

**Sir S. Radhakrishnan** (United Provinces: General): Mr. Chairman. Sir, I have great pleasure in commending this Resolution to the acceptance of the House. From the list of amendments tabled, I see that there are three different questions raised: whether a declaration of this character is essential; whether this is the proper time for considering such a declaration; and thirdly, whether the objectives included in this Resolution are matters of general agreement or they require modification or Amendment.

I believe that such a Declaration is essential. There are people who are suspicious, who are wavering, who are hostile, who look upon the work of this Constituent Assembly with considerable misgivings. There are people who affirm that, within the Cabinet Plan, it will not be possible for us to effect either real unity in the country or true freedom or economic security. They tell us that they have seen before squirrels move round in a cage, and that within the limits of this Cabinet Statement, it will not be possible for us to effect the revolutionary changes which the country is aiming at. They argue from history that revolutionary changes are generally effected by violent action overthrowing established Governments. The British people were able to end monarchical despotism that way; the United States of America attained her primary freedom through direct action; the French, the Bolshevik, the Fascist and the Nazi revolutions were also effected by similar methods. We are told that we can not effect revolutionary changes through peaceful methods, through negotiation and discussion in constituent assemblies. We reply that we have similar ends; we wish to bring about a fundamental alteration in the structure of Indian society. We wish to end our political and economic dependence, but those who are strong of spirit, those who are not short of sight, take their chances --they make their chances. Here is a chance that is open to us and we wish to use this to find out whether it will be possible for us to gain the revolutionary ends by methods which are unusual so far as past history is concerned. We want to try whether it will not be possible for us to effect a smooth and rapid transition from a state of serfdom to one of freedom. That is the undertaking which this particular Assembly has on hand. We wish to tell all those who are abstaining, from this Assembly that it is not our desire to establish any sectional Government. We are not here asking anything for a particular community or a privileged class. We are here working for the establishment of Swaraj for all the Indian people. It will be our endeavour to abolish every vestige of despotism, every heirloom of inorganic tradition. We are here to bring about real satisfaction of the fundamental needs of the common man of this country, irrespective of race, religion or community. If the trumpet gives an uncertain sound, we cannot rally the people to our support. It is therefore essential that our bugle call, our trumpet-sound, must be clear, must give the people a sense of exhilaration, must give the suspicious and the abstaining a sense of reassurance that we are here pledged to achieve full independence of India, where no individual will suffer from undeserved want, where no group will be thwarted in the development of its cultural life. Therefore I believe that a declaration of objectives of this character is essential and it is not necessary for us to wait till this Assembly is fuller than it happens to be at the present

moment.

Now let us turn to the objectives themselves. We resolve that India shall be an Independent, Sovereign Republic. On the question of independence there is no difference of opinion. Premier Attlee, in his first statement, made on 15th March, said:

"I hope that the Indian people may elect to remain within the British Commonwealth. I am certain that she will find great advantages in doing so; but if she does so elect, it must be by her own free will. The British Commonwealth and Empire is not bound together by chains of external compulsion. If, on the other hand, she elects for independence, in our view she has a right to do so."

The Muslim League and the Princes have all agreed to it. In the Memorandum on States' Treaties and Paramountcy, presented by the Cabinet Mission to the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on the 12th May, 1946, it is said that--

"The Chamber has since confirmed that the Indian States fully share the general desire in the country for the immediate attainment by India of her full stature. His Majesty's Government have now declared that, if the Succession Government or Governments in British India declare independence, no obstacle would be placed in their way. The effect of these announcements is that all those concerned with the future of India wish her to attain a position of independence within or without the British Commonwealth."

All those concerned with the future of India, the Congress, the Muslim League, and other organisations and the Princes also, they all desire independence for India within or without the British Commonwealth.

Mr. Churchill, in the House of Commons, referring to His Majesty's Government's offer of independence, said on the 1st of July, 1946--

"However, it is another matter when we try to short-circuit the process and my 'Take independence now'. That is what the Government are going to get and they are going to get it very soon. They should not blind themselves to the idea. There is going to be no hesitation on the part of those with whom the Government is dealing in taking full and immediate independence. That is what is going to happen."

This Resolution on the objectives does not wish to disappoint Mr. Churchill. (*Hear, hear*). It tells him that the expected is happening. You gave us the choice to get out of the British Commonwealth. We are electing to go out of the British Commonwealth. May I say why? So far as India is concerned, it is not a mere Dominion like Australia, like New Zealand or Canada or South Africa. These latter are bound to Great Britain by ties of race, religion and culture. India has a vast population, immense natural resources, a great cultural heritage and has had an independent career for a very long time, and it is inconceivable that India can be a Dominion like the other Dominions.

