

The Honourable the President: I think the Member of the Government in charge may reasonably ask for notice of that question.

The Resolution as amended below was adopted.

'This Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council the desirability of employing responsible Passenger Superintendents at junction stations and also Travelling Passenger Superintendents for important passenger trains, whose sole duty should be to look after the comfort and convenience of passengers, especially the third class.'

RESOLUTION *RE* ARMY IN INDIA.

Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer: Sir, I rise to move the Resolution which 3-59 P.M. stands against my name and which runs as follows:

'This Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council that he do represent to the Home Government that the proposals of the Esher Committee contained in Parts I and II of their Report should not be acted upon and that on the other hand the Army in India should be entirely under the control, real as well as nominal, of the Government of India and should be free from any domination or interference by the War Office on matters of military policy, organization or administration and that such co-ordination as may be desirable between the military policies or organizations of different parts of the Empire should be secured by discussion and agreement at Conferences at which India is adequately represented.'

The subject of Army administration and organisation in India is one of very grave importance to the people in its military, political and financial bearings. Members of this House are aware of the great interest which has been excited by the Report of the Army in India Committee, more shortly known as the Esher Committee, and of the very grave apprehensions to which it has given rise not merely in this country but also in well-informed circles, even in England, apprehensions not merely as to the exact import and significance of these proposals but also as to their consequences, and the military and financial burdens which they will involve.

The object of my Resolution is to clear up these misapprehensions to ascertain how far it is possible for the Government to see eye to eye with us, and to secure the assent of the Government to the principles which, we believe, should be borne in mind in any proposals for the administration or organisation of the Army.

Now, before going further, I may just say a word as to the procedure which has been followed by the Esher Committee. It is unfortunate that this Committee should have decided not to take any formal evidence whatever upon which to base their conclusions. Had they taken formal evidence, that evidence would have been printed and published and made available to the public and we should have been in a position to know how far their proposals were supported by the evidence of witnesses. The reasons given by the Committee for the procedure adopted are not very satisfactory. They say:

'At the outset of our enquiry it was necessary to decide whether formal evidence should be taken. After consideration, we determined that it was undesirable to add to the mass of documentary evidence already arrayed. We consequently decided to take counsel with high officers, military and civil, and certain independent persons whose views and experience would simplify our task, but not to record their evidence formally. We have thus obtained expressions of opinion given with complete freedom, and coupled with the experience of the members of the Committee, they were of great value in forming our conclusions.'

But they have deprived the public of the help they would have derived had such evidence been placed before the public.

Now, Sir, the administration of the Army in India has two important aspects from which it should be considered. One is the aspect of India's home needs, both internal and external, if I may say so; and secondly, the aspect of Imperial needs. The impression that one derives from a perusal of the whole of this Report is, that the Committee have been dominated throughout by the Imperial aspect of the question of Army administration. It does not appear that they have paid sufficient attention to the question from the point of view of India's own needs, internal and external. Now, the instructions which were issued to the Committee, included, among others, the instruction to keep in view the approach of India towards a Dominion status. These instructions are referred to in the report of the Committee, but evidently they have had very little attention given to them. The instructions are simply referred to for the purpose of being passed over. It does not appear that any specific proposal or recommendation of the Committee is based upon the necessity for keeping these instructions in view. The Committee have said that the bases of control of Imperial Defence have not yet been laid down, and that they, therefore, proceeded upon the existing statutes and usage governing the question of Army administration. How far the Committee have done so, how far they have conformed to the existing statute and usage, I will examine shortly.

There are three principles mentioned by the Committee in their Report as the principles which have governed the decision of the Committee in these matters. They are laid down on page 1 of the report. They say, the plans proposed must be consistent with (1) the control by the Government of India of Indian military affairs, (2) giving to the Government of India a voice in questions of Imperial Defence, and (3) allowing the Imperial General Staff through its Chief to exercise a *considered influence* on the military policy of the Government of India. It seems to me, Sir, with all the deference due to the expert body that constituted the committee, that while the first two principles are all right, the third is one to which we cannot subscribe. But even with regard to the first two principles enunciated, namely, that the Government of India should have the control of Indian military affairs and that the Government of India must be given a voice in questions of Imperial Defence, it seems to be more a question of lip-homage than of actual observance of those principles in the recommendations made. First of all, with regard to the second principle, *viz.*, giving to the Government of India a voice in questions of Imperial Defence I see hardly any trace of that principle in this report. With regard to the first principle, *viz.*, the control by the Government of India of Indian military affairs, it seems to me that the control that will vest in the Government of India under these proposals is of a very shadowy character, and that it is far from real.

