

Anti Sind Separation Conference

SPEECH OF MUKHI GOBINDRAM PRITAMDAS

Chairman, Reception Committee.

BROTHER DELEGATES,

On behalf of the Reception Committee, allow me to thank you for the great deal of trouble that you have taken in coming from long distance at this time of trying heat to attend this Conference.

1. You all know the purpose for which we have met; and, I am sure, you will agree with me that there is no more vital question affecting the future well-being of Sind than the proposal to separate it from the Bombay Presidency at this time of financial stringency, falling prices and heavy demand on our resources in men and money made by the new conditions arising out of the Barrage. We have times out of number registered out protest against this senseless proposal but so far our efforts have proved unavailing. The Government of India and the All India politicians seem to be too much concerned with the high political issues affecting the whole India to pay any serious attention to the intrinsic merits of the case put forward on behalf of the Moslem separationists of Sind and seem determined to ignore completely the just protests of the Hindus of Sind against the extremely unfair way in which their representations in a matter of life and death to them has been disposed of by the Government of India and His Majesty's Government in England.

I need not recall here the details of the old familiar history of the origin and the course of subsequent history of this question from its inclusion in Mr. Jinnah's 14 points right up to the Sind Conference convened by the Government of

India and presided over by Mr. Brayne of the Indian Finance Department. But a general survey of these events is necessary for the purpose of drawing pointed attention of the All India politicians and the public outside Sind to the extraordinarily unfair way in which this grave question is being dealt with. For a proper appreciation of the *pros* and *cons* of the question, it is necessary to recall to mind the remarkable transformation Sind has undergone during the last 80 years of its administrative connection with Bombay. As the Executive Committee of this Conference have pointed out in their pamphlet on "The True Facts regarding the Separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency" its population has increased by over 300 per cent; its cultivation has extended even more; its canal irrigation has transformed barren lands into smiling fields; its system of education and local self-government has been brought into line with that of advanced Bombay; its residents enjoy in association with the more advanced people of Gujrat, Bombay and Maharashtra the largest measure of self-government that any province has in India; its port of Karachi has risen from a fishing hamlet to a position of approaching equality with Madras, Bombay and Calcutta; financially, it has all along received considerable help from the Presidency; economically, one of the gigantic schemes of irrigation ever undertaken in the history of India has been initiated by the efforts of the Bombay Government and the guarantee of its tax-payers; commercially, most of its leading commercial communities, Europeans, Hindus, Parsis, Khojas have close business and social connections with Bombay; and so strong has grown to be the tie between Sindhis and the people of the other divisions of the Bombay Presidency that to-day the majority of the residents of Karachi, the seat of the Commissioner-in-Sind, speak languages, other than Sindhi. And just at the time when the people of Sind were looking forward to a more rapid economic progress owing to the Sukkur Barrage, and the heavy programme for construction of roads, feeder railways, and a new Barrage at Kotri,

to which the Bombay Government had committed itself, an apple of discord was thrown among the people of Sind by outside politicians who dragged Sind as a pawn in so called "balance of power" between Hindus and Muslims in India, the separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency and its constitution as a separate Province.

2. Eighty years is not a small period in the history of any province or even a nation; and it will, we feel sure, be generally admitted that there should be exceptionally strong reasons for severing the administrative connection that has continued so long and worked so much to the benefit of Sind. The Government of India Act 1919 lays down specific conditions and procedure for effecting territorial changes or for constituting new provinces. These provisions have not been satisfied; instead of these, a short cut was sought by putting the case before the Simon Commission and the Committees attached to it. Undeterred by the movement for the boycott of the Simon Commission, the Sind Hindu Association argued their case against the separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency. The Bombay Committee attached to the Simon Commission were impressed with these arguments and by an overwhelming majority (six to one) including its chairman, Sir Shahnawaz Khan Bhutto, a Sindhi Muslim, came to the conclusion that "the administrative difficulties which have been pointed out by the Bombay Government are real and can not be ignored", and that "for financial reasons alone the proposal is impracticable", and that Sind "must, in order to secure this advantage (full provincial autonomy), continue a part of Bombay Presidency". Far from being impressed by the so called geographical isolation of Sind from Bombay, the Bombay Committee definitely stated that "with the changes which have taken place during the last few years, the delegation of powers (under the Sind Commissioner's Act) is no longer necessary" and recommended that "Sind Commissioner should be placed on the same footing as divisional Commissioners in the rest of the Presidency". The Simon

Commission, though misled into believing that "the ordinary method by which, whether for the purposes of business or Government, one passes between Bombay and Karachi, the port of Sind is by sea and that "Railway communication involves a long detour, usually via Lahore", definitely stated that "there are grave administrative objections to isolating Sind and depriving it of the powerful backing of Bombay before the future of the Sukkur Barrage is assured," stressed the financial objections against it, laid down a number of conditions which must be fulfilled by all proposals for constituting new provinces (vide Appendix A) and recommended a General Boundary Commission to which classes of questions, "of which Sind and Orissa are only particular illustrations" should be referred. The Government of India in their despatch thought that an enquiry would be necessary and recommended a special Commission on Sind. The Bombay Government concurred in this, and it was generally thought that the whole question on its merits will be referred to a special Commission—an impression strengthened by the fact that the Bombay Government sent no official to present their case against Separation of Sind before the Round Table Conference and that His Excellency Lord Irwin did not nominate a representative of Sind Hindus on the Round Table Conference.