Secondly, let us consider the implications of what happened at the United Nations Organisation, when the Indian Delegation, headed by our distinguished colleague, Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, so ably defended--the rights of Indians in South Africa--look at the attitude that was adopted by Great Britain. Great Britain along with Canada and Australia supported South Africa, New Zealand abstaining from voting. It shows that there is a community of ideals between Great Britain and the other Dominions in which India has no share. There is no sense of belonging in the British Commonwealth. We do not feel that we are all members, enjoying similar rights as parts of the British Commonwealth. Some

of you may also have heard of the recent move launched by Mr. Churchill and Lord Templewood for a European Union under the fostering care and leadership of Great Britain. That also shows in what way the wind is blowing.

Yet, even though India may elect to quit the British Commonwealth, there are a hundred different ways of voluntary co-operation, ways of mutual collaboration, in trade, in defence, in matters of culture; but whether all these forms of mutual co-operation are going to develop in a spirit of friendship, trust and harmony, or whether they will be allowed to die out in mutual distrust and recrimination, depends entirely on the attitude which Great Britain will adopt in this crises. This Resolution about the Indian Republic seems to have irritated Mr. Churchill and his followers. Our Chairman today referred to one statement by Mr. Churchill and I will refer to some others.

When the debate on Burma took place, Mr. Churchill stated that the annexation of Burma happened during his father's Secretaryship, and that now Burma is given the liberty to get out of the British Commonwealth. He seems to look upon Burma and India as parts of his ancestral estate and now when they are passing out, he seems to be terribly disheartened.

On the debate on India, he asked His Majesty's Government to remember its obligations "to the Muslims, numbering 90 millions, who comprised the majority of the fighting elements of India" --truth is not rated high in Indian debates and international intercourse-- "and of untouchables of anything from 40 to 60 millions." He refers to the representatives of the Great Congress Party as the mouthpiece "of actively organised and engineered minorities who, having seized upon power by force, or fraud or chicanery, go forward and use that power in the name of vast masses with whom they have long since lost all effective connection." A party of men who have braved the perils of life, who have suffered for their patriotism whose love of country and capacity for sacrifice are second to none in the whole world who are led by one who is today leading a lonely trek in a far off corner of India, bearing on his aging shoulders the burden of a nation's shame and sorrow, to talk of that party in the way in which Mr. Churchill has done is I do not know how to describe it (*Cries of shame*). Mr. Churchill's outbursts are bereft of dignity or discretion. Provocative and irrelevant remarks, sneers of derision in regard to our communal divisions, have punctuated his speech on that occasion and on other occasions. I shall only say here that such speeches and such statements cannot prevent the end but can only postpone it and thus prolong the agony. The British connection will end, it must end. Whether it ends in friendship and goodwill or in convulsions and agony, depends upon the way in which the British people treat this great problem.

Republic is a word which has disturbed some of the representatives of the States in this country. We have said from this platform that a Republican India does not mean the abolition of Princely rule. Princes may continue; Princes will be there so long as they make themselves constitutional so long as they make themselves responsible to the people of the States. It the great paramount power which is sovereign in this country by conquest. is now transferring responsibility to the representatives of the people, it goes without saying that those who depend on that paramount power should do what the British have done. They must also transfer responsibility to the representatives of the

people.

We cannot say that the republican tradition is foreign to the genius of this country. We have had it from the beginning of our history. When a few merchants from the north went down to the south, one of the Princes of the Deccan asked the question. "Who is your King?" The answer was, "Some of us are governed by assemblies, some of us by kings."

*Kecid deso ganadhina kecid rajadhina.*

Panini, Megasthenes and Kautilya refer to the Republics of Ancient India. The Great Buddha belonged to the Republic of Kapilavastu.

Much has been said about the sovereignty of the people. We have held that the ultimate sovereignty rests with the moral law, with the conscience of humanity. People as well as kings are subordinate to that. Dharma, righteousness, is the king of kings.

*Dharmam Kshatrasya Kshatram.*

It is the ruler of both the people and the rulers themselves. It is the sovereignty of the law which we have asserted. The Princes--I count many of them amongst my personal friends--have agreed with the Cabinet Statement and wished to take their share in the future development of this country, and I do hope that they will realise that it is their duty to take notice of the surging hopes of their peoples and make themselves responsible. If they do so, they will play a notable part in the shaping of our country. We have no ill-will towards the Princes. The assertion of republicanism, the assertion of the sovereignty of the people, do not in any manner indicate any antagonism to the Princely rule itself. They do not refer to the present facts of past history of the Indian States but they indicate the future aspirations of the peoples of the States.

