British Commonwealth of Nations, her answer will be, "Yes"; but the choice must be hers. The words "self-determination" means this, or they mean nothing. And that is our standpoint. We, therefore, desire that the Government shall, without any delay, continue to negotiate along lines which will enable India to realise that we are not relying on force, but on good will. For a moment let us consider why the Indians claim this. As my hon. Friend<sup>3</sup> the Member for Limehouse (Mr. Attlee) pointed out, every nationalist movement has an economic basis. Lord Balfour, when Chief Secretary for Ireland, described the Irish Home Rule movement as a

"social revolution in the guise of a political agitation."

Absentee landlordism and other forms of landlordism have brought the peasantry of Ireland to ruin, depopulated the countryside and stirred in the minds of Irishmen the world over a grim determination that in one way or another Ireland should be free.

**Sir WILLIAM WAYLAND:** On a point of Order. Is it correct for the right hon. Gentleman to read his speech?

**Mr. SPEAKER:** I have not made any objection.

**Mr. LANSBURY:** I deliberately put down very copious notes in order to try to keep within time.

Our Indian friends suffer from the same economic causes. The immense cost of the, British Army and pensions alone reach the terrible figure of 63 per cent. of total central expenditure; in fact, the upkeep of the British administration means a terrible drain of wealth from a people, millions of whom live on the borderline of destitution and famine. I need not call further attention to the facts which my hon. Friend the Member for Ogmore (Mr. E. Williams) brought before the House last night. I wish, however, to emphasise the point that this drain is from the resources of poverty-

stricken millions. Our 150 years' rule has also left—and the hon. Baronet agrees about this—the overwhelming mass of the people in India illiterate. That does not mean, as Lord Lytton said, that they are ignorant. Such of them as are literate, those who have come to Europe, to Berlin, Paris, Moscow and London, have learned in the schools and universities what liberty means. Thousands of them are back in India with no outlet for their training. They are demanding, and in my view rightly demanding; that armies manned by Indians who would live in India and whose families would live in India, shall replace the very costly British Army. They are demanding that the Civil Service shall be Indianised. In both cases the cost would be very much less. They demand the same in regard to the judiciary and the whole services connected with Government and administration. These things are demanded as a right and also on economic grounds. They maintain that just as Ireland suffered from the drain which absentee landlordism caused, so does India suffer from British administration. I think every fair-minded person must see their case.

Out of this condition of things and many other well known evils, nationalism has grown. It is a mistake to imagine that the movement for responsible government is now confined to the towns. All that is vocal in young India is in the villages and will be there to-morrow preaching the gospel of the new India, pointing out that poverty and want, foul housing conditions, terribly high mortality rates, are all due not to nature but to the evil results that come from living under conquerors who drain immense wealth from the country and spend it abroad. [Interruption.] The hon. Member who is hiding behind the hon. Member for Eastbourne (Mr. Marjoribanks) might have the decency to allow me to proceed without interruption. I wish also to call attention to the fact that the Indians also desire that the wealth created in factories and workshops, on railways and elsewhere, shall be retained in their own country, just as to-day we in Britain are striving might and main to keep within our own shores whatever wealth we are able to create.

If I have made this clear, I think I can go a step further and make the House

understand that when the All-India Congress party demands control of finance, and control of the army, it is really asking for something which in all justice must sooner or later be conceded, and I hope "sooner" will be the word adopted. Some representatives of the All-India Congress are going home quite unsatisfied. No one in this House can foretell what will happen on the return of Mr. Gandhi and his friends. It is said that already non-co-operation is being organised, and that boycott and passive resistance are being prepared. I have no authority or right to speak definitely on these matters, but I am terrified at the thought of any attempt on the part of the home Government or the Indian Government to suppress the Congress. I cannot without dire distress agree with the position that this Parliament must accept the present coercion or an extension of the powers of repression.

We are sending out Sir John Anderson as Governor of Bengal. I know that he is looked upon in India with suspicion—*[Interruption]*—because of his association with the Home Office, and because he served in Ireland during the worst period of the Sinn Fein troubles. I have known him only a very short time. He is a courteous, high-minded public servant, and I am certain that he will carry out his duties in as humane a manner as is possible, but we must face the truth that violence begets violence and that Satan cannot cast out Satan. We all know that evil begets evil. I hope that when Sir John Anderson gets to Bengal he will be able to follow the lead of Lord Irwin, the greatest Viceroy that India has ever had, and keep in mind the fact that force is no remedy, not even for civil disobedience, and that as Governor there he will be not only responsible for law and order but also for doing his utmost so to advise the home Government that the causes which lead to disorder may be removed.

I wish, if my words reach them, to say to my friends in India that while we of the Labour party can give them sympathy and what help our propaganda amongst British people brings, we cannot assist them in defence of violence or law breaking. We should be untrue to ourselves and our convictions if we were for a moment to encourage people thousands of miles away from us to endure the

suffering and misery which violence and disorder brings, while we rest safely at home. The responsibility for their actions must rest on them. I am in no position to advise, but I would implore every friend of mine in India and everyone in any position of authority to believe that our nation is sincere and, given the time, will see that justice is done. I also want to say to the Government that we on these benches cannot stand simply for coercion. The history of our own country, in fact the history of the human race, proves what futile folly it is merely to rely on force. Mr. Gladstone, on a famous occasion when dealing with Irish disorders, said that the resources of civilisation were not exhausted. Immediately afterwards the Irish Land League was suppressed. Mr. Parnell and the leaders were flung into prison but, as is well known, this lasted only a very short time. The Kilmainham Treaty was signed and the Land League again functioned. Do not let us forget that when the men were put into prison in Ireland the women took their places. I beg the House to bear in mind the fact that this has also happened in India. Women of all sections, daughters, wives and sisters of princes, merchants, labourers and peasants, banded themselves together in a women's movement to take the place of Gandhi, Nehru and others when these leaders were recently sent to prison.

