

The Hon'ble Mr. Shri Krishna Sinha (Bihar: General): Mr. Chairman Sir, I stand here to support the Resolution as originally moved by Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru: In my opinion, it is really unfortunate that a resolution of such a sacred nature should have been subjected to amendments. I purposely call it sacred because by this Resolution an attempt is made to give expression to that aspiration to be free which has stirred us for the last several years.

Sir, the Resolution, if carefully analysed, comes to this. It gives a picture of the vision of future India. That India of the future is to be a democratic and, decentralised republic, in which the ultimate sovereignty is to lie with the people and in which fundamental rights are to be safeguarded to minorities inhabiting this land. Now, Sir, these are the three fundamental features of this Resolution and it is because of these three fundamental features that I call this Resolution sacred. I shall try to be brief. Yet I cannot refrain from reminding this House that we are all assembled here in Assertion of a right, a cherished and valuable right which mankind has achieved for itself after undergoing untold sufferings and sacrifices. Some sort of political structure is required in every society to make life therein possible. A careful analysis of the process of evolution of States in this world shows that the nature of these has changed with the change in the conception of life. Sir, I was not a little surprised to hear just now from an Hon'ble Member of a House which has assembled in assertion of the constituent power of the People that there can be honest difference of opinion regarding the place where political sovereignty resided in society. Certainly, Sir, not long ago, the world did not believe that all individuals composing society had an equal right to liberty and happiness. Society was composed of classes and the individual had no place in society. The place of man in society was determined by the class to which he belonged and so there was no individual liberty to be safeguarded. Poverty was not thought to be a disease which society must get rid of. Some of the great thinkers of the 18th century France, were of the opinion that the presence of poverty in society was necessary for the proper production of wealth. In such a society, Sir, there could be no place for the principle of the sovereignty of the people. Sovereignty belonged to the King whose privilege it was to rule. The people existed merely to pay the taxes demanded of them by the king and obey the laws enacted by him. But with the lapse of time, the conception of society and life changed. Men came to believe that every individual has an equal right to liberty and happiness. With this change in the conception of life, a change in the structure of the State became necessary. But those who held political power were reluctant to part with it and effect a change in the political structure. There was thus a clash between the ideologies which swayed the people and those which swayed the men in power. There were revolutions on both sides of the Atlantic at the end of the 18th century in which the principle that the power belonged to the People was vindicated. Even after this, there were rulers who would not recognise this principle and so another blood-bath in the shape of a revolution had to be gone through to get finally sanctioned the principle that political power belonged to the people. It was to achieve this constituent power that we in this country have been fighting British Imperialism for the last several years. It is this which moved this country from one end to the other in 1921 and made its millions rally under the banner of revolt raised by Mahatma Gandhi in that year. It was for asserting this basic right of a people that hundreds mounted the scaffold, thousands faced bullets and men, in lakhs swarmed the jails. There was a wide gap between the political ideals on which the Government of India was based and the political ideology which swayed the people, and the result has been strife.

So, Sir, we are not here in this Assembly because the British Government in a fit of generosity have thought it proper to ask us to take over power. I have been in a position from where I can form my own opinion as to whether there is any sincerity behind all this talk of peaceful transfer of power. We are here because we have succeeded in compelling those who still entertain the dream of governing India according to the political ideals embodied in the Government of India Act, to give up that dream. We have succeeded because of that spirit of rebellion which spread all over the country in 1942. It is as a result of the 1942 rebellion that we are here in this Constituent Assembly. Gathered together in such an Assembly it should be our first duty to draw up a picture of future free India and present it to our people. The Right Hon'ble Dr. Jayakar who spoke eloquently, has drawn a picture of the difficulties which the absence of our Muslim League friends will cause. I do not think that we required a speech from a man of the eminence of Dr. Jayakar to point out these difficulties. We know what those difficulties are. If I understood him aright, however, he did not give us a counsel of despair. He has actually advised us to go on with our work if our friends of the Muslim League do not come in after some time.

Sir, our leader, the Hon'ble Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, has made it quite clear that we are anxious to see our Muslim League friends occupying their rightful place in this Assembly. Every one of us is equally anxious to see them come back. But I fail to understand how this particular Resolution would stand in the way of their so coming here at a future date. If we have understood the political ideology of the Muslim League correctly, if we understood the Cabinet Declaration correctly, there is one matter in which all are agreed and that is that the future India is to be, a United India and that that India might also be outside the British Commonwealth of Nations, if the Indian people so decide. From the pronouncements made from time to time by Muslim League leaders I think we can rightly draw the conclusion that the Muslim League also stands for a free and independent India. So, Sir, according to all of us including the League, the future India is going to be an independent free India. In that independent free India the source of authority is going to vest in the people who inhabit this land. That is the cherished right which has been won for the people inhabiting this globe by those who have gone before. That is the principle for which we have been fighting all along. Now when this Constituent Assembly meets and we draw up a declaration, I think the first thing to be included in that declaration should be this elementary right of a people which decides to be free, and therefore to this feature of the Resolution no one can have any objection. Now, Sir, the Union which we are going to have in India is going to be a Union of all the parts of India. This certainly means that the future India is going to be a united India. I will again say that the shape of that future India which this Resolution envisages certainly shows that the framers of this Resolution have taken pretty good care to see that nothing is said in this Resolution which can create difficulties in the way of our friends of the Muslim League coming into this Assembly at some later date. I know, Sir, there are members in this Assembly-- and I must confess that I am one of those, who believe that-- there has arisen in Indian, an Indian nation, an Indian nation with an Indian culture and an Indian civilisation. Such men certainly are only too anxious to have a republic of the unitary type in this country.