Part I of the Committee's report deals with the question of the relations of the Governor General in Council with the India Office and with the War Office and with the question of the high Command. Section II which deals with the question of Defence Committees is not of very much consequence. It is a consultative body, and there are no proposals of any importance in that section. Before examining the Committee's proposals, I should like to draw the attention of the House to the provisions of the existing statutes in conformity to which the Committee say they have made their proposals. There are only four sections in the Government of India Act bearing

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upon this point. There is a clause in section 2 of the Government of India Act which vests the control, direction and superintendence of Indian affairs in His Majesty's Secretary of State. Section 33 of the Act vests the Government of India in the Governor General in Council, but he has to obey the orders of the Secretary of State. So we may take it that the Government of India is vested in the Governor General in Council subject to the orders of the Secretary of State. There are only two other sections, and no more, which have any bearing upon these questions of military organization. Section 21 relates to the control of the Secretary of State over the expenditure of revenues, and section 22 relates to the application of the revenues of India to military operations beyond the external frontiers. These are all the sections that have any bearing upon the question of military organization. So far as section 22 is concerned, I may perhaps be permitted in passing to draw attention to what I conceive to be a defect in the provision, namely, that while it prohibits the application of Indian revenues to military operations beyond the external frontiers of India, it does not prohibit a draft upon our man-power. The Imperial Government would be entitled through its Secretary of State to ask us to send an expedition outside India, provided only that it does not call upon us to pay for the expenses. In the Self-governing Dominions the Imperial Government has no power to move a single soldier without the consent of the Dominions.

Now, there is one other matter to which I should like to refer before I pass on from the statute. It is one of the essential principles of the Indian Constitution and one which can be easily gathered from the spirit of the Act and has been emphasised by the Joint Parliamentary Committee in their proposals is that the control which is vested in the Secretary of State as the mouth piece of Parliament can be relaxed only *pari passu* with the recognition of popular control. The Esher Committee have in many of their proposals, as I will show later on, felt the existing control of the Secretary of State to be embarrassing, and they have asked for more latitude. But what that latitude means is simply a devolution of power to the Government of India free from interference by the Secretary of State. That devolution would be a departure from the spirit of the statute, a departure from the essential constitutional principle that it is only in so far as we recognise popular control that the control over the Government of India's power to expend revenues can at all be relaxed by the Secretary of State.

Now, Sir, I will refer briefly to the recommendations of the Committee in Part I of their Report. The first thing they say, after referring to a passage already quoted in the course of this day's discussion, is that 'the control exercised by Parliament has been illusory.'

They further say :

'The working of this system,' that is the control of the Secretary of State, 'unduly causes delay in dealing with military questions that frequently require rapid settlement both in the interests of efficiency and the contentment of the army in India. We, therefore, recommend that greater latitude should be allowed to the Governor General in Council in deciding questions of a military character, provided they do not influence by reflex action on the administration of the British Army at Home.'

This is practically their first recommendation in Part I. Now, there may be a certain amount of delay involved in this procedure of reference to the Secretary of State. Delays are unavoidable in any system of bureaucracy,

and for the matter of that, I doubt whether they would be avoidable even under democracies. But while delays are dangerous during war, questions relating to the army, such as pay, allowances, pensions, annuities and so on, though they may have been under consideration for some time,—are not questions that will not brook delay. It may, I well understand, be irritating to the officers concerned, but on the other hand, look at the safeguard provided for securing due deliberation, for not allowing the Government of India to suddenly plunge into a scheme requiring a large amount of expenditure at the dictation or the importunity of the military authorities. Now the latitude that the Committee wants is really not latitude to the Government of India to carry out their own determination or conviction, but, as I shall show later on, a latitude to be led by the War Office. After all, this complaint of delay in settlement of questions is not a matter of very serious consequence, as I submitted, in times of peace, and, on the other hand, there are advantages which out-weigh the disadvantage.