3. The Round Table Conference was convened for the purpose of finding out the largest measure of agreement between His Majesty's Government and the people of India, and between the different communities in India, on the larger constitutional reforms, and not for the purpose of deciding a local question on its merits. If an attempt was to be made to arrive at the largest measure of agreement on the Sind question, the representatives of Sind Hindus should have been in fairness nominated on the Round Table Conference. But to the intense surprise of the Sind public, the question of Sind was raised in the Minority Committee, referred to the Business Committee which set up a sub-committee on Sind with such restricted terms of reference that even proposals

based on the Simon Commission's recommendations had to be ruled out of order. The sub-committee on Sind consisted of three British statesmen, none of whom has lived in Sind, seven Muslims, of whom three were Sindhis and all for separation of Sind, five Hindus none of whom had lived in Sind or was acquainted with the history of the question or with the facts bearing on the question, two Parsis none of whom was a Sindhi, and one European who knew very little about Sind. Sir Shahnawaz Khan Bhutto, the Chairman of the Bombay Simon Committee, changed front in London, forgot all that he had subscribed to as a member of that committee and argued vehemently for the separation of Sind from Bombay, while Sir Ghulam Hussain, a member of the Bombay Government, definitely stated in the sub-committee that he came to represent Muslims and not the Bombay Government. There was thus no one who could represent the other side of the case, or correct serious mis-statement of facts. Statements were freely made at the meetings of the Sind sub-committee that 95 per cent of the people of Sind are for separation of Sind, that "it is a demand by Sindhis including Europeans", that "the most enlightened community though they are a handful in Sind, the Parsees, have been urging the separation of Sind", that "on this question there is virtually no difference of opinion between the Hindus and Muhammadans of Sind," that Hindus were "the first to be in favour of separation," that "Seth Harchandrai Vishindas, the greatest leader we have had in Sind and a Hindu" made a representation to the Right Hon'ble Mr. Montagu that Sind be separated from Bombay, that he moved at the Indian National Congress 1913 a resolution for separation of Sind from Bombay and that "he protested against that (Sind's connection with Bombay) over and over again in resolutions passed by the Indian National Congress urging upon Government to separate Sind". Each of these statements is either wholly devoid of truth, or at least a gross misrepresentation of real facts. An impression was sought to be created that non-official Europeans were in

favour of constituting Sind into a separate province by telling the members of the Sind sub-committee that in 1922 Sir Montagu Webb headed a deputation of Sindhis and waited on the Governor of Bombay, threatening that if they were not properly dealt with, they would ask for "a separation" and that "non-official Europeans, headed by Sir Montagu Webb, are in favour of separation". In reply to a specific enquiry whether the statement that as head of the deputation in 1922 he pressed for separation of Sind is untrue, Sir Montagu Webb wired as follows: "Untrue but have often urged linking Sind with Punjab"—a proposal altogether different from constituting Sind into a separate Province. The Nehru report was quoted in favour of separation of Sind but the resolution of the All Parties Conference at Lucknow, which made separation of Sind conditional on the fulfilment of certain conditions was never referred to, though that had been endorsed not only by the whole All Parties Conference at Lucknow but also by Muslims like Maulana Shaukatali. The Report of Sir Purshottamdas' Committee, appointed along with Nehru Committee was not even mentioned. That these mis-statements materially influenced the judgment of non-Sindhis is clear from the observation made by Mr. Mody that the sub-committee was "basing its recommendations on the assumption that there is an overwhelming demand for separation on the part of the people of Sind", and similar remarks made by the Chairman and Mr. Isaac Foot. Apart from the mis-statements, the other side of the arguments advanced by Sir Ghulam Hussain and Sir Shahnawaz Khan Bhutto could not be presented at the sub-committee as none of the other members were acquainted with the relevant facts or even the evidence led before the Simon Commission. Grossly exaggerated statements about the numbers and position of Amils, unfair attacks on their character and motives, misinterpretation of the figures, and insinuation against the individuals opposed to separation, all went unchallenged. None of the non-Muslim members of the Sind sub-committee seems to have taken the

trouble of reading the evidence. And yet on this one-sided evidence it was thought that academically a very good case for separation had been made out. The decision of the sub-committee and the Round Table Conference was thus based on ex-parte hearing of the case; and the public can easily realise the strength of feeling of unfairness created in the minds of those who knowing that they have a very good case find that the judges and the jury would not give them a hearing. It is no fault of the antiseperationists that their case has been heard ex-parte; they had their misgivings that unfair advantage would be taken of their absence and they asked for representation at the Round Table Conference. Unfortunately their claim was not considered as a pressing one, presumably because it was thought that Sind question would not be decided at the Round Table Conference, or if brought up for discussion, the case against separation of Sind would be presented by Sir Shahnawaz Khan Bhutto, who as chairman and member of the Bombay Committee had signed the majority report against separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency.

