

[Dr. H. S. Gour.]

ask whether it would not be cheaper for the Government to construct a temporary Secretariat in Raisina, including a hall for the accommodation of the Honourable Members of this Assembly and the Members of the Council of State. This would certainly cost much less than Rs. 5½ lakhs and place not only the clerks but also the Honourable Members of this Assembly under very great obligation. The clerks as well as ourselves suffer intolerable inconvenience in living at one end of the town and coming here six miles away for the purpose of business. I submit that it would be economical in the end if a temporary Secretariat were constructed somewhere in the proximity of the hostel there or the clerks' buildings, and the work of the Secretariat and the Legislative Assembly conducted there till the completion of the permanent buildings.

I, therefore, submit that this motion ought to be carried.

The motion* was negatived.

LONGWOOD HOTEL, SIMLA.

Dr. H. S. Gour : The next amendment I beg to move, Sir, runs as follows :

That the provision of Rs. 74,000 for the extension of Longwood Hotel, Simla, be omitted.

This is another point upon which I should like to elicit the opinion of Government. From the information which I have been able to collect, I find that the Longwood Hotel is intended for the accommodation of Members of this Honourable House while the Legislative Assembly is in session in Simla, that it has been acquired for that purpose, and that it is being adapted for the purpose of accommodating Members of this Assembly. So far as my information goes, this Hotel is two or three miles away from the place where the Council Chamber is under construction. I submit, if this is the case, then the Government is perpetuating the same mistake which they have committed here of locating the Members a long distance away from their ordinary place of business. Here we can afford the service of a motor car, but in Simla we cannot. We are told that we might be able to get to our place of business on horses. I do not suppose that every one of us can afford or ride a horse. The result would be, that it involves walking three or four miles every morning and evening to our place of business. I beg to submit, that the expenditure of Rs. 74,000 for the extension of Longwood Hotel shall be deferred till this Assembly has had time to decide whether it is willing to move to Simla for the autumn session. Therefore, I submit, that we must, first of all, address ourselves to the question. Is this Assembly of opinion that its legislative business should be transacted at any part of the year on the cloudy heights of Simla, and if it is of opinion that it should not be so transacted, I submit, that this motion for reduction should be carried. I therefore submit, that this question again is interlinked with the main question whether this Assembly does or does not wish to go to Simla, and I would ask the Honourable Members to indicate their opinion as to whether they are prepared to go to Simla for the Simla session. If they are not, they will support me in this amendment.

* That the provision of Rs. 2,55,000 for Motor Bus Service for the conveyance of Government of India establishment be omitted.

Sir Sydney Crookshank : I understood from the ruling of the Chair that the principle as to whether the Government of India would go to Simla during the course of the next seven years while the new Secretariats are under construction, or would carry on in our present Chamber and surroundings, is a matter which will be discussed on the motion which is down in the agenda under No. 22.