The second proposal made by the Committee is that there should be a chain of military responsibility established from the Chief of the Imperial General Staff in England downward to the Governor General and the Commander-in-Chief in India, and this chain of military responsibility is attempted to be accomplished by certain methods. The Committee have sought to achieve this object both in England and in India. In India what they propose is, that the Commander-in-Chief himself is to be appointed on the recommendation of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. He would, therefore, be bound by ties of gratitude to the authority to whom he owes his appointment. And not merely the Commander-in-Chief, but the Chief of the General Staff in India is to be appointed on the recommendation of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

Now, it may be asked what is there wrong with this proposal? Is it not right that in making such high appointments, appointments to high commands, we should consult the very best expert authorities in England? Is there anything wrong in consulting them? I would answer that first with this question; what is the present system; what has there been wrong with it and what is the object with which you propose this change? It has not been proved that our Commanders-in-Chief in India have been military failures. On the contrary, I believe, we have been fortunate enough to secure a succession of distinguished heads of the Army in India. The object with which this is proposed is to see that the officers who are Commanders-in-Chief and Chiefs of the General Staff here are persons bound by intimate ties to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. It is all for the purpose of producing what they call a close and intimate touch between the Commander-in-Chief in India with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff that this is proposed. They say that the Commander-in-Chief should be at liberty to communicate freely with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. At present, evidently he does not enjoy the privilege of writing to the head of the Imperial General Staff behind the back of the Government of India and behind the back of the Secretary of State. It may be said that they provide against any possible inconvenience by their suggestion that he should furnish them with copies. The Commander-in-Chief writes straight off to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, but he sends copies to the Government of India and the Secretary of State and keeps them informed.

The real object, however, with which you bring forward these proposals is disclosed later on in your own report, and that is, to bring a larger and larger

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influence and control to be exercised on the military authorities in India directly by the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

This is what they do in India. At the other end, in England, they think that the Secretary of State should no longer have a military colleague in this Council. The Military Member of Council has to go, and, in place of the Military Member of Council in the India Office, the Secretary of State should only have a Secretary in the Military Department.

And who is the Secretary? He is a Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff, so that the Chief of the Imperial General Staff has got not only the support of the Commander-in-Chief in India, but also that of the Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff. They say that the Secretary of State should be distinctly given to understand that he should not look for advice to anybody except the Chief of the Imperial General Staff who is the sole military adviser. The Secretary in the Military Department is the *liaison* officer between the Secretary of State, and the Chief of the Imperial General Staff is affected by this power, and will be his conscience-keeper in the India Office and will communicate to the former the instructions, directions or advice of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. It may be asked, 'What is there wrong in asking for advice? Is there anything wrong in one expert asking another for advice, or, in a layman referring to experts for advice?' The position is very different from that of mere consultation. It is clear from the Report that the state of relations which the Committee wished to bring about is not of a mere advisory character which even the Dominions have recourse to, but of a directory character. I may refer you at once to the passage so that you may see that my observation is justified. They say :

'We are in agreement with the General Staff view that the Commander-in-Chief in India should be more directly in touch with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, with a view to obtaining increased efficiency as regards the organisation, equipment and training of the Army in India, so as to develop the military resources of India in a manner suited to Imperial necessities. We have already stated that in our view, the Commander-in-Chief in India should have the established right to communicate in peace with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff in London with regard to strategical plans, war organisation, training and the selection for commands and senior Staff appointments.'

Then they say, with very engaging modesty,—'But we are not prepared to dogmatise as to whether the Government of India or the Imperial Government at Whitehall is to be responsible for the military safety of India.'—I presume, they refer to the question of financial liability. They go on :

'It is obvious that, if the gradual approach of India to a Dominion status is to be taken as an axiom, this question can be resolved only by the exercise of judgment, tact, and the principle of 'give and take.' We, however, are strongly of opinion that, while unity of administration is for the present out of the question, unity of conception on broad lines of military policy, such as those for which an Imperial General Staff should be responsible, is essential in the interests of India herself and of the Empire as a whole.'