4. In July 1931 we considered it necessary to wait in deputation on His Excellency the Viceroy at Simla to represent our case and invited His Excellency's kind attention to the position which we along with other non-moslem communities occupy in the economic, political and social life of Sind. If the British can claim with pride their achievement in evolving order out of the chaos and anarchy that prevailed on after the British conquest of Sind, we the Hindus of Sind can claim to have given them their fullest co-operation in this task; we supplied for generations the bulk of administrative staff and professional talent; we have been the pioneers in the field of education, social reform and local self-government; we sowed the seeds of public life in Sind; we not only stimulated its internal trade but went abroad to bring to it wealth from foreign lands; we built up the indigenous banking system of the country and connected it with the trading centres of India.

and the world outside ; and as can be seen from the settlement reports we supply the most progressive and enterprising element even among the Zamindari class. But our very existence depends on economic and political security, freedom of enterprise in trade, industry and agriculture, and absence of crushing taxation. Anything that is likely to affect this essential basis of modern civilisation is a matter of life and death to us. We own twenty seven per cent of land, and as owners and lessees we already pay forty per cent of the land revenue ; the bulk of the Excise revenue, Stamps Registration, Income-tax and Customs in Sind falls likewise on our shoulders. Any increase of taxation will hit us hard specially in these days of severe depression ; any reduction of expenditure on Police or Justice will force us to leave the mofussil ; any lowering of educational efficiency will ruin our future. We are thus vitally interested in the question of separation of Sind from the Bombay Presidency, for we have great stakes in Sind ; and we claim that as a minority of twenty six per cent we have contributed much more than their proportionate share towards the moral and material development of Sind, and towards the administrative expenditure on provincial and central governments. All we demanded was fair play and a full hearing before a just and impartial tribunal which will deal with this question absolutely on its merits, irrespective of communal bargaining. Our interests in Sind are large, and it will be perfectly legitimate for us to safeguard our position and economic interests which we have built up after generations of effort, particularly in view of the recent communal tension and the treatment accorded to us by the majority during the recent widespread communal dacoities, arson and murders in the districts of Sukkur, Larkana and Upper Sind. But our opposition was based on ground much wider than selfish considerations, for we were convinced and were ready to prove it before any impartial tribunal, that the separation of Sind would prove ruinous to Sind as a whole.

His Excellency the Viceroy was pleased to give us a

patient hearing and said at the end that he fully realised the desirability of giving a hearing to the Sind Hindus on the whole case and not merely on the financial side of it, before a final decision was taken regarding the separation of Sind and would represent this aspect of the case to His Majesty's Government. Soon after this the Government of India appointed an expert Financial Enquiry Committee from which a deliberate attempt was made to exclude every Sindhi or for the matter of that every expert from Bombay for reasons which are best known to the Government of India and His Majesty's Government. It is significant to note in this connection that the constitution of the Orissa Committee was materially different and that the non-official representatives of Orissa fully participated in the deliberations of their Committee either as full members or as co-opted members of the Committee. It is significant also to note, that although originally it was intended that a former Accountant General of Bombay would carry on the expert examination of the financial implications of separating Sind from Bombay, an official from the Punjab, known for his pro-Muslim tendencies, was eventually appointed as Chairman of the Sind Financial Enquiry Committee. The Expert Committee's investigation showed that on the day of separation Sind will have to face an initial deficit of 110.42 lakhs a year which, unless the Lloyd Barrage came to the rescue, would grow to 144.19 lakhs in 1962-63 (vide para 84 of their report). They further pointed out that even if the full rates of assessment proposed for the barrage area were realised, "a very rash assumption in the existing circumstances, Sind will always be a deficit Province on our basis of calculation, although the deficit will fall to below half a crore of rupees after 14 years and below a quarter of a crore after 18 years. If only the slump rates are imposed the deficit will never be less than a Crore of Rupees. At the average of the two rates, the deficit will not fall below a crore of rupees until the 14th year after separation, the ultimate deficit on the full development of the Lloyd Barrage being 63.71 lakhs". (Vide para 83 of the Report).