There has been such a tremendous increase in the economic forces of production in the world that if full use is to be made of these forces in this world, it is necessary that we should have still larger political units which will transgress the national boundaries of national states. It is a realisation of this truth which makes many Indians feel that India must have a centralised republic. But in spite of that, if we by this Resolution want to have a republic in India which will be democratic and at the same time decentralised, it is because the framers of this Resolution have taken care to take into account the feelings of our Muslim League friends. Sir, there was a time when because of the historical circumstances prevailing in the world of those days, States of large sizes, containing populations homogeneous in language and religion, could be erected. There can be no doubt that a national state with a homogeneous population is a force and a living force. But unfortunately at a time when there is a tendency for these national states to pass out of existence, we have to deal with a bitter legacy left behind by them and that is the legacy of small nationalities, consisting often of a few thousands or a few lakhs, clamouring for separate states of their own. This has been creating havoc in this world. The whole of Eastern Europe has become the zone for breeding wars because in that portion of Europe are living small nationalities so intermixed that they cannot be divided into small states, and yet they clamour for separate political existence.

Sir, this Resolution gives expression also to the aspiration that India shall have her place, her rightful place, among the nations of the world. Every Indian legitimately aspires that one day India will drive a lead to the whole of Asia and we can give this lead now by successfully constructing a state which will be a democratic republic, and, at the same time decentralised so that different cultural groups based on language, on religion, may be integrated in a vast republic. It is hoped that very soon the flood of Western Imperialism will retreat from the lands of Asia, and no sooner it has retreated, these lands will have to solve the problem of erecting independent states of their own. This question of nationalities is bound to raise its head even in those countries. They have such problems in Palestine, in the Arab world, and in the small islands in the south-eastern portion of Asia. If we are to lead them rightly so that like the Balkans these Asiatic lands may not also become the battleground of the Imperialisms of the West, it is very necessary that we should set an example by having a state in India which will be a state for the whole of India and at the same time provide safeguards for cultural minorities. This is what this Resolution contemplates by further making provision for the fundamental rights of the individuals and groups living in this country and for safeguarding the fundamental rights of the minorities.

Sir, it is because of these features of this Resolution that I said that the Resolution was of a sacred nature and one which is bound to rank with those declarations which were made on similar occasions in the past by peoples just after they had shed their shackles of slavery. It not only is sacred, it is arduous also, arduous not only because of the difficulties pointed out by Dr. Jayakar, but arduous because of the attitude of British statesmen over there in England. I have just now told you that from my personal experience as an administrator I do not feel that the Britishers have made up their mind to peacefully transfer power to the people of India. Only the other day you had the speech of Mr. Churchill. Not one word of cheer from that great imperialist. At a time like this in the history of our country when so many of us have assembled here to advise a constitution for this land, instead of giving a word of cheer, he was again at his old game. He had a fling at the Congress, he had a fling at Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. In the advent of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru into the Interim Government he sees the butchery of innocent men in Bihar. To Mr. Churchill, living seven seas across, I will say, you have been supplied with a lie by some interested person and you have made yourself the willing tool for the propagation of that lie. The Government of Bihar did not hesitate for one single moment to use force and it used force, whatever force it had, to give protection to the lakhs of Mussalmans living in that Province. The Bihar Government is a proud Government. It is not going to have dictations from the Government of India, so long as it is constituted under the Government of India Act, 1935. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru is our leader and so lie went to Bihar. He is a source of inspiration to us. I may tell Mr. Churchill that during his strenuous tours of a few days through the Province he gave the people a bit of his mind. I told the greatest official of this country that he could not restore order in Bihar in the short period in which we did it. Order could be speedily restored, not because of the bayonets that the Government of Bihar had or because of those bayonets that were lent to them by the Government of India. It was the dynamic personality of Pandit Nehru, the saintly presence of Dr. Rajendra and the spectre of a fast unto death by the Mahatma that restored order Quickly in Bihar. Mr. Churchill has done great mischief by giving currency to such lies. I have taken much of your time. But I must tell you that before you pass this Resolution you must try to visualise the difficulties that may come in your way. I have not studied this declaration of the Cabinet from the point of view of a lawyer. Spurn to look at it from the point of a lawyer. I have been a soldier all my life and I would look at it from the point of view of a fighter. The statements of British statesmen are not quite helpful. It is just possible that not because of the difficulties that have been dangled before us by Dr. Jayakar but because of the difficulties which may be created in our way by those in power. This Constituent Assembly may one day have to go the way the Constituent Assembly of France in 1799, had to go, because of the attitude of the King and statesmen. of that time. So before I sit down, I would remind Hon'ble Members of the House that before they make up their minds to vote in favour of this Resolution they trust realise the difficulty that they may have to face in giving effect to their resolve. If we pass this Resolution we must at the same time take a firm resolve to tear down that political edifice which owes its existence in India to the Government of India Act, 1935--a monument of constitutional jugglery--and build on it a Republic of the type which this Resolution envisages, whatever may be the difficulties that may come in the way.