I am not oblivious of the necessity for co-ordination in matters of Imperial policy and it is certainly desirable that there should be co-ordination and that there should be harmony of conception in such matters. But the proper way to secure it is by very different methods, not by making the War Office in England close its tentacles over the Army and the Military Department in India.

Let me refer to one other passage which shows that I am justified in

describing it as a proposal for tightening the grip of the War Office over the military administration here, and it is this :

'We recommend in section 3 that the Commander-in-Chief in India shall be appointed with the concurrence of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff and that the Commander-in-Chief shall be the sole military adviser of the Government of India. If this system can be established, the chain of military responsibility over questions of an Imperial character will be complete. On the one hand, the Commander-in-Chief will look to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff not for advice, but for *supreme direction* in all questions of Imperial military policy in which India is concerned, and, on the other hand, the Governor General will look to the Commander-in-Chief for military advice upon questions in which India only is concerned and also upon questions of a wider military character, so that the Commander-in-Chief will be in a position to express upon the latter the considered views of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.'

And then they say :

'We believe that under the plan, as proposed, the Government of India will retain its statutory control over the Army in India (yes, a paper control), that the Governor General will be assured of undivided counsel upon military questions, that unanimity of military policy will at last be established between Great Britain and India.'

Now, whether there is any alternative scheme to these proposals for co-ordination and so on, is a matter which can be examined later on. One such method is, what I propose, namely, discussions at general conferences like the Imperial War Conference at which India will have a voice just like other countries. I may mention, in passing, that in the Self-governing Dominions also they have got a General Staff but the General Staff is perfectly autonomous. If they want the advice of the Home authorities, they secure it by arranging for inspection by proper officers, by interchange of officers, not proposals for the wholesale fusion of cadres, and by securing facilities for training. These are the methods which the Dominions employ for the purpose of securing co-ordination and unity of conception. This is the proper method, and not the invocation of the influence of the War Office to such an extent that the Government of India cannot act, except in accordance with the advice of the Commander-in-Chief who is to be guided by the advice of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

The Honourable the President: I must remind the Honourable Member of the rule regarding time limit.

Sir Sivaswamy Aiyer: I am quite willing to sit down, Sir.

The Honourable the President: If the Honourable Member wishes to close his argument, I am willing to give him a few minutes more.

Sir Sivaswamy Aiyer: In view of the late hour, Sir, perhaps I had better sit down.

Sir Godfrey Fell: Sir, I think I shall be voicing the general opinion of this Assembly if I congratulate my Honourable friend upon the extremely lucid exposition which he has given of Parts I and II of the Esher Committee's Report and upon the great ability with which he has stated his case. I should like to say at once that, on behalf of Government, I am prepared to accept his Resolution, provided that he will agree to modify it. The modification, which I venture to suggest, is that he should omit the words beginning with 'he do' in the first line, down to the words 'on the other hand' in the third line. The Resolution would then read thus :

'This Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council that the Army in India should be entirely under the control, etc.'

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If the Honourable Mover of the Resolution is prepared to agree to this amendment, I do not think it will be necessary for me to deal in any great detail with the arguments he has put forward to-day. But I should like to take this opportunity of explaining the Government of India's point of view on the main issue which he discussed. The point of view of the Government of India is this. They hold that certain phrases, certain sentences, certain paragraphs in the Esher Committee's Report are misleading and might give rise to the impression that War Office influence could be exerted on the Army in India. They hold, however, that no such intention was in the minds of the Members of the Esher Committee, nor would the Government of India acquiesce for one moment in any such interference. May I for one moment, speaking as a late Member of the Esher Committee, add that there is not one of the Members representing India on that Committee who would not rather have had his right hand cut off than sign a report which would place the Army in India under the control of the War Office. The Assembly may rest assured that the Government of India are fully alive to the paramount necessity of securing that all matters of Indian military policy shall be retained in the hands of the Government of India. On the other hand, they accept the view of the Esher Committee that there are many questions which it is desirable to discuss with the Chief of the Imperial General Staff at Home and to obtain his advice upon. These are the wider questions of Imperial policy, in which both India and the rest of the Empire are concerned. I am not sure whether a reply has yet been given to a question on this subject or whether it has only been drafted, but I take this opportunity of assuring this Assembly that the Government of India have undertaken that no action shall be taken on Parts I and II of the Esher Committee's Report until this Assembly, and the Council of State, if they so desire, have had an opportunity of expressing their opinions on them. It is also the intention of the Government of India to communicate the views of this Assembly and of the Council of State to the Secretary of State in order to enable him and the Cabinet to arrive at a final conclusion on these debated points.