5. Soon after the Expert Committee completed their investigation the second Round Table Conference met in London, and to our intense disappointment, while we were expecting something in terms of the assurance given to us by His Excellency the Viceroy that the whole question of the separation of Sind will be reviewed by an impartial Commission of Enquiry before which we will be given an opportunity of fully putting forward our whole case, the Premier on behalf of His Majesty's Government made an announcement at the conclusion of the second Round Table Conference that "His Majesty's Government accept in principle the propositions endorsed at the previous Conference that Sind should be constituted a separate Province, if satisfactory means of financing it can be found." He further announced that "the intention of His Majesty's Government was to ask the Government of India to arrange for a Conference with the representatives of Sind for the purpose of trying to overcome the difficulties disclosed by the Report of the expert financial investigation made last summer". It was clear that His Excellency's representation of our case had not been favourably received by His Majesty's Government but we hoped that the position, at any rate, had not become worse than what was indicated by the resolution of the Sind Sub-Committee, which had been endorsed by the whole Round Table Conference and accepted by His Majesty's Government. In view of the recent controversy as to the meaning of the Premier's announcement, the resolution passed by the Sind Sub-Committee and the Round Table Conference had in best to be quoted in full. The full text of the same reads as follows:—

"The Committee with two dissentients (Dr. Moonji and Dr. Narendranath) are impressed in favour of the arguments in favour of the separation and they have come to the conclusion that the principle of separation should be accepted. They further recommend that an expert Committee in India should examine carefully the security of debt on the Sukkur Barrage and should also recommend an equitable adjustment of the

financial commitments for which Sind may properly be considered liable. If the investigation shows that separation would leave the new Province with a deficit, the Sub-Committee think that the representatives of Sind should be asked to show satisfactorily how the deficit would be met before the new Province is set up."

The full report of the proceedings of the Sind Sub-Committee of the Round Table Conference show that its members took particular care to see that the resolution which they passed should not be interpreted in a way different from what they intended and the following extract from the reported proceedings of the Conference makes their position as clear as the words in the English dictionary could make it:—

"Sir Phiroze Sethna: All I want to point out is that we are all for the separation of Sind, but Sind must stand on its own legs.

Sir S. N. Bhutto: That is right.

Sir Phiroze Sethna: Then if not, what is the recommendation of this Sub-Committee? We must not be vague on the point.

Chairman: I will tell you, in view of the last words of Mr. Jinnah accepted, what the recommendation of this Sub-Committee is. The recommendation of this Sub-Committee is that *if Sind cannot show that it can stand successfully on its own legs, the separation does not take place.*

Sir Phiroze Sethna: If you can bring that out in the Report, that is all right.

Chairman: I think those words make it quite clear.

Sir Phiroze Sethna: That is all we want."

The words of the resolution also make it clear that it was never the intention that the Expert Committee's findings

should be questioned by the representatives of Sind or that it would be open to the Conference of representatives of Sind to press for an adjustment different from what the Expert Committee recommended.

6. The Sind Conference met last month. Once again its composition was not fair to the Hindus of Sind. It was clear from the proceedings of the Sind Sub-Committee of the Round Table Conference that the representatives of Sind on this Conference would be all non-officials, and yet a Sindhi Hindu official from Bihar of known pro-separationist views was nominated to the conference at the last minute. This clever trick was practised upon the Hindus of Sind by wire-pullers in Simla to show to the world outside that the Hindus of Sind were directed, but the fact is that this Sindhi official represented no political or communal group in Sind at all. It is an open secret, that of the handful of Hindus and Parsis who were formerly separationists under certain conditions, in the belief that Sind was not a deficit province, none was left in Sind except this Sindhi Hindu official who could be made a tool of by designing Muslims pulling the wires from Simla. The Report of this Conference will be shortly out but it is understood that the Chairman of the Conference has expressed the view, inspite of suggestions made by the Muslim separationists that Sind will be faced with a deficit of at least 90 lakhs on the date of separation and that even if all the heroic suggestions and the unwarranted assumptions made by the Moslem separationists are accepted, Sind will not be able to stand on its legs for years to come. If the terms of the resolution passed by the R. T. C. were therefore to be adhered to by Government, separation of Sind will not take place. For Lord Russel, the Chairman of the Sind Committee, explicitly stated that the recommendation of the Sub-Committee was that "If Sind cannot show that it can stand successfully on its own legs, separation does not take place."