As regards the specific motion put forward by my esteemed friend, Dr. Gour, I will just explain to him what the actual circumstances are in this case. We acquired late last summer the Longwood Hotel which stands on the Elysium at a distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 miles at the utmost from Gorton Castle, that is to say, the locality of the new Council Chamber, at a cost of 5 lakhs of rupees, and I maintain, that we made a very good bargain of it. The alternative was to have bought the Grand Hotel at a cost of 20 lakhs. That was considered rather too ambitious. We are at the present moment providing additional accommodation at the Longwood Hotel at a cost of Rs. 1,74,000 and we are also building some quarters below the Cart Road for those who live in the orthodox style at a cost of Rs. 87,914. Against the acquisition of the Longwood Hotel there has been paid Rs. 5 lakhs. Against the other two items we have liabilities to the extent of about Rs. 1,32,000. The accommodation which will be provided eventually under the measures in contemplation for the provision of orthodox style quarters will be roughly 60 quarters for the Members of this Assembly and of the senators of the Council of State, if I may give the Members of the other House that nomenclature, and about 40 quarters for those living in the European style, total about 100. That of course is not anything like enough for the total number of Members of the two Houses, but inasmuch as there are a certain number of officials and certain others who prefer to go to hotels or make private arrangements, it is thought that a provision of 100 quarters would suffice. If this item of Rs. 74,000 is disallowed, not only shall we have to stop the work on the orthodox and some of the unorthodox quarters, but also incur heavy liabilities, and I may, for the information of the House, explain here that the difficulties of carrying out work in Simla are extremely great. Labour is very short. Materials have to be brought up from a distance and now that all these arrangements have been made and the work is progressing, I hope satisfactorily, it would be a thousand pities, I speak from my own personal point of view, to shut down work on the provision of these quarters. I, therefore, leave it to the House to judge the matter from the business point of view. Incidentally, I may add that the value of house property in Simla is rising by leaps and bounds every year and that these quarters will, if not required for use by the Members of these two Houses, really be a very valuable property which can be disposed of to advantage. It will thus be seen, that if we cut down this Rs. 74,000 not only do we throw a certain amount of difficulty but probably considerable inconvenience on the Members of the two Houses who have not got the means of making their own arrangements in Simla, and I may mention that in Simla it is often very difficult indeed to get accommodation in the hotels or elsewhere, and I think the House will agree that as a purely business proposition our measures in this respect are on sound lines. I would, therefore, prefer to leave to the House the question of rejecting this amendment.

Mr. Wali Mohamed Hussainally : I have one or two remarks to offer in connection with this question. I really think that the question of the exodus to Simla is a very important question which ought to be

[Mr. Wali Mohamed Hussainally.]
decided before this question is taken up and I therefore beg for a ruling from the Chair whether it would not be in order to defer the consideration of this question until that question is finally decided and my reason for asking for it is that if we now budget for this provision, we are practically committing ourselves to the course of going over to Simla for the next session, which I think ought not to be done.

I think several Members will find it difficult now to vote one way or the other until that question is thrashed out and decided. Therefore, I agree with my friend, Dr. Gour, in asking that this should be deferred until that larger question is decided.

The next fact that I would point out is, that the accommodation that is being provided for Members of the Assembly is, if anything, too small, because, if I understood the Honourable Member for the Public Work Department aright, the accommodation that is going to be provided there will be only for about 100 Members, whereas the total number of this Assembly is very much larger than that, so that there will be very keen competition for the accommodation there. If we decide the question of the exodus, against moving to Simla, even then, according to what we have just now heard, there will be no difficulty at all, because the hotel can easily be disposed of or utilised in another way at a considerable profit. That is for the Government to say, but we just now heard that it was a very good bargain, and, if this provision is not made, still a good price will be got for that property. All the same, Sir, I think that the question of the exodus is a very important one, which ought to be discussed before this provision is made.

The Honourable Mr. W. M. Hailey : If you could allow this, Sir, and if you would allow it to be done, it would be suitable from the point of view of Government if the question arising out of motions Nos. 22 and 23 were decided before this question was proceeded with.

The Honourable the President : The motion to postpone consideration of the motion for reduction standing in the name of Dr. Gour is in order. Do I understand the Honourable gentleman has moved that motion ?

Mr. Wali Mohammed Hussainally : Yes, I would like to move the proposition that the consideration of this question might be put off.

Dr. H. S. Gour : If my consent is required, I freely accord it, that these Resolutions standing in my name might be deferred until the larger question about the exodus to Simla has been decided.

The Honourable the President : The original question was :
'That the provision of Rs. 74,000 for the extension of Longwood Hotel, Simla, be omitted.'

Since which it has been moved to postpone the consideration of this amendment as well as the following amendment No. 21* until the amendment No. 22† has been considered and disposed of.

The motion to postpone consideration of this amendment was adopted.

*No. 21—'That the sum of Rs. 1,12,000 provided for the quarters of the non-official Members of the Council (page 51) be omitted.'

†No. 22—'That the provision of the sum of Rs. 5,64,000 for building a Council Chamber for the Legislative Assembly in Simla (page 51) be omitted.'