I cannot, however, pass over in silence some of the criticisms which my Honourable friend has made upon the Esher Committee's Report.

I hope that this Assembly will feel some sympathy with me. I stand here as the sole member present of that much abused body, the Esher Committee. I wish I could secure the services of my Honourable friend, Mr. Eardley Norton, or some Advocate of equal ability to defend me. I find myself in the position of the one accused out of seven or eight, who has been arrested and placed on his trial. Speaking, then, as a member of the Committee, and not on behalf of the Government of India, may I point out that the Mover is somewhat under a misapprehension in a good deal that he has said.

One matter, to which I take particular exception, is his suggestion that a Commander-in-Chief who has been appointed on the recommendation of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff would be so bound to the latter officer by ties of gratitude, that he could not possibly do his duty as a servant and a member of the Government of India. I deny that most emphatically.

The great men in our public life are not so lost to all sense of decency as to give their blind support in all questions, right or wrong, to the men to whom they owe their appointment. Let me put the matter in another way. We have an army in India, one of the largest armies in the world, an army of which we are all justly proud. Do we, or do we not want the best soldier that

the Empire can give us to command it? I take it that this Assembly will agree with me that we do. If we want the best soldier that the Empire can give, is it not natural that we should turn to the greatest military authority in the Empire for advice in selecting a Commander-in-Chief? That is all that it comes to. The appointment is made by His Majesty the King on the advice of the Cabinet, and the Cabinet naturally turns to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the highest military authority in the Empire, for advice. I do not think that any one in this Assembly can really take exception to this procedure. Ever since there has been a Chief of the Imperial General Staff, that has been the practice that has obtained.

There is another point. The Mover reproved the Esher Committee for saying that there was no necessity for the Secretary of State to have a military colleague on his Council. I do not know whether he was under the impression that the military member on the Secretary of State's Council has any statutory right to be his military adviser. I rather gathered from the argument used by the Mover that that was his impression. If I am wrong, he will perhaps correct me. Now, in the India Office, as many Members of the Assembly know, there is no system of portfolios. The Members there are not in charge of portfolios as Members of the Government of India are; and the one senior Military Officer who, in practice, is appointed as a rule to the Secretary of State's Council has no more right to tender military advice to him than the Member who looks after Finance or the Members who look after the Public Department or the Judicial Department. Unfortunately, there have been occasions in the past when a soldier Member of the Secretary of State's Council has considered it his duty, and has been permitted, to tender military advice to him. I am not at liberty to explain to the Assembly one particular instance which I have in view. I will merely say that one of the greatest tragedies in the late War has been held by many to have been due, directly due, to the fact that the Secretary of State for India listened to advice, military advice, from a quarter from which he had no right to demand it, from an authority who had no special right to offer it.

I want the Assembly to realise the essential necessity for unity of military policy. We are one Empire, and the first duty of the various parts of the Empire is that any one of them should be prepared, in case of need, to go to the aid of another part when that other part is attacked. This Assembly knows that the whole of our scheme of defence in India against external aggression is based upon the assumption that we should maintain an army sufficient to hold our own against certain potential enemies until help can come from the United Kingdom. I should like with your permission, Sir, to read a few lines on this subject from a very able article in a periodical named the 'Army Quarterly.'

It says:

'The Self-governing Dominions and India cannot stand aloof in matters of defence. On the contrary, with the growth of their power, they should assume their responsibilities in the Imperial Council and accept their proportionate burdens and liabilities. Their defence representatives must be consulted in all plans and projects of co-operation and co-ordination and are to be truly Imperial and if the Empire is to be consolidated in the most effective and economic manner.'