But once again the wire-pullers in Simla and the lega

quibblers in the Reform Office seem to have managed to discover in the words of the Prime Minister a meaning materially different from the intentions of the R. T. C. as interpreted by the Chairman of the Sind Sub-Committee. On the last day of the Sind Conference its Chairman is reported to have asked the members of the Conference if they were prepared to put forward any justification for a subvention to Sind, for he had definite instructions to permit a justification for a subvention to be put forward by the Conference. The Hindu members of the Conference are understood to have made a spirited protest against these unfair tactics, and rightly so the Prime Minister's announcement itself makes it perfectly clear that it must be read with the full text of the resolution passed by the Sub-Committee of the R. T. C. and endorsed by the whole Conference, while the clear ruling of the Chairman of the Sind Sub-Committee gives an authoritative interpretation to the resolution passed by that Committee. The full text of the speeches made at the sittings of this Sub-Committee and the whole trend of the discussion makes it perfectly clear that an overwhelming majority of the members of the Sind Committee agreed to the principle of separation of Sind on the distinct understanding that there would be no question of subvention at all. Once again the old history repeats itself; having failed to make out a case for separation on its merits, having failed to prove that Sind was a surplus Province, having failed to show that by retrenchment or by additional taxation Sind could stand on its own legs, the Moslem separationists have shifted their ground now, and rest their hopes on a subvention from the Central Government. No clearer proof can possibly have been given of the desire of the separationists to repudiate the clear and emphatic assurances given by them to the members of the Sind Sub-Committee of the Round Table Conference that "Sind must stand on its own legs" (vide Sir S. N. Bhutto's statement on page 87 of the proceedings); that "We do not want any financial help" (vide page 65 also page 31);

that "it is up to the representatives of the proposed new Province to show how the deficit should be met by taxing themselves" (vide H. H. The Agha Khan and Mr. Jinnah's statements on page 82 of the proceedings)—assurance without which the separationists would never have secured the support of a clear majority of the members of the Sind Sub-Committee of the Round Table Conference. In fact it is difficult to find a stronger and clearer statement than what Sir Bhutto made when he knavely asked his colleagues in the Round Table Conference:—"If we are not able to support ourselves how can we ask for separation?" (Page 37). No body who reads without bias the statement made by the Premier on behalf of His Majesty's Government, can find anything in it to suggest that the Prime Minister had any intention to go beyond the terms of the resolution of the Round Table Conference or to suggest that the separation of Sind from Bombay must be effected anyhow whether Sind was able to stand on its own legs or not. If subvention from outside was included among "the satisfactory means", there was no point in convening a Conference of the representatives of Sind and asking them "to show satisfactorily how the deficit would be met before the new Province is set up". Clearly, the question of a subvention is an after thought of the Moslem separationists, and the only justification for a suggestion as to a subvention found by the legal quibblers in Simla to contain in the words "If satisfactory means of financing could be found" in the Prime Minister's statement. The Moslem separationists sometimes use the word "adjustment" instead of the word "subvention" and they have understood to have now put forward a proposal that the Government of India should take no contribution from Sind under the Federal Finance Committee's proposals while transferring to it the whole of income-tax, that they should wipe out the whole of the pre-reform debt on irrigation in Sind, or that the Bombay Government should take over Rs. 4 crores of accumulated interest on the Barrage debt. But all these proposals are in effect tantamount to the suggestion

that some one should pay Sind a subvention in perpetuity instead of for a limited period of time. It is again contended that Sind is in fact receiving a subvention from Bombay. This is not in fact a correct statement of the present position. Sind is at present a part of the Bombay Presidency; the people of the Presidency proper along with those of Sind control expenditure and determine policy both in the Presidency proper and in Sind; the whole Presidency including Sind is one administrative and legislative unit; but subvention from outside to a separate province of Sind is a different matter altogether, there is no union of interests and no unification of control of policy and the expenditure in this case.

Both the Nehru Report and the Simon Commission make it perfectly clear that an area that claims to form a separate Province and secede from a Larger union should be "so situated and endowed as to be able to support its existence as a separate province". The Moslem separationists of Sind cannot fairly demand independence from the control of Bombay and at the same time a subvention from the Hindu taxpayer in Bombay or other Hindu Provinces outside Sind. At any rate it is not playing the game to secure the conditional acceptance of the Round Table Conference of the principle of separation on the *basis of certain supposed facts and after* giving definite assurance, and then at the end, when facts are proved to be otherwise and the conditions accepted cannot be fulfilled, to turn round and say "you have any way agreed to separation; and now that we cannot stand on our own legs and fulfil the conditions precedent, it should make no difference whatsoever, for you can give us a sub-vention which will enable us to lead a separate existence at the expense of others".

