

Mr. R. R. Sidhwa (C. P. and Berar: General) : Mr. Chairman, Sir. the demand made by the Indian National Congress for framing a constitution for free India has now become an accomplished fact. We are here to frame a constitution for India and we are sure--whether our friends the Muslim Leaguers whom we welcome--speaker after speaker has stated that they miss their presence here--whether they come in or not, let me state, that with all the threats that have been now thrown at us by the Britishers during the last four or five days in the House of Commons and the House of Lords we shall proceed with our business and shall frame a constitution which they dare not refuse to implement. If they choose not to implement it when the occasion arises for them to do so, then we know how to implement it. Sir, if poverty as to be eradicated from India, to bring human happiness to this country and our constitution should be based on the socialist principle and such a constitution. I am confident when it is completed will be welcomed by all in this country and also outside this country. Much fuss has been made many a time about the minority question. Sir, all reasonable safeguards and all interests will be reasonably considered while framing this constitution but I do not understand why the question is brought to the forefront. In this very resolution, in paragraph 3, you will see how we have safeguarded, without anybody else's telling us, the interests of the minorities. Paragraph 4 relates to residuary powers, which we have accepted, not because the British Delegation want us to do so. This matter had been receiving the serious consideration of the Congress as you know, Sir, for a number of years, and to allay the fears of the Muslim Leaguers, we came to a decision in August 1942 that there should be residuary powers in the provinces. Many of us even to-day do not like the residuary powers to be vested in the provinces; we want a strong Central Government. If a free vote is taken in this House or in the country, they will oppose residuary powers being vested in the provinces. But simply because we want to allay the fears of the Muslim League, imaginary or real, we respect their feeling and accepted that residuary powers shall vest in the provinces. May I ask who came forward to safeguard the interests of the minorities? It is the Congress and the majority community that have said that the provinces shall have residuary powers. Whether leaguers are here or not, as Hon'ble Congressmen we will stick to that resolve. We do not want to go back, even if the Muslim League choose to remain absent upon that pledge; even though we do not like it, we shall implement it. That is one instance that I want to point out to the Britishers when they tell us how we are ourselves alert in safeguarding the interests of the minorities. But if you make unreasonable demands, it is certainly not possible for the majority community to be converted into a minority community. In this very paragraph there is a reference regarding redistribution of provinces. I am a firm believer in the redistribution of the present provinces. (*Hear, hear*). The present heterogeneous way in which, without any thought, or without any sense these provinces have been formed, requires immediate revision. Coming from the Province of Sind, as I do, I know ten years ago when we were separated from Bombay there was 22 crores of rupees of debt to the Government of India. We have wiped off that debt in 7 years--I do not want to enter into the details of the advantages that we have achieved by separation.

But what I would state is that this paragraph is so guardedly framed as to respect the feelings of the Mussalmans, so that the present provinces may be taken into consideration in going into Sections. If I were free I would suggest an amendment that the provinces should be redistributed straightaway and the boundary commission appointed immediately and then the constitution should be framed. But here also we want to keep to our promise to go into Sections within the framework of the Declaration of May 16.

I point out these things in order to show to the world that without any interference or dictation or advice that has been given to us day in and day out in the House of Commons and in the House of Lords the mischievous statements and mischievous speeches that are being heard from the British to-day,--we do our legitimate duty. We cannot tolerate this kind of propaganda, which have falsely raised the question of minorities and raised the usual bogey of communal disturbances. When the