I want to make an appeal to the Prime Minister, although it may appear a hopeless proposition. I make it without any communication with Mr. Gandhi on the subject. I would appeal to the Prime Minister once again to see Mr. Gandhi and to use his persuasive powers to make that great man understand that the differences between us are not and shall not be insurmountable. Do not let the House imagine that I am in any doubt as to the power of Great Britain to hold India down by brute force. If it is to be a fight between the Congress and ourselves, Britain for a time may be victorious but the power of the terrible meek who use passive resistance will break us. Public opinion in the world will not permit either the British Government or Mr. Gandhi to stagger humanity. There is a grave and terrible responsibility on both sides because of consequences too terrible for any of

[Mr. Lansbury.] us to contemplate. Some more excellent way must be discovered. Therefore, I appeal to the Prime Minister once more to approach Mr. Gandhi, not through the Secretary of State but himself. [Laughter.] I am sure the right hon. Gentleman will understand that I do not mean that in any offensive way. It has been stated publicly that Mr. Gandhi is very fond of the right hon. Gentleman.

If the Prime Minister would himself invite Mr. Gandhi to meet him it might have some effect. [Interruption.] At the risk of rousing the hilarity of hon. Members below the Gangway, I want to remind the Prime Minister of the story of the man who wrestled with an angel, and who said, "I will not let thee go." If both these men were inspired by that thought much bloodshed might be avoided. I am a firm believer in the union of the British Dominions. I have a great faith that India will become one of the foremost partners, that together with her we shall start on the road to the federation of the world. We are torn and distracted in Europe because of our economic difficulties. We may chide and jibe at Indians, but we have not yet discovered the real way of life. We are only struggling towards the dawn. Asia, after centuries, is awakening. Millions of people are awakening to new visions of what life should be. The new wine is bursting the old bottles. [Interruption.] We have done great things in the past; and we are not played out. Our course now lies along another road. We have to substitute comradeship, brotherhood and co-operation, in place of domination and imperialism, and in dealing with our Indian comrades remember that India is their country, their motherland, which they love as we love Britain. I believe that those who are young will work this transformation.

Whatever the result may be it is not worth while this great country of ours embarking on a policy to hold India which may mean bloodshed and slaughter, or even economic stagnation and ruin. It will be better that we should take up our belongings and leave the country. [Interruption.] I do not want this to happen. There is a more excellent way; prompt negotiations, prompt settlement. Once or twice in this Debate hon. Mem-

bers have mentioned Rome. Do not forget that the Roman conquerors came here, settled down, and for four centuries administered the affairs of Britain; created a civilisation. In their day they were powerful beyond measure—I think even more powerful than ourselves. But Rome fell. A writer has said:

"Rome had great qualities, great and good men, yet she fell. What did she lack? She has left us a shining example of strength, endurance, courage, and justice, attention to duty. Where did she fail? She lacked just what we lack ourselves, the true idea of unity, the true ideal of universal love, without which all other greatness profiteth nothing."

Are we just beginning to learn that the true walls, which alone can preserve our nation and Empire from destruction and decay, which do insure its stability, are not walls of brick or stone, or armies, or dreadnoughts, aeroplanes or submarines, but the great moral and spiritual qualities, high aspirations— [Interruption.]

**Mr. MAXTON:** The Tory party knows nothing about moral and spiritual qualities.

**Mr. LANSBURY:**—an ideal of unity, which views the whole world as one, faced by one common enemy, and sees that, with the nation as with the individual, true greatness consists in humility and willingness to serve. The writer concludes:

"Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise."

[Interruption.] I just want to say this in conclusion: The House has done with me what, in the whole period that I have sat in that Gallery, since I was a boy of 15, I have never seen done before. I have never heard any speaker treated with the absolute contempt that I have received. I think I was entitled to some protection. Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. I did not appeal for it. The behaviour of this House to-night is a disgrace to any assembly. I have no sort of feeling about those who have treated me like this. The British public can decide. I have quoted from two writers. It is probable that the men who have interrupted me have never heard of them. It is quite possible that those who have jeered never knew that India had the civilisation of

which I have spoken. But the people in the Gallery who have witnessed this scene will judge the action of the people who hold their destinies in their hands.

**The LORD PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Mr. Baldwin):** The Debate, which has now lasted for two days, has been one of singular interest both from the subject itself and from the merit and quality of many of the speeches which have been delivered. We have had an unusual number of maiden speeches, many of which have delighted the House by the promise they showed of future eminence in this Chamber. We have had a most interesting and valuable contribution from my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Sir A. Chamberlain), himself at one time Secretary of State for India. I think that the Debate has been worthy of the subject, and I shall do the best I can, in the short time that I shall occupy, in maintaining its character. At this period of Debate it is not possible nor desirable to make an eloquent speech. What is wanted is to pick up two or three of the points which deserve consideration, and to make some observations upon the position which awaits the House and the decision which the House is asked to take.

With regard to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken, there was but one question that he asked. He read a kind of paraphrase of paragraph 2 of the White Paper. My short answer to him is this: I think it would be better for him to read again paragraph 2 and to assume that it means exactly what it says. What it sets forth in about three words is a federal Constitution, with safeguards as an essential party to the Constitution. There should be no mistake about that.

I want, if I may, to note one or two points before I proceed with my speech, which were raised by my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill). It is a great tribute to the importance of this Debate that two of the most remarkable men, one belonging to the East and one to the West have each postponed their voyage across the seas to await the result of this Division, one going home into the sun-baked East, and the other going to cross the stormy

winter ocean to the palpitating publicity of the new Republic. I am glad for one, that my right hon. Friend has postponed his voyage, because though to-night, again, I am sorry to say that we find ourselves differing from each other, I do not think anything that passes between us is going to affect our friendship. I have watched him for some time, holding the deep convictions that he does on this Indian question, and I am quite sure that all he said to-day reflects quite sincerely what has been in his mind for a long time past. So soaked has he lately been in Indian problems that, while I sometimes think how impossible it would be for Mr. Gandhi to deliver that speech which he delivered this afternoon yet at the same time I find it equally impossible to visualise him as the Lama in "Kim" sitting under a banyan tree with his faithful *Chela* from North Paddington, engaged in deep and holy converse as to whether they can keep silence for 24 hours or not.

There are two points which my right hon. Friend mentioned and which I think it my duty to note. I take, first, the second point which he raised. He said, I regret to say—I think perhaps in a moment of high emotion—that at one time in this House—I was not clear when—it was put about by the Whips that agreement would never be reached between Indians. That, so far as my knowledge goes, is an invention. I consulted the present Chief Whip, and he denies all knowledge of it. If things are put about discreetly as they are put about, the leader of a party generally knows what is going on. Nothing of the kind has been done. I mention that, because I do hope that, whatever statements may appear in the Indian Press, quoting my right hon. Friend, they may equally quote what I have just said.