The separationists are now relying on the analogy of the N. W. F. P., but as was pointed out by the N. W. F. P. sub-committee, the latter Province "was constituted on

grounds of general frontier policy, for which the Central Government was responsible, and is still maintained on the same grounds". It is significant to note that the common view expressed by the non-official witnesses before that Committee was "that the Central Government having called the Province into existence, must be prepared to finance it fully, and that if the Central Government were not ready to grant a subvention, that would place the inhabitants of the Province in respect of Government activities on a reasonable equality with those of the Punjab, they had no objection to re-amalgamation with the Punjab." The position is just the reverse in Sind. We are already a part of the Bombay Presidency and the Bombay Government is spending on Sind far more than it gets from it. A separate Province in Sind will be called into existence not because of the general frontier policy but as a result of a demand from the Moslem community in Sind; and His Majesty's Government and the Round Table Conference were led to accept the principle of separation of Sind on certain definite conditions and assurances, without fulfilling which the whole case falls down. The justification for subvention is nil beyond the untenable proposition that as the Muslims of Sind have all along lived on other peoples' money and if Bombay ceases to pay to a separate Sind, some one else must do it. But why then separate Sind from Bombay if you cannot stand on your own legs? The magnitude of the Barrage project is no argument for separation from Bombay, but as a weighty reason against it. It only means that Sind cannot afford to stand alone and that undeveloped Sind must continue to be a part of a bigger unit, more advanced than a separate Sind, with more credit as security for development loans. It is necessary, therefore, to enter out most emphatic protest against these unscrupulous attempts of the separationists and their wire-pulling friends at Simla to bring up the question of subvention of Sind against the clearly expressed intentions of the Round Table Conference and its Sind Sub-Committee.

7. The case for separation of Sind presented to the

R. T. C. has already shown to be untenable more than once. I will only content myself with inviting attention of the public outside Sind to the pamphlets "The True Facts regarding Separation of Sind from Bombay Presidency" issued by the Executive Committee of the Sind Hindu Conference in which we have proved to the hilt that the case for separation of Sind as presented at the R. T. C. was based either on statements which are false in material particulars or on arguments which are easily proved to be untenable. One of the arguments advanced at the Round Table Conference was that Sind had been neglected by Bombay, inspite of the fact that the Bombay Government had been spending on Sind much more than the revenue received from Sind. Will the situation be better in a separated Sind or distinctly worse, is the question which common-sense people will naturally ask. Perhaps the best answer to this pertinent question is the general tenor of the Moslem separationists' evidence before the Sind Financial Enquiry Committee and their discussion in the Sind Conference. We are told therein that though the advice and control of Bombay experts will be dispensed with, "the amenities will be provided in due course and not on the date of separation." Even the increasing expenditure to which the Bombay Government has committed itself in respect of primary education and prohibition, and the programme entailed by the Barrage are to be washed out. No additional headquarters establishment is to be provided for Land Records, Excise, Stamps, Forests, Registration, Police, Education, Public Health, Co-operation, Industries, for our chhota sahibs are quite fit to be transformed into Burra sahibs at the magic words "Separate Sind from Bombay." The Chief Court Act will be repealed; or the number of Judicial Commissioners reduced; no judicial district is needed for Nawabshah; no Inspector of Schools as distinct from the Director of Public Instruction is required for inspection of Indian or European Schools; there should be no Borstal School or Police Training School; the proposed new

Districts at Dadu and Guni are not wanted; the Civil Surgeons of Karachi and Hyderabad are lightly worked and should be shifted for half the time to the district jails as Superintendents; we shall have no university, no Government Arts or Science College, no professional college in Agriculture, Medicine or Art, in Electrical and Mechanical Engineering or Technology, nor are special arrangements with Bombay necessary for these branches of higher education; and, there will be no town-planning schemes or a sanitary division, no Revenue Commissioners, Daftardars, Supervising Tapedars or Huzur Deputy Collectors. The Legislative Council will be housed in the rooms of the second floor of the J. C.'s Court, as if it would be desirable for members of the Council, members of the Bar, litigants, criminals and bailiffs to mingle together and produce a very Babel of confusion or for the Courts to stop their work when the Governor chooses to address his Council. Or if this is found inconvenient, the J. C.'s court must be shifted bag and baggage to their old premises which they have quitted out of sheer perverseness. There will be no further expenditure on revenue and police even in the Barrage zone; the programme of agricultural research and development must be cut down; and that of roads and education, better roads better amenities which the separationists have been promising us, has boiled down to this catalogue of "noes".

Administrative Expenditure

The "Ayes" are no less depressing. The establishment of the Governor's two Secretaries will cost only Rs. 800 a month, while that of one costs in Assam Rs. 17,000 a year. The expenditure from contract allowance will be dropped as a superfluity. The tour expenses of the Governor in roadless Sind will amount to only 10,000 while those of the Chief Commissioner in N. W. F. P. with its fine military roads and area of 13,149 miles come to Rs. 35,000. The total expenditure for three Ministers and their establishment in

Sind will be lower than for two in Assam; and the whole Cabinet will consist of only three persons. On Rs. 800 we shall get an officer whose salary in Assam is 2,700 and who shall perform the combined duties of Secretary Legislative Council, Secretary to Government Legislative Department, Legal Remembrancer and Administrator General etc.