Now, the Honourable Member picked out many phrases in the Esher Committee's Report and read them out with telling effect. I have already stated the opinion of the Government of India that some of the expressions used were misleading. The accusation against us in this respect amounts, there-

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fore, to one of lack of literary skill, one, if you like, of illiteracy; but I frankly admit, speaking as I said before, as a Member of that Committee and not on behalf of the Government of India, that I stand here unrepentant and unashamed regarding the main lines of the Esher Committee's Report. I believe that we must play our part as partners in the Empire, and on this point I should like to read you another passage from the article which I quoted just now. Before doing so, I should like to point out that the Honourable Mover, no doubt unconsciously, rather slurred over a certain phrase in the Report, anyway he did not give it the significance which the writers intended should be attached to it, and that was this:

'On the one hand, the Commander-in-Chief will look to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff for supreme direction in all questions of Imperial military policy in which India is concerned.'

Now, the really important word there is 'Imperial'—'Imperial military policy.' That means military policy which affects more than one part of the Empire, not India alone. No one wants the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, much less the War Office, to interfere in anything to do with our military policy in India; but the Assembly can very well imagine situations arising in the future as they have arisen in the past, as, indeed, they exist to-day, in which India, if she is perhaps not so much concerned as some other parts of the Empire, is at least concerned to some extent. It is a very important principle of military science that the power which holds the ultimate reserves must have an effective voice in the decision of policy. The ultimate military reserves of the Empire are held in the United Kingdom, and the adviser of His Majesty's Government on their employment is and must be the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

The passage, which I wanted to read to you on this subject, is this:

'The fact of the matter is that the expression 'military policy,' used in the Committee's Report, has created misunderstanding and roused hostility to its recommendations. 'Military policy,' as used here, does not imply policy in regard to initiating or undertaking military operations, but merely in regard to securing military efficiency in the means available and in the preparation and study of plans. The term is unfortunate, for, in any event, policy must be dictated by the Government and Imperial policy by an Imperial Council, assisted by an effective and efficient Committee of Imperial Defence. But the respective portions of the Empire can no longer work in compartments; they must co-ordinate their efforts if those efforts are to be effective and economical, and in this respect India is no exception to this rule.'

That is the underlying principle of Part I of the Esher Committee's Report.

Again, the Honourable Mover painted a doleful picture of the Government of India, tied hand and foot to the Imperial General Staff. I am very glad that he did not go quite so far, as a certain influential newspaper at Home, whose remarks on the subject, I should like to read to you:

'We do not hesitate to say that these extraordinary proposals are, in the highest degree, unconstitutional. They reduce the Viceroy, who is, by statute, the head of the Army in India'

(the Governor General in Council, by the way, is the head of the Army in India, not the Viceroy);

'to a nonentity, and they wipe the Government of India off the slate altogether. They convert the Commander-in-Chief into a gramophone. This is the negation of constitutional government, and it is entirely destructive of the fundamental British principle that in military matters the Civil power should be supreme.'

Surely that is the language of hyperbole. Against it I should like to refer the Assembly to a few passages on the other side in Part I of the Esher Committee's Report. We recommended that greater latitude should be allowed to the Governor General in Council in deciding questions of a military character. We called attention to the fact that the Government of India must retain its statutory control over the Army in India. In the letter with which we presented Part I to the Secretary of State, we laid down the fundamental principle that the plans we proposed must be consistent with the control by the Government of India of Indian military affairs.