The second point on which I would like to pause for a moment is this. He spoke of my friendship with Lord Irwin, and with the present Prime Minister, and I think he implied by that, that it was through these evil associations that I had led the Tory Party into wrong paths on Indian matters. That is what I understood. I may say, incidentally, that I have had my critics for my friendship with my right hon. Friend, but I preserve the liberty of every hon. Member

[Mr. Baldwin.]  
to choose my friends where I like. Well, it is a curious thing, but, if 10.30 p.m. what my right hon. Friend says is right, I must be a very different man from my reputation. I do not often read about myself in the Press, but I have gathered through several years that I am a feeble creature, amiable, but always apt to be pushed aside and overborne by stronger characters; and yet he speaks as though I had snatched the Tory party, as a brand from the burning, from his clutches. There is some mistake somewhere, but, wherever the truth may lie, I am still here.

All I would say about by leadership on the Indian question is this: I was anxious two years ago as to the line which our party would take on the Indian question. I believed that the one course was the only one for a progressive party—and a party must be progressive to live. I believed that the other course led to the destruction of the party. Hence it was that I made a speech, just two years ago, which I knew at the time did not commend itself to my right hon. Friend, because I saw that he sat silent through it and that he cheered the speech which followed mine by the right hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs (Mr. Lloyd George). He has confessed that that right hon. Gentleman has completely changed his view since then, but I am exactly of the same opinion that I held two years ago. I think it only right, looking back to that night, to tell this House, and perhaps particularly the older Members of the House, that I received a letter two days after I made that speech in such warm and generous terms that I have hardly shown it to a single friend of mine, but it endorsed everything that I said. It finished with these words:

“It is a delight to me to think that on a subject which has so greatly occupied the thoughts of my declining years it has fallen to you, as Leader of the party, to give utterance in fitting language to great thoughts on the greatest of subjects. Yours ever, Balfour.”

I discussed this whole Indian question with Lord Balfour about that time, and he told me then that he agreed with every word I had said in that particular speech; and I felt that, if that was so, at all events I had a great sanction behind me in try-

ing at that time to give the lead which I did give to the party.

I will say a few words about the situation in which we find ourselves to-night. I listened to the speech of my hon. and learned Friend the Member for Swindon (Sir R. Banks)—one point of this was also touched upon by my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping—stressing the terms of the Statute, of the Government of Indian Act, and expressing, not the fear, but regret that the Government and the previous Government had gone outside those terms in inviting the Conference to come to London. It seems to me that what happened is no unusual thing in this country. We have very seldom committed anything connected with our Constitution into writing, and the attempt to do that, to commit the imponderable and intangible into a Statute, was what we all of us felt went a little against the grain. The great secret of our political strength is that from our own political experience we have a flexibility in meeting situations as they arise, and with that usual sound instinct, as the years went by, we felt that we ought to add the Conference to the lines that we laid down in that Statute. It is a curious thing, but it has been the pride of the political theorists in our own country, and particularly of the Liberal political theorists of past generations, to be at the greatest pains to educate Indians in our political theories and in the study of democratic institutions, and I have no doubt that it was done largely with a view to bringing our various races together by a sympathetic understanding of political principles.

The results have not been entirely what those who embarked on them could have foreseen. It is from that teaching that the demand for democracy has come, and not from our imposing it upon them as my hon. and gallant Friend the Member for Bournemouth (Sir H. Croft) would have us believe. The difficulty of our position is this: Having given them this education for two or three generations, having encouraged their students to come to Oxford, Cambridge and London, are we to turn round on India and say, “While it is quite true we taught you all this political theory, after all, democracy is for us, and not for you”? It is an impossible position, and you have to remember that an essential and inherent

factor in democracy is the consent of the governed, without which democracy cannot function. You must gain that consent, and that is the basic idea of proceeding by conference.

Has the Round Table Conference after all been a failure? I say "No." It is true that it has not reached anything cut and dried, and that there is a great deal to be done yet, but it has done one or two things that wanted doing. It has brought together the English in India and the Indians more closely than they have been brought together yet, and that is a good thing for the future. It has taught us a lot, and it has taught the Indians a lot, and that is to the good. Now that both sides are getting into contact with realities, and beginning to realise the difficulties of realities, that I believe in itself will bring them closer. Here I should like to touch on something which my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham said. I do hope that as discussions proceed in India we may find that contributions of value may come from the Indian side. After all, we in the rapidity of the progress of our democracy have practically destroyed rural life in England; at any rate, we have sacrificed it to the urban. India is a country still where village life is predominant. May it be their good fortune to remember that, and may it help them to frame their constitution as not necessarily a constitution which would suit this country, but a constitution in which that village life may play that great part in that continent that it ought to have done in this country. We have got to the point that we have reached with still a practical unity of parties. The House is probably well aware that I have, for various reasons that I need not elaborate to-night, always laid great stress on the importance of that. There is a well-known observation of Leckie; it is known to most of us, but I will give it to the House again.

"I think it is very true that party must exist, that it must be maintained as an essential condition of good government, but it must be subordinated to the public interest, and in the public interest it must be in many cases suspended. They are subjects which cannot be introduced without the gravest danger into the arena of party controversy. Indian politics are a conspicuous example."

I believe that to be absolutely true, and I want to pay tribute, here in this House,

to the delegates from all three parties who have worked for months and months through the two Conferences. They have worked together, on the whole, with great harmony, they have put an immense amount of labour into it, and I think the thanks and gratitude of this House are due to them all, and certainly to the Liberal and Socialist representatives. It is quite true that in this matter, as in all other political matters, you have extremists on both sides, and extremists, too, who are perfectly honest in their convictions. I can gather from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman that he has extremists in his party who would go to a point which, in my view, might easily lead to anarchy, and, again in my view, would be the most deadly thing which could happen to any part of India having regard to her future, and particularly the prospects of her political future—a disastrous thing from every point of view. Equally we have on the other side men who regret that the Montagu reforms ever took place and who would, if they could, put the clock back under that Section of the Government of India Act which has been quoted.