On Rs. 12000 a month in all, we shall have a superintendent, three reporters and two clerks for the Legislative Council, though the Bombay Council pays Rs. 43,406 for eight reporters and three clerks. The Election expenses for a Council of sixty will cost only Rs. 10,000 a year, though Government foolishly provided Rs. 13,750 for expenditure on General Elections in Sind for the Bombay Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly in 1930-31. The contingencies of Sind Council will cost Rs. 150 a month, though Assam provides Rs. 10,843 under this head. One Secretary on Rs. 2,000 and two on Rs. 800 will not only do the entire work which 29 Secretaries and other Secretariat Officers do in Bengal, 24 in Madras, 22 in Behar, 27 in Burma, 24 in U. P., 15 in C. P., 35 in the Punjab, and 9 in Assam and N. W. F. P., but also take over the duties of Revenue Commissioner, Excise Commissioner, Director of Land Records, Inspector General of Registration etc. The total Secretariat will cost one lakh less than the Commissioner in Sind and his office do at present. Such is the administration which we are now promised. The public need now have no illusions as to what is in store for them if Sind separates. Why not cut the Gordian Knot and say straightway "We shall make Sind another Khairpur State or revert to the good old days of the Mirs."

8. The proposals for taxation made by the Moslem members of the Sind Conference reveal clearly their perverse mentality. Among the new taxes proposed, the only tax the burden of which is likely to fall partly on the shoulders of the Sind Moslems is the suggestion that there should be an

increase of one anna in the Rupee over the land revenue assessment both in the Barrage zone and outside over and above whatever be the rates fixed by Government for the Barrage zone. The total revenue of Sind both from the Barrage and in non-barrage zone during the year 1933-34 is not expected to be more than 156·1 lakhs on the basis of the figures given in Appendix 8 of the Sind Financial Enquiry Committee's Report so that a total yield of this additional tax will be less than 10 lakhs of which 40 per cent will fall on the shoulders of the Hindu Zamindars who are opposed to separation. The second tax proposed is the professional tax on lawyers, doctors and moneylenders, almost all of whom in Sind belong to the minority communities. Even the suggested tax on the employers of domestic servants is likely to fall almost exclusively on the non-Moslem communities, for the domestic servants of Moslem agriculturists in the rural areas will not be classed as tenants or agricultural labourers, and are in point of fact indistinguishable from these at certain seasons of the year. The vend feature on tobacco is impracticable over the whole of Sind owing to administrative difficulties; if restricted to towns, it only means taxation of the consumer of tobacco in cities which in Sind are predominantly non-Moslem. The suggested transit duties on the cotton bales coming from up-country mean taxation on the Punjab grower of cotton and will probably lead to diversion of trade from Karachi to other centres. On the most optimistic calculations the yield from the Professional tax will not exceed 2 lakhs and from vend fees on tobacco another 2 lakhs and from the transit duty on cotton bales 5 to 10 lakhs. A wide gap therefore yet remains to be filled up by other means.

For the reduction of interest charges our non-Moslem friends rely on what amounts to repudiation of debt. The proposal that barrage debt should be divided in the proportion of 15 to 85 between Sind and Bombay, is on the face of it absurd as it would mean that Sind will have the whole of the

proceeds of land sales and the revenues from the barrage zone but will pay only 15 per cent of the total debt on the barrage. Prof. Batheja's proposal that the Central Government should wipe out the whole of the pre-reform irrigation debt amounts again to nothing more than a subvention from the Central Government. There remains Mr. Dow's proposal that Bombay should take over 85% of the accumulated interest charges on the barrage capital on the ground that if the interest of barrage debt had been met out of revenue, all revenue transactions on capital regarded as closed as suggested by the expert committee in para 32. As pointed out by Prof. Chablani, Mr. Dow has misread and misinterpreted paragraph 32 of the report which reads as follows:—

“Our conclusion therefore is that no question of debt arises at all in respect of *past expenditure* from revenue. Throughout the years prior to separation, the revenues of the joint province *were devoted* to those objects which, at the time, appeared to be the most deserving in the interests of the province as a whole; it is quite immaterial in which particular division of province the expenditure occurred; and all such revenue transactions must, in our opinion, be regarded as closed. It follows that the only debt which requires to be distributed is that which entails continuing liabilities in the shape of payment of interest and repayment of capital.”