Now, the Honourable Mover, in drawing his pathetic picture of the powerless Government of India, tied hand and foot to the chariot of a triumphant Chief of the Imperial General Staff, instanced the position which the Esher Committee proposed to assign to the Military Secretary at the India Office. There has always been a Military Secretary at the India Office, whose time is mostly taken up in attending to the affairs of officers who are at Home on leave and such like matters. We wanted to secure much closer *liaison* in military affairs between the India Office and the War Office; for the experience of the War showed the extreme dangers which attend any attempt to run the defence of this Empire, or military operations, in water-tight compartments. I think I need only refer to the early phases of the Mesopotamian campaign in support of my argument. For this reason, and as we knew that there was no effective *liaison* at present, we recommended that the Military Secretary at the India Office, while continuing to be Military Secretary at the India Office, should have a recognised status and position on the General Staff, by being made a Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff. This does not render him directly subject to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Perhaps I might be allowed to read to the Assembly a few lines which indicate more clearly what was our intention :—

'The Secretary in the Military Department at the India Office should have the status of a Deputy Chief of the Imperial General Staff, with the right of attending the meetings of the Army Council. He would thus be in a position to ascertain the views of the Imperial General Staff in matters which are not of sufficient importance to necessitate the personal intervention of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, to keep the Secretary of State for India, and through him the Government of India, in touch with the trend of the Army Council's discussions, and at the same time to represent and press the views of the Government of India as communicated to the Secretary of State from time to time.'

I do not think that this Assembly will really take exception to the proposal to secure, in this perfectly constitutional manner, closer *liaison* between the India Office on its military side and the War Office.

There is just one other point which I should like to comment upon in the Honourable Mover's speech. I may have misunderstood him, but I think he said, when referring to the Government of India Act, that the Secretary of State had the power to make the Government of India send troops out of India. That, I think, is not the case. The position is exactly the reverse. The position is that the Government of India, who are masters in their own house, cannot send their troops for service outside India, at the expense of Indian revenues, without a Resolution of both Houses of Parliament.

I turn now to the last part of the Resolution, which deals with the co-ordination between the military policies or organizations of different parts of the Empire. On this point, I think, all that I need say, is that the machinery already exists in the Imperial Defence Committee at Home. That Imperial

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Defence Committee, as this Assembly is probably aware, is a body presided over by the Prime Minister. He can appoint to it any one he chooses. I believe that there is a certain nucleus of more or less permanent members, but the Prime Minister can call in to his assistance any one he likes; and, in any matter in which India is closely concerned, he would have the power, and he would certainly decide, to seek the advice of the Secretary of State for India, and very likely of the Military Secretary at the India Office as well. I think that in this way the object of the Honourable Mover's Resolution on this point is fully met.

I do not wish to detain the Assembly any longer to-night and I would only beg my Honourable friend, the Mover, to agree to the omission which I mentioned earlier in my speech. In that case, Government will be very happy to accept the remainder of his Resolution.

Chaudhuri Shahab-ud-Din: There is one question, Sir, which I would like to put to the Honourable Member through the Chair. It has been said that the Government of India propose to ascertain the opinion of the Legislative Assembly as well as of the Council of State to communicate it to the British Cabinet. How does the Honourable Member suggest that that opinion should be gathered? If we are told that, our task would be very much shortened. In the next place, he suggested an amendment, which, if accepted, would mean the omission of all mention of the Esher Report. How does he propose to meet that objection?

Sir Godfrey Fell: I am afraid I do not quite understand the Honourable Member's question.

Chaudhuri Shahab-ud-Din: The first is this: the Honourable Member has just declared before the House that the Government of India propose to ascertain the views of both Houses and to communicate them to the British Cabinet. How is that proposed to be done? Will there be any separate committee of each House, or a joint committee of both Houses? How is that opinion to be ascertained? That is the question in a nut-shell.

The second question is this: the Honourable Member proposed that the words 'do represent to the Home Government . . . acted upon and, that on the other hand' be omitted. Now, if the words 'Esher Committee, etc., are altogether deleted, the Resolution might perhaps be complete, but it will lose its whole force. How is that proposed to be met?

The Honourable the President: Perhaps it would be well if the Honourable Mover of the Resolution could say how far his mind is altered by the offer made on behalf of the Government. Until then, I do not think it is reasonable to ask the Military Secretary in what manner the opinion of this House or of the Council of State shall be taken on a subject of this kind. I would ask the Honourable Mover whether he has anything to say by way of comment on the offer made by the Government.

Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer: Quite so. In doing so, Sir, may I have the liberty of making a few remarks in reply to some of the observations which have fallen? I presume I have the right of reply as Mover of the Resolution.