I listened last night to a new Member, my hon. Friend the Member for the English Universities (Sir R. Craddock). Men who hold those opinions and hold them honestly would be fully justified, in my view, in voting at any time against the Government on a Resolution of this kind, because they cannot honestly support it—they cannot do it. But I do say that not only the bulk of this House but the bulk of the country are with the Government in the course they are pursuing. I think the vote to-night will show it, and I am perfectly certain that if it were possible to put a referendum to the country it would show it too. But, after all, this whole Indian question is much more a question for the younger men than it is for most of us who sit on this bench. My hon. Friend the Member for the English Universities and myself cannot look forward to many more years of active politics. The day will come when even my right hon. Friend will feel that he will have to lessen his activities—I hope not yet. The day will come, also, when many Members, particularly among the new Members, who may well have half a century yet before them, will see what the new development of the British

[Mr. Baldwin.]

Empire is going to be, and what is going to be the position in relation to that Empire of the great Indian Empire.

There is no problem in the world to-day of more vital interest to us, to India, and to the whole world, and I must say there is none more fascinating, from its very difficulty, and from the romance that attends all that is concerned with India; and were I to be able to put my own clock back, which I do not want to do, if I were 40 years of age again, there is no task I would more willingly undertake than that now undertaken by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for India. To-day what we ask for is the approval of this House of the general lines on which the Government are going to proceed. I would say here a word on the speech last night of my right hon. Friend. It was stated by himself last night, and I say it again on his authority, that there is no difference of any kind between what he said and what is contained in the White Paper. He spoke for 40 minutes, and the Prime Minister spoke for 20 minutes. Naturally a man who speaks for 40 minutes says more than a man who speaks for 20 minutes, and his speech was the White Paper and the White Paper was my right hon. Friend's speech. I would like to say something in answer to a question put to me by the hon. Member for Kidderminster (Mr. Wardlaw-Milne), whose speech I regret to say I did not hear. He asked about the transitional period, and how long it will last. At this moment no one can say. What they can say is that it will last just as long as it is the will of Parliament that it should last. If and when that constitution is set up nothing in that constitution will be relaxed without the assent of Parliament.

With regard to the committees of which something has been said, they will be Government committees, and in each case where a committee is set up the names and the terms of reference will be announced in this House. Reports of their work will be published when they return and their work is done. Such reports would be available in due course for Parliamentary discussion. All I can say is that I hope it will not be long before my right hon. Friend will be in a position to give the House such facts

as he will be in possession of with regard to the first one or two of these committees. One more observation on something that fell from the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Epping. I think the right hon. Gentleman was a little confused about the way in which the Motion is put from the Chair. If I may anticipate, Mr. Speaker, in a case of this kind, always puts the words of the Amendment, reads them, and says, "The Question is that those words be there added."

What I want to say is this, as it was put by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham: When the Government put down a Motion of this kind, odd as it may seem, and I do not pretend to justify it, it is the acknowledged practice of this House that any Motion to add words or subtract them is taken as a vote of censure on the Government, and therefore it is hardly open to anyone who would be willing to accept the words of the Resolution to vote at the same time for a vote of censure. As I said before, men who are so deeply convinced that any attempt in the direction of democratic government is wrong and should be protested against in this House, those men, if they are honest to their own convictions, must vote against this. There is no question about that, but I hope that those who are not convinced that that is the right course will think once or twice before they allow themselves to censure the Government for what, possibly in the next Division, they may be supporting, because the position would then be somewhat ridiculous.

With regard to the course that we propose to pursue, I agree that no man can say now whether success will crown our efforts or not, but we can continue our labours, and use our experience and our sympathy to the utmost to bring our efforts to a successful conclusion, and to help India to help herself. It all depends, as my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said, on the spirit in which we enter on this great work. India calls to-day more than ever for the best we have to offer in men. The task is so hard. It was a simple thing to work in India before the War compared with what it is to-day. Courage and statesmanship are called for as they never were before, but the alternative to proceeding as I have

said, would be to proceed with your mind made up that nothing but failure awaits you. To enter on this work in that spirit would be neither honest nor wise. We are going forward with a full realisation of the gravity of the problem, with a full realisation of its difficulties, but with the will and the intention to succeed, and to support our will and intention, we want to be fortified by a large majority of our fellow Members of this House, who in their turn represent, after a most remarkable election, the people of these islands, that we may send a message forth to the world that, at any rate, all that courage, perseverance and good will can do, we will do. Give us our mandate to-night, and wish us well in the most difficult task that anyone in this Empire has ever tried to undertake.

**Mr. BALFOUR:** The right hon. Gentleman, the most respected leader of the party to which I belong, has, in my opinion, in the concluding speech of a Debate of this kind taken rather an unfair advantage of the fact that there are so many young and inexperienced Members in this House. He has put before us the view that anyone voting for this Amendment is voting against an extension of a democratic form of government in India. I do not think it was quite fair or reasonable in a concluding speech, well knowing that there was no likelihood of any answer, unless perhaps one of the old Members would dare to get up to express himself. I want to put this to the newly-joined Members of the House. You are dealing to-night with a great constitutional issue. My right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Sir A. Chamberlain) said that it was no use crying over spilt milk, or "jobbing back," but to-night we are not crying about spilt milk, we are spilling milk to-night. [*Interruption.*] It is all very well, because you do not agree with my opinions, to laugh at them. If there were time—if we had two more days allowed for this Debate—to allow all Members to express their views, you would perhaps come to different conclusions.

What is the real truth of this position? A day was asked for for this Debate, and, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Epping (Mr. Churchill) said, it would in the ordinary course have been a Debate on the Motion for Adjournment. We also asked that His Majesty's Government

should state in this House and give a declaration of their policy. Why is it that the declaration of policy was given just a day or two before this Debate took place, and we are to have no alternative at all but to give a blessing to a declaration which was made, not by parties discussing a treaty, but at a Round Table Conference, and we are not allowed to say "No"? It is put to us, and by this we are fixed for the future, and our policy regarding India is fixed for the future. My view is, as far as I have been able to judge, held by a large number of the newly elected Members of this House, though no doubt they will feel compelled out of loyalty to vote with the Government, but what is the real opinion of the people outside in relation to this position?

I ask right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Bench what is the first duty of statesmen. It is to interpret in this House what they really understand and know and believe to be the spirit expressed by the people outside. What is the spirit of the people outside? Is it in favour of this legislation? At any rate, let the Government come before this House reinforced with the knowledge that they have this issue before the House, and that they have explored it in this House, so that the people outside might have a reasonable opportunity of understanding what it is that is placed before us. Has that been done? This is the last opportunity that the people outside have of understanding this issue, and how long an opportunity has been given in the last five years? What chance has there been of the people of this country understanding the issue that we are deciding to-night in this House, with hardly any Debate?

The Prime Minister, in his opening speech, laid it down that this Resolution must be passed or it would be a vote of no confidence in the Government. In what circumstances were the Government elected? They were elected as a National Government, and we all give them loyal support, in order to deal with the crisis at the present moment. Is it urgent that this declaration made to the Round Table Conference should be hurled at our heads to-night? I say most decidedly "No," and I say it is an abuse of the rights and privileges of the Members of the House of Commons for



[Mr. Balfour.]  
the Prime Minister of a National Government, willingly given support by all of us and entrusted with powers by the people of this country to do certain things—to rescue us in this crisis and not to deal with these matters. The Statute of Westminster was hurled at our heads the other day, and this matter is hurled at our heads now. If this is to continue, this National Government can exist for

but a short time—[*Interruption.*] I beg and implore the Prime Minister to try to give us these pet hobbies of his, which are being given effect to by support of this National Government, which was elected for entirely other objects.

Question put, "That those words be there added."

The House divided: Ayes, 43; Noes, 369.

## Division No. 30.]

## AYES.

[11.0 p.m.]

Applin, Lieut.-Col. Reginald V. K.  
Balfour, George (Hampstead)  
Blaker, Sir Reginald  
Boyd-Carpenter, Sir Archibald  
Broadbent, Colonel John  
Caine, G. R. Hall-  
Carver, Major William H.  
Chalmers, John Rutherford  
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston Spencer  
Courtauld, Major John Sewell  
Craddock, Sir Reginald Henry  
Croft, Brigadier-General Sir H.  
Davison, Sir William Henry  
Dixey, Arthur C. N.  
Emmott, Charles E. G. C.  
Everard, W. Lindsay

Ganzoni, Sir John  
Graham, Fergus (Cumberland, N.)  
Greene, William P. C.  
Gretton, Colonel Rt. Hon. John  
Gritten, W. G. Howard  
Hamilton, Sir George (Ilford)  
Henderson, Capt. R. R. (Oxf'd, Henfey)  
Kimball, Lawrence  
Lennox-Boyd, A. T.  
Levy, Thomas  
Lymington, Viscount  
Marjoribanks, Edward  
Moore, Lt.-Col. Thomas C. R. (Ayr)  
Nall, Sir Joseph  
Nicholson, Rt. Hon. W. G. (Peters'fld)  
Oman, Sir Charles William C.

Purbrick, R.  
Raikes, Hector Victor Alpin  
Rankin, Robert  
Remer, John R.  
Sandeman, Sir A. N. Stewart  
Smiles, Lieut.-Col. Sir Walter D.  
Stewart, William J.  
Wayland, Sir William A.  
Wilson, Clyde T. (West Toxteth)  
Wise, Alfred R.  
Wolmer, Rt. Hon. Viscount

TELLERS FOR THE AYES.—  
Major-General Sir Alfred Knox and  
Mr. Hannon.

## NOES.

Adams, D. M. (Poplar, South)  
Adams, Samuel Vyvyan T. (Leeds, W.)  
Agnew, Lieut.-Com. P. G.  
Albery, Irving James  
Allen, Maj. J. Sandeman (B'k'n'h'd, W.)  
Allen, William (Stoke-on-Trent)  
Amery, Rt. Hon. Leopold C. M. S.  
Anstruther-Gray, W. J.  
Apsley, Lord  
Aske, Sir William Robert  
Astorbury, Lieut.-Com. Frederick Wolfe  
Astor, Maj. Hn. John J. (Kent, Dover)  
Attlee, Clement Richard  
Baillie, Sir Adrian W. B.  
Baldwin, Rt. Hon. Stanley  
Baldwin-Webb, Colonel J.  
Bainiel, Lord  
Banks, Sir Reginald Mitchell  
Barrie, Sir Charles Coupar  
Barton, Capt. Basil Kelsey  
Batey, Joseph  
Beauchamp, Sir Brograve Campbell  
Beaumont, R. E. B. (Portsmouth, Centr'l)  
Benn, Sir Arthur Shirley  
Bennett, Capt. Sir Ernest Nathaniel  
Bernays, Robert  
Betterton, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry B.  
Bevan, Aneurin (Ebbw Vale)  
Bevan, Stuart James (Holborn)  
Birchall, Major Sir John Dearman  
Bird, Ernest Roy (Yorks., Skipton)  
Blindell, James  
Borodale, Viscount  
Bossom, A. C.  
Boulton, W. W.  
Bowler, Capt. Sir George E. W.  
Braithwaite, J. G. (Hillsborough)  
Brass, Captain Sir William  
Briant, Frank  
Briscoe, Richard George  
Brocklebank, C. E. R.  
Brown, C. W. E. (Notts., Mansfield)  
Brown, Ernest (Leith)  
Brown, Brig.-Gen. H. C. (Berks., Newb'y)  
Buchan, John  
Buchan-Hepburn, P. G. T.

Burghley, Lord  
Burgin, Dr. Edward Leslie  
Butler, Richard Austen  
Cadogan, Major Hon. Edward  
Campbell, Edward Taswell (Bromley)  
Campbell, Rear-Adm. G. (Burnley)  
Campbell-Johnston, Malcolm  
Capc, Thomas  
Caporn, Arthur Cecil  
Cassels, James Dale  
Castlereagh, Viscount  
Castle Stewart, Earl  
Cautley, Sir Henry S.  
Cayzer, Sir Charles (Chester, City)  
Cazalet, Thelma (Islington, E.)  
Cazalet, Capt. V. A. (Chippenham)  
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. Sir J. A. (Birm., W.)  
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. N. (Edgbaston)  
Chapman, Col. R. (Houghton-le-Spring)  
Chorlton, Alan Ernest Leofric  
Chotzner, Alfred James  
Clarke, Frank  
Clayton, Dr. George C.  
Cocks, Frederick Seymour  
Colfox, Major William Philip  
Collins, Sir Godfrey  
Colman, N. C. D.  
Conant, R. J. E.  
Cook, Thomas A.  
Cooke, James D.  
Cooper, A. Duff  
Copeland, Ida  
Courthope, Colonel Sir George L.  
Cranborne, Viscount  
Craven-Ellis, William  
Cripps, Sir Stafford  
Crooke, J. Smedley  
Crookshank, Col. C. de Windt (Bootle)  
Crookshank, Capt. H. C. (Gainsb'ro)  
Cross, R. H.  
Crossley, A. C.  
Culverwell, Cyril Tom  
Curry, A. C.  
Daggar, George  
Davidson, Rt. Hon. J. C. C.  
Davies, David L. (Pontypridd)