Delegation came they were in a different mood because there were political riots. The army, the navy and the air force were in revolt before they came. It was a political riot. Now, Sir, the Services in India feel that their days are numbered. They have started making capital of communal disturbances. Now that there is communal tension the British Cabinet want to go back upon what they stated when they came over here. The British Government have told us that, if we do not frame the constitution according to their interpreting clause 15, it shall not be forced upon the minority community. I come from the minority communities, it is a very small minority comparatively an insignificant number, but still that community, as the world knows, although we are a lakh of Parsis only--the Parsi community is known all over the whole world. As Babu Purushottam Das Tandon pointed out in seconding the Resolution, in the earlier days of this country's history, whosoever came in this country were welcome. 1300 years ago when we were driven away from Iran so the history say, and were wandering in the sea for three months, nobody gave us a shelter excepting the Jadhwa Rana of Sanjan in Gujarat. We are grateful to him. We have had no grievance against the Hindu community, so long as we have been here. The Parsis have taken prominent part in politics, social and industrial enterprises; amongst the founders of the Indian Congress that great man Dadabhoy Naoraji was one. (*Cheers*). In 1909 from the presidential address in Calcutta he coined the word "Swaraj". Parsis were the pioneers in the industry of shipbuilding and textiles. They were the first to introduce female education, so in charitable Organisation like hospitals irrespective of caste and creed. As recently as 30 years ago the Iron and Steel industry of India which is the second largest in the whole world was started by the Tata family. I do not say all this to glorify my community. All I want to show is that the majority community have never forgotten us; and on our part we have not lagged behind in taking part. We were forced by the British people to ask for separate electorates. We have refused. In the general electorate our community's interests are absolutely safe. I know of an instance where 30 years ago the mischief of separate representation was forced for the purpose of upholding British rule in this country. In Sind we had in the local bodies general representation without any communal representation. The then Commissioner of Sind called some of the Mussalmans to the Government House and told them secretly. "You give us a representation demanding separate electorates and I shall recommend to the Government of Bombay". Such representation was given and ever since there are separate electorates in our Sind Municipality. Thus, we have seen with our own eyes how mischief is played by the British by dividing one community against another. Parsis have been asked many a time to demand separate electorates. We have refused and replied, "We are quite safe with our majority community." See the goodness of the majority community in this very Assembly. We have all been all elected by their votes. May I say that those who opposed our cherished goal of achieving freedom were opposed to our goal for they have also been elected by the majority community. We do not consider anybody a foe although they may have opposed our cherished views or cherished demand, I mean the Anglo Indians, yet we have elected them. This is a Magnanimity which one ought to appreciate. What kind of safeguard do the Britishers want unless it is to create the usual old mischief? But let me tell the British Government, the time has come when this mischievous propaganda that is being carried on intentionally to-day to disturb the Constituent Assembly work cannot help them. We shall proceed with our work. We shall proceed in spite of the difficulties and hurdles and machinations that have been carried on in season and out of season,

particularly at this juncture. Instead of Sir Stafford Cripps or the Secretary of State telling Mr. Jinnah "You got the interpretation of particular clause, as you want and you must stop the propaganda of Pakistan." The Cabinet Mission discussed, investigated and have come to the conclusion that Pakistan is neither feasible practicable nor advisable and therefore that question is buried once and for all. Yet now in the Parliament during the recent debate have you said a single word to Mr. Jinnah, to stop making speeches of pernicious, poisonous propaganda on Pakistan? Mr. Jinnah day in and day out, whenever he goes either to a press conference or in his statements, goes on reiterating the story of Pakistan. We do not know therefore what he wants notwithstanding the decision that the British Delegation has given in their Statement of May 16.

Unless the British Government want to go back upon it, they should tell Mr. Jinnah to stop this propaganda, poisoning the minds of the people which causes communal disturbances in this country. Instead of telling him so, they have the effrontery to give advice to the minority community. We cannot understand what is it that they really want and what is it that is working in their mind. Was it to frustrate our object of meeting here on 9th December that they invited the Muslim League to London? But, all honour to our leaders; they stuck to their decision to hold the first meeting of the Constituent Assembly on 9th December despite the fact that the Hon'ble Pandit Nehru had to go to England the previous week, assuring us that he would return on 9th December and participate in the opening ceremony of the Constituent Assembly. We have been thwarted in many ways. They want to stop our work. That is clear from the speeches delivered in the Parliament. A day ago we were told "You can go to the Federal Court, and take decision soon". Next day the Secretary of State says: "You may go to the Federal Court; but we were not bound by any decision that the Court takes". Have we not met here in very large numbers in this Assembly? We will go on with our work. We will face any difficulty that arises and try to solve it as we have done in the past. We have already prevented great harm being done to the major community. We have done that in the past and we shall do that again in order to bring about solidarity and drive away the British people from this country. We can do that.

But let me ask why is the Muslim League remaining out? They want the British people to tell us that even if we assemble here and frame a constitution, they would not implement it. Let them say so. We will draw up a constitution and place it before the bar of public opinion. We have in this world unbiased countries of unbiased mind who will judge our actions rightly, justly and truly. Only a jaundiced eye will see everything yellow and wrong. In the South African dispute the United Nations Organisation Delegates supported our just cause although Britishers opposed us. Our cause is just, we shall proceed with our work and prepare a Constitution which will be one to be proud of. (*Applause*).