The Honourable the President : If I allow the Honourable Member to exercise his right of reply now, I think, under the usual procedure, that will be taken as closing the debate. I do not know whether that meets the convenience of the House or not.

What I suggested to the Honourable Member was that he might give an indication of the attitude he takes towards the proposal made by Government.

Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer : Oh, yes. I am quite prepared to indicate my attitude at once. Only my misgiving was that it might deprive me of the right of making my reply later. Of course, I am going to accept what Sir Godfrey Fell has suggested. I am thankful to the Government for their willingness to accept my proposition in the form in which it has been put forward. I do so on the principle that half a loaf is better than none. Though it does not secure the acceptance of the Government in respect of my proposal that certain recommendations of the committee should not be accepted. I am thankful to the Government for having agreed to accept the principle which I have put forward in the later part of my Resolution.

Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas : May I rise to a point of order, Sir?
 4-57 P.M. My point of order is this. The House might not accept the modification suggested by Sir Godfrey Fell though the Mover himself may be agreeable to it. Therefore, this difficulty will arise that if the suggested modification is not acceptable to the House, then the Members of the House would like to say something more. That again will be inconsistent with the Mover's right of reply before the close of the debate.

The Honourable the President : So far, I have not given that ruling because of the offer made by the Government. We do not want to enforce the rules rigidly, and the Honourable Mover has stated that he is prepared to accept the modification proposed by Government. The Assembly is well aware that the acceptance by the Mover of a Resolution of any change in his Resolution is not valid until endorsed by the whole House. I propose to seek that endorsement now by putting this proposition to the vote.

The question is . . .

Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer : That does not preclude discussion. . .

The Honourable the President : No, that does not preclude discussion on the main question. The question is that the words from and including 'he do represent' in the first line of the Resolution, down to and including the words 'on the other hand' in line 3 of the Resolution do stand part of the Resolution.

Rao Bahadur T. Rangachariar : May I know, Sir, whether the Government have any objection to add as introductory words?
 4-59 P.M.

'With reference to the proposals of the Esher Committee the Army in India should be entirely under the control, etc., etc.'

because there must be some reference made to the Esher Committee, otherwise what is the object of this Resolution? We should indicate the occasion for this Resolution . . .

The Honourable Mr. W. M. Hailey : We are quite willing, Sir, to put in some form of words connecting this Resolution with the Esher Committee's Report. We are quite prepared, for instance, to accept the following form of words :

‘Notwithstanding anything that has been said in Parts I and II of the Esher Committee's Report.’

The Honourable the President : I put the question to the House, first :

‘That those words, *viz.*, ‘he do represent’ in the first line of the Resolution, down to and including the words ‘on the other hand’ in line 3 of the Resolution, do stand part of the Resolution.’

The motion was negatived.

The words proposed to be inserted are :

‘Notwithstanding anything contained in Parts I and II of the Report of the Esher Committee.’

The motion was adopted.

The Honourable the President : The main question is that the Resolution, as amended, be adopted.

Chaudhuri Shahab-ud-Din : Sir, there is one word which I should like to say, with your permission. If I understood the Honourable Mr. Hailey rightly, he wanted to put in the words ‘the whole of the Esher Committee's Report’ and not only ‘Parts I and II.’ I think it would not make any departure from the principle, if the words ‘Parts I and II’ were deleted, and the words ‘the whole of the Esher Committee's Report’ retained.

The Honourable the President : My Honourable friend is one of the Panel of Chairmen and must know that we have already decided the question.

If there are no further speeches on the main question, I shall call upon the Mover of the original Resolution to exercise his right of reply.

Munshi Iswar Saran : Sir, at the Bar, an Advocate, who argues a bad case with grace, tact, skill and ability, is always considered to be superior to an Advocate who can argue a good case well. Having regard to that, Sir, I may be permitted to offer my tribute of admiration to the Honourable Member who has represented the Government on the present occasion (Sir Godfrey Fell).

Sir, I do not wish to conceal from this Assembly the strong feeling that was created in India, I am happy to say, not only amongst Indians, but also amongst thoughtful Englishmen, that the Report of the Esher Committee was a danger and had to be fought against. With your permission, Sir, I