Davies, Edward C. (Montgomery)  
Davies, Maj. Geo. F. (Somerset, Yeovil)  
Davies, Rhys John (Westhoughton)  
Denman, Hon. R. D.  
Denville, Alfred  
Dickie, John P.  
Eeran, Edward  
Duckworth, George A. V.  
Dugdale, Captain Thomas Lionel  
Duggan, Hubert John  
Duncan, Charles (Derby, Claycross)  
Duncan, James A. L. (Kensington, N.)  
Eales, John Frederick  
Eden, Robert Anthony  
Edmondson, Major A. J.  
Edwards, Charles  
Elliot, Major Walter E.  
Ellis, Robert Geoffrey  
Elmley, Viscount  
Emrys-Evans, P. V.  
Entwistle, Major Cyril Fullard  
Erskine, Lord (Weston-super-Mare)  
Essenhigh, Reginald Clare  
Evans, Capt. Ernest (Welsh Univ.)  
Foot, Dingle (Dundee)  
Foot, Isaac (Cornwall, Bodmin)  
Fraser, Captain Ian  
Fremantle, Lieut.-Colonel Francis E.  
Fuller, Captain A. E. G.  
Gault, Lieut.-Col. A. Hamilton  
Gillett, Sir George Masterman  
Gledhill, Gilbert  
Glossop, C. W. H.  
Gluckstein, Louis Halle  
Glyn, Major Ralph G. C.  
Goodman, Colonel Albert W.  
Graham, D. M. (Lanark, Hamilton)  
Graville, Edgar  
Grattan-Doyle, Sir Nicholas  
Graves, Marjorie  
Grenfell, David Rees (Glamorgan)  
Griffith, F. Kingsley (Middlesbro', W.)  
Griffiths, T. (Monmouth, Pontypool)  
Grimston, R. V.  
Groves, Thomas E.  
Guy, J. C. Morrison

Hacking, Rt. Hon. Douglas H.  
 Hales, Harold K.  
 Hall, George H. (Merthyr Tydvil)  
 Hamilton, Sir R. W. (Orkney & Zetland)  
 Hanbury, Cecil  
 Hanley, Dennis A.  
 Harris, Percy A.  
 Harvey, Major S. E. (Devon, Totnes)  
 Haslam, Sir John (Bolton)  
 Headlam, Lieut.-Col. Cuthbert M.  
 Heilgers, Captain F. F. A.  
 Heneage, Lieut.-Colonel Arthur P.  
 Hicks, Ernest George  
 Hillman, Dr. George B.  
 Hoare, Lt.-Col. Rt. Hon. Sir S. J. G.  
 Holdsworth, Herbert  
 Hope, Capt. Arthur O. J. (Aston)  
 Hope, Sydney (Chester, Stalybridge)  
 Hopkinson, Austin  
 Horobin, Ian M.  
 Horsbrugh, Florence  
 Howard, Tom Forrest  
 Howitt, Dr. Alfred B.  
 Hudson, Capt. A. U. M. (Hackney, N.)  
 Hudson, Robert Spear (Southport)  
 Hume, Sir George Hopwood  
 Hunter-Weston, Lt.-Gen. Sir Aylmer  
 Hurd, Percy A.  
 Hurst, Sir Gerald B.  
 Hutchison, Maj.-Gen. Sir R. (Montr'ise)  
 Hutchison, W. D. (Essex, Romford)  
 Inskip, Sir Thomas W. H.  
 Jackson, Sir Henry (Wandsworth, C.)  
 James, Wing-Com. A. W. H.  
 Janner, Barnett  
 Jenkins, Sir William  
 Jennings, Roland  
 Joel, Dudley J. Barnato  
 John, William  
 Johnstone, Harcourt (S. Shields)  
 Jones, J. J. (West Ham, Silvertown)  
 Jones, Lewis (Swansea, West)  
 Jones, Morgan (Caerphilly)  
 Ker, J. Campbell  
 Kerr, Hamilton W.  
 Kirkpatrick, William M.  
 Knatchbull, Captain Hon. M. H. R.  
 Knebworth, Viscount  
 Knight, Holford  
 Lamb, Sir Joseph Quinton  
 Lambert, Rt. Hon. George  
 Lansbury, Rt. Hon. George  
 Law, Richard K. (Hull, S.W.)  
 Lawson, John James  
 Leckie, J. A.  
 Leech, Dr. J. W.  
 Leighton, Major B. E. P.  
 Lewis, Oswald  
 Lister, Rt. Hon. Sir Phillip Cunliffe-  
 Little, Graham, Sir Ernest  
 Llewellyn-Jones, Frederick  
 Lloyd, Geoffrey  
 Locker-Lampson, Rt. Hon. G. (Wd. Gr'n)  
 Lockwood, John C. (Hackney, C.)  
 Loder, Captain J. de Vere  
 Logan, David Gilbert  
 Lumley, Captain Lawrence R.  
 Lunn, William  
 Mabane, William  
 MacAndrew, Capt. J. O. (Ayr)  
 MacCorquodale, M. S.  
 Macdonald, Gordon (Ince)  
 MacDonald, Rt. Hon. J. R. (Seaham)  
 MacDonald, Malcolm (Bassetlaw)  
 McEntee, Valentine L.  
 McEwen, J. H. F.  
 McKie, John Hamilton  
 MacLay, Hon. Joseph Paton  
 McLean, Major Alan  
 Maclean, Rt. Hon. Sir D. (Cornhill N.)  
 Maclean, Nell (Glasgow, Govan)  
 McLean, Dr. W. H. (Tradeston)  
 Maitland, Adam  
 Makins, Brigadier-General Ernest  
 Mallalieu, Edward Lancelot  
 Mander, Geoffrey le M.  
 Manningham-Buller, Lt.-Col. Sir M.  
 Marsden, Commander Arthur  
 Martin, Thomas B.  
 Mason, David M. (Edinburgh, E.)  
 Mayhew, Lieut.-Colonel John  
 Meller, Richard James  
 Merriman, Sir F. Boyd  
 Mills, Sir Frederick  
 Milne, John Sydney Wardlaw-  
 Milner, Major James  
 Mitcheson, G. G.  
 Molson, A. Harold Elsdale  
 Monsell, Rt. Hon. Sir B. Eyres  
 Moore-Brabazon, Lieut.-Col. J. T. C.  
 Moreing, Adrian C.  
 Morgan, Robert H.  
 Morris, John Patrick (Salford, N.)  
 Morris, Owen Temple (Cardiff, E.)  
 Morris, Rhys Hopkin (Cardigan)  
 Morris-Jones, Dr. J. H. (Denbigh)  
 Morrison, William Shephard  
 Muirhead, Major A. J.  
 Munro, Patrick  
 Nation, Brigadier-General J. J. H.  
 Nicholson, Godfrey (Morpeth)  
 Normand, Wilfrid Guild  
 North, Captain Edward T.  
 O'Connor, Terence James  
 O'Donovan, Dr. William James  
 O'Neill, Rt. Hon. Sir Hugh  
 Ormsby-Gore, Rt. Hon. William G. A.  
 Palmer, Francis Noel  
 Patrick, Colin M.  
 Peake, Captain Osbert  
 Pearson, William G.  
 Peat, Charles U.  
 Penny, Sir George  
 Percy, Lord Eustace  
 Peters, Dr. Sidney John  
 Petherick, M.  
 Pickford, Hon. Mary Ada  
 Pike, Cecil F.  
 Potter, John  
 Powell, Lieut.-Col. Evelyn G. H.  
 Pownall, Sir Assheton  
 Price, Gabriel  
 Pybus, Percy John  
 Ramsay, Alexander (W. Bromwich)  
 Ramsay, T. B. W. (Western Isles)  
 Ramsbotham, Herswald  
 Ramsden, E.  
 Ratcliffe, Arthur  
 Rathbone, Eleanor  
 Reed, Arthur C. (Exeter)  
 Reid, James S. C. (Stirling)  
 Reid, William Allan (Derby)  
 Rentoul, Sir Gervais S.  
 Renwick, Major Gustav A.  
 Rhys, Hon. Charles Arthur U.  
 Roberts, Aled (Wrexham)  
 Robinson, John Roland  
 Rodd, Rt. Hon. Sir James Rennell  
 Ropner, Colonel L.  
 Ross Taylor, Walter (Woodbridge)  
 Rothschild, James L. de  
 Runciman, Rt. Hon. Walter  
 Runge, Norah Cecil  
 Russell, Albert (Kirkcaldy)  
 Russell, Alexander West (Tynemouth)  
 Russell, Hamer Field (Sheffield, B'tside)  
 Russell, Richard John (Eddisbury)  
 Rutherford, Sir John Hugo  
 Salmon, Major Isidore  
 Saft, Edward W.  
 Salter, Dr. Alfred  
 Samuel, Rt. Hon. Sir H. (Darwen)  
 Samuel, Samuel (Wid'sworth, Putney)  
 Sassoon, Rt. Hon. Sir Philip A. G. D.  
 Savery, Samuel Servington  
 Selley, Harry R.  
 Shakespeare, Geoffrey H.  
 Shaw, Captain William T. (Forfar)  
 Simon, Rt. Hon. Sir John  
 Sinclair, Maj. Rt. Hon. Sir A. (C'thness)  
 Skelton, Archibald Noel  
 Smith, Louis W. (Sheffield, Hallam)  
 Smith-Carington, Neville W.  
 Somervell, Donald Bradley  
 Soper, Richard  
 Sothoron-Estcourt, Captain T. E.  
 Southby, Commander Archibald R. J.  
 Spears, Brigadier-General Edward L.  
 Spencer, Captain Richard A.  
 Spender-Clay, Rt. Hon. Herbert H.  
 Stanley, Lord (Lancaster, Fylde)  
 Stanley, Hon. O. F. C. (Westmorland)  
 Stevenson, James  
 Stones, James  
 Storey, Samuel  
 Stouton, John J.  
 Strauss, Edward A.  
 Strickland, Captain W. F.  
 Stuart, Lord C. Crichton-  
 Sueter, Rear-Admiral Murray F.  
 Sugden, Sir Wilfrid Hart  
 Summersby, Charles H.  
 Sutcliffe, Harold  
 Taylor, Vice-Admiral E. A. (P'd'd'gt'n, S.)  
 Thomas, Rt. Hon. J. H. (Derby)  
 Thomas, James P. L. (Hereford)  
 Thompson, Luke  
 Thomson, Mitchell, Rt. Hon. Sir W.  
 Tinker, John Joseph  
 Todd, Capt. A. J. K. (B'wick-on-T.)  
 Todd, A. L. S. (Kingswinford)  
 Touche, Gordon Cosmo  
 Train, John  
 Tryon, Rt. Hon. George Clement  
 Turton, Robert Hugh  
 Vaughan-Morgan, Sir Kenyon  
 Wallace, Captain D. E. (Hornsey)  
 Wallace, John (Dunfermline)  
 Ward, Lt.-Col. Sir A. L. (Hull)  
 Warrender, Sir Victor A. G.  
 Watt, Captain George Steven H.  
 Wedderburn, Henry James Scrymgeour-  
 Weymouth, Viscount  
 White, Henry Graham  
 Whiteside, Borras Noel H.  
 Whyte, Jardine Bell  
 Williams, David (Swansea, East)  
 Williams, Edward John (Ogmore)  
 Williams, Dr. John H. (Llanelli)  
 Williams, Thomas (York, Don Valley)  
 Wills, Wilfrid D.  
 Wilson, G. H. A. (Cambridge U.)  
 Windsor-Clive, Lieut.-Colonel George  
 Withers, Sir John James  
 Womersley, Walter James  
 Wood, Rt. Hon. Sir H. Kingsley  
 Wood, Major M. McKenzie (Banff)  
 Worthington, Dr. John V.  
 Young, Rt. Hon. Sir Hilton (S'v'noaks)  
 Young, Ernest J. (Middlesbrough, E.)

TELLERS FOR THE NOES.—  
 Captain Margesson and Mr. Russell  
 Rea.