It is clear that what the Expert Committee regarded as finally closed was only the *past expenditure* from revenue and not continuing liability in the shape of payment of interest or repayment of capital. The original Barrage project expressly provides that the land sales and the revenue from the Barrage are to pay for the capital expenditure of the barrage including accumulated interest. The Bombay Government has already paid 81 lakhs out of revenue and Famine Fund towards the interest on the barrage and it was on the definite undertaking that the remaining interest on the barrage will be added to the capital during the period of construction and paid out of the revenue and the land sales from the barrage zone that the

Secretary of State sanctioned the project and the Bombay Legislative Council agreed to take up the responsibility of the Barrage. If Sind continues with Bombay, this accumulated interest will certainly be met out by the revenue of the barrage which will then become a part of the whole presidency revenues. It is inequitable to take over the entire revenue and capital receipts of the barrage and then throw on Bombay 85 per cent of the accumulated interest. The assumption that Sind revenues paid for the interest on the Deccan irrigation works is untrue in point of fact. At any rate, since 1921 when the provinces came to have separate financial resources, Sind's revenues have always fallen short of expenditure in Sind by more than half a crore annually, and it is absurd in the face of these facts to content that Sind should be presumed to have contributed towards the interest charges of the Back Bay Schemes and the capital sunk in the Deccan Irrigation Works. What strikes me even more absurd is the fact that even 15% of accumulated interest has been taken over not as an item of unproductive debt of Sind but as a part again of the Barrage capital.

It is no use camouflaging the fact that any suggestion that Bombay should pay any part of the barrage debt and interest charges and Sind should have the whole revenue from land sales and land assessment from the barrage zone is equivalent to asking for subvention from Bombay Government.

As regards the future expenditure our Moslem friends have practically washed out all the estimates of Expert Committee and of the Bombay Government regarding the growth of capital expenditure and expenditure charged to revenue, considered as inevitable under the conditions created in the barrage zone. Any one who knows the conditions in Sind cannot escape the conclusion that the anticipated revenue of barrage will hardly be sufficient for the inevitable growth of expenditure in the barrage zone, inevitable because it will become necessary if Government is to get its expected revenue from the barrage.

The assumed rates of the barrage have already been objected to by the Zamindars of Sind and I am firmly convinced that they are pitched too high for these difficult times when the Zamindars find it hard even to pay the existing rates of assessment. During the last 12 months the Hindu and Muslim Zamindars of Sind have repeatedly demanded reduction of land rates by at least 50 per cent and both K. B. Khuhro and K. B. Allahbuksh who have now agreed not only to the rates proposed by the barrage officials but to an additional one anna in the rupee over and above this, led a deputation to the Honourable Home Member proposing for 50 per cent rebate on existing assessments. As to the general ability of the people of Sind, I can do no better than quote from Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto's speech at the R. T. C. in the course of which he rightly said, "We shall be questioned by our people. The people have no money, and they are already starving and cannot pay more taxes." These quick-change artists have now found a new hidden taxable capacity of the Zamindars of Sind which will bear not only an increase of 66 per cent over the existing rate in the barrage area but also an additional one anna in the rupee over and above this 66 per cent increase. These are our leaders who have all along professed to be the friends of the Zamindars and the ryots of Sind. Evidently, they believe they can humbug the public not only once or twice but for all time to come. They can say one thing today and just the opposite tomorrow to suit their purpose; but the wearer knows where the shoes pinch and the Zamindar knows what it means to pay these fantastic rates out of his greatly reduced income during these days of agricultural slump.

We must, therefore, warn Government that Sind cannot stand on its own legs for a generation to come, and that any attempt to add to the height of taxation in this period of acute depression, will create serious discontent among all classes of people of Sind on whose shoulders the main burden of the proposed taxation is likely to fall.

9. Brother Delegates, in the world of politics it is not the merit of the question, that counts in these days when the Government of India is thoroughly demoralised on account of the passive resistance movement on the one hand and the clamorous sectional demands of the outside Muslims on the other. Between the pressure of these two, the voice of commonsense and reason is in danger of going unheeded. I can therefore easily sympathise with friends who have lost all faith in the willingness of Englishmen to decide any question on its intrinsic merits. I am aware that a number of our youths feel that the anti-separationists in Sind have no other course but to organise itself for resistance by all legitimate and peaceful means to any new Government in Sind that may be set up as a result of the Government of India's desire to placate the All India Moslem politicians at the cost of the welfare of Sind. But, I believe that this is a counsel of despair. Even if our efforts fail and a new Province of Sind is created in an atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion, the acute economic distress accentuated further by increasing burdens of taxation in a period of falling prices and by increasing unemployment due to wholesale retrenchment in the various Government departments, will not allow any government in a separate province of Sind to outlive the short period of subvention from the Central Government. It is easy to talk of taxing the non-Muslims to maintain a Muslim government; but it is not possible to do so in Sind without ultimately ruining the Zamindar, for our only source of wealth in Sind is ultimately land. You may for a time tax trade; but the hen that now lays the golden eggs will either cease to exist or migrate to fairer fields after short but bitter experience. I do not believe that we have exhausted all means of constitutional agitation and I, therefore, heartily commend to your careful consideration the proposal that efforts should be made once again to represent our point of view to the Government of Bombay, to His Excellency the Viceroy and to His Majesty's Government. I would earnestly implore my impatient friends to wait for the result and not to preach the gospel of despair at this critical stage and thus prejudice our cause at a time when we need the sympathy of every impartial judge.