The next thing that we find in this Resolution is about the Union of India. The Cabinet Statement has ruled out the partition of India. Geography is against it. Military strategy is against it. The aspirations of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs from the very beginning have been against it. The present tendency is for larger and larger aggregations. Look at what has happened in America, in Canada and Switzerland. Egypt wishes to be connected with Sudan, South Ireland wishes to be connected with North Ireland. Palestine is protesting against any division. Again nationalism, not religion, is the basis of modern life. Allenby's liberating campaigns in Egypt, Lawrence's adventures in Arabia, Kemal Pasha's defiant creation of a secular Turkey, point out that the days of religious States are over. These are the days of nationalism. The Hindus and Muslims have lived together in this country for over a thousand years. They belong to the same land, speak the same language. They have the same racial ancestry. They have a common destiny to work for. They interpenetrate one another. It is not a kind of Ulster, which we can separate; but our Ulster is a ubiquitous one. Even if we have two States, there will be large minorities and these minorities, whether really oppressed or not, will look across their frontiers and ask for protection. This will be a source of continual strife which will go on, as long as we do not have a United India. We realise that while a strong Centre

is essential to mould all the peoples into one united whole, on account of the grievances real or imaginary, we have to be satisfied with a Centre which is limited to the three subjects, which the Cabinet Plan has put before us. Therefore, we are proceeding on the principle of Provincial Autonomy, with the residuary powers to the Provinces themselves. Events that have happened in Bihar and Bengal, tell us that there is an urgent need for a strong Centre. Yet as there are these difficulties, we propose to develop a multi-national State which will give adequate scope for the play of variations among the different cultures themselves.

Grouping has given us a lot of trouble. But grouping is subject to two essential factors--which are the integral parts of the Cabinet Plan,--a Union Centre and residuary powers in the Provinces; and in these Groups also we will have large minorities. Those who are insistent on the rights of minorities will have to concede these rights to others who happen to be included in the Groups. In a statement made by Sir Stafford Cripps on July 18, 1946, he said:

"A fear was expressed that somehow or other the new Provincial Constitutions might be so manoeuvred as to make it impossible for the Provinces afterwards to opt out. I do not myself see how such a thing would be possible, but if anything of that kind were to be attempted, it would be a clear breach of the basic understanding of this Scheme."

That is what Sir Stafford Cripps said. If any attempt is made to so manipulate electorates as to make it difficult for the Provinces to opt out, then that would be, in the words of Sir Stafford Cripps, "a clear breach of the basic understanding of this Scheme". After all we have to live together and it is impossible to impose any constitution against the wishes of the people who are to be governed by that Constitution.

There is also a reference to fundamental rights in this Resolution. It is a socio-economic revolution that we are attempting to bring about. It is therefore necessary that we must re-make the material conditions; but apart from re-making the material conditions, we have to safeguard the liberty of the human spirit. It is no good creating conditions of freedom without producing a sense of freedom. The mind of man must have full liberty to flower and mature and to grow to its fullest stature. The progress of man is due to the play of his mind, now creating now destroying, always transmuting. We must safeguard the liberty of the human spirit against the encroachments of the State. While State regulation is necessary to improve economic conditions, it should not be done at the expense of the human spirit.

We are actors today in a great historical drama. We are involved in it and therefore we are unable to perceive the large contours of it. This declaration, which we make today, is of the nature of a pledge to our own people and a pact with the civilized world.

The question was put by Mr. Churchill to Mr. Alexander whether this Assembly is functioning validly. Mr. Alexander said:

"I repeat the scheme for elections for the Constituent Assembly was carried out. If the Muslim League abstained from going there, how can you prevent a duly elected Assembly from going on to do its business?"

That is what Mr. Alexander said. There was some difficulty about the interpretation of the grouping. Much against its will, the Congress has accepted His Majesty's Government's interpretation. The only two clauses that remain are adequate safeguards for minorities, and a treaty on the problems which arise out of transfer of power. The Constituent Assembly is legally functioning. Every part of the State Paper has been completely accepted and if we are able to frame adequate safeguards for minorities, safeguards which will satisfy not so much the British or our own people, but the civilized conscience of the world, then while yet the British have the power to put it into action, they must give this Constitution the force of law. It is essential that they should do so. If after all these conditions are satisfied, if some excuse is invented for postponing the independence of India, it would be the most callous betrayal of history. If, on the other hand, the British argue that the Constituent Assembly has started functioning on the basis of the Cabinet Plan and they have accepted every clause of the State Paper of May 16, and have provided adequate safeguards for all minorities and therefore they should implement it, then it will be an achievement of history which will secure the co-operation and goodwill of two great peoples.

In that very speech which Mr. Attlee made as the Prime Minister on March 15th, he said:

"In the mass of Asia, an Asia ravaged by war., we have here the one country that has been seeking to apply the principles of democracy. I have always felt myself that political India might be the light of Asia..."

may, the light of the world giving to its distracted mind an integral vision and to its bewildered will an upward direction.

Here are the two alternatives. Accept the Constituent Assembly. Take its findings. Find out whether there are adequate safeguards for minorities or not. If they are there, give them the force of law and you may get cooperation. If, after all these conditions are fulfilled, you still try to make out that something is lacking, the British will be understood as violating the spirit of the whole State Paper, and the dark possibilities which will lie ahead of us in the present world conditions, I do not wish to contemplate.