Main Question put.

The House proceeded to a Division.

Mr. BUCHANAN (seated and covered): On a point of Order. I want

to ask for your guidance Mr. Speaker, seeing that the number of voices in the Division which we have challenged is likely to be small. In the event of your

[Mr. Buchanan.]

not calling the Division and asking the hon. Members implicated to stand up, will you allow those hon. Members to have an opportunity of showing that they think this is a vital issue and of having their names recorded, so that they may indicate their dissent from the majority of the House?

**MR. SPEAKER:** I do not know of any Standing Order by which the names can be recorded. There used to be a Rule of the House by which the names of hon. Members standing up could be recorded, but that Rule was done away with some years ago.

**MR. BUCHANAN:** I do not intend to pursue the point, but I give notice that as soon as possible after Questions I will raise the point again.

*Mr. SPEAKER stated that he thought the Ayes had it; and, on his decision being challenged, it appeared to him that the Division was unnecessary, and he accordingly called upon the Members who supported and who challenged his decision successively to rise in their places, and he declared that the Ayes had it, three Members only who challenged his decision having stood up.*

Resolved,

"That this House approves the Indian Policy of His Majesty's Government as set out in Command Paper, No. 3972 (Indian Round Table Conference), presented to Parliament on 1st December, 1931."

**MR. J. JONES** (seated and covered):  
On a point of Order—

**MR. SPEAKER:** That is only the rule while the House is dividing. If the hon. Member wishes to address me now he must stand up in his place.

**MR. JONES:** I want to ask whether an hon. Member has the right to borrow a hat from people he has been fighting all his life?

#### ESTIMATES.

Ordered,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to examine such of the Estimates presented to this House as may seem fit to the Committee, and to suggest the form in which the Estimates shall be presented for examination, and to report what, if any, economies, consistent with the policy implied in those Estimates, may be effected therein."

Ordered,

"That the Committee do consist of Twenty-eight Members:

Mr. Barclay-Harvey, Mr. Brocklebank, Mr. Butler, Mr. Cadogan, Mr. Cocks, Mr. Daggan, Sir George Gillett, Mr. Hannon, Sir Vivian Henderson, Lieut.-Colonel Heneage, Dr. Hunter, Mr. Campbell Ker, Major Llewellyn, Captain Loder, Captain L. Macdonald, Mr. McEntee, Mr. Maclay, Major McLean, Mr. Magnay, Captain Peake, Mr. Ramsden, Mr. Rhys, Major Salmon, Lieut.-Colonel Spender-Clay, Mr. Strauss, Sir Kenyon Vaughan-Morgan, Mr. Wardlaw-Milne, and Mr. E. J. Williams nominated Members of the Committee."

Ordered,

"That Seven be the quorum."

Ordered,

"That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records, and to sit notwithstanding any Adjournment of the House."

Ordered,

"That the Committee have power, if they so determine, to appoint one or more Sub-committees, and in that event to apportion the subjects referred to the Committee between the Sub-committees, any of which shall have full powers of the undivided Committee, and that Four shall be the quorum of any of the Sub-committees."

Ordered,

"That the Committee do report any evidence taken by the Committee or by any of the Sub-committees to the House."

Ordered,

"That the Committee have power to report from time to time."—[Sir F. Thomson.]

#### ELECTRICITY (SUPPLY) ACTS.

Resolved,

"That the Order made by the Electricity Commissioners and confirmed by the Minister of Transport under Section 7 of the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1919, amending the London and Home Counties Electricity District Order, 1925, which was presented on the 17th day of November, 1931, be approved."

Resolved,

"That the Special Order made by the Electricity Commissioners under the Electricity (Supply) Acts, 1882 to 1928, and confirmed by the Minister of Transport under the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1919, and the Public Works Facilities Act, 1930, in respect of the parish of Pleasley, in the rural district of Blackwell, in the county of Derby, which was presented on the 17th day of November, 1931, be approved."

Resolved,

“That the Special Order made by the Electricity Commissioners under the Electricity (Supply) Acts, 1882 to 1928, and confirmed by the Minister of Transport under the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1919, and the Public Works Facilities Act, 1930 in respect of parts of the rural districts of Alton and Petersfield, in the county of Southampton, and parts of the rural districts of East Preston and Westhampnett, in the administrative county of West Sussex, which was presented on the 10th day of November, 1931, be approved.”

Resolved,

“That the Special Order made by the Electricity Commissioners under the Electricity (Supply) Acts, 1882 to 1928, and confirmed by the Minister of Transport under the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1919, and the Public Works Facilities Act, 1930 in respect of part of the rural district of Fylde, in the county palatine of Lancaster, which was presented on the 10th day of November, 1931, be approved.”

Resolved,

“That the Special Order made by the Electricity Commissioners under the Electricity (Supply) Acts, 1882 to 1928, and confirmed by the Minister of Transport under the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1919, and the Public Works Facilities Act, 1930 for the transfer of the undertaking authorised by the Crediton Electricity Special Order, 1925, which was presented on the 10th day of November, 1931, be approved.”

Resolved,

“That the Special Order made by the Electricity Commissioners under the Electricity (Supply) Acts, 1882 to 1928, and

confirmed by the Minister of Transport under the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1919, and the Public Works Facilities Act, 1930 in respect of the rural district of Bootle and part of the rural district of Whitehaven, in the county of Cumberland, which was presented on the 10th day of November, 1931, be approved.”

Resolved,

“That the Special Order made by the Electricity Commissioners under the Electricity (Supply) Acts, 1882 to 1928, and confirmed by the Minister of Transport under the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1919, and the Public Works Facilities Act, 1930 in respect of part of the rural district of Morpeth, in the county of Northumberland, which was presented on the 10th day of November, 1931, be approved.”

Resolved,

“That the Special Order made by the Electricity Commissioners under the Electricity (Supply) Acts, 1882 to 1928, and confirmed by the Minister of Transport under the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1919, in respect of part of the rural district of Oswestry, in the county of Salop, and part of the rural district of Llanfyllin, in the county of Montgomery, which was presented on the 10th day of November, 1931, be approved.”—[*Mr. Pybus.*]

#### ADJOURNMENT.

Resolved, “That this House do now adjourn.”—[*Captain Margesson.*]

Adjourned accordingly at  
Twenty-two Minutes after Eleven  
o’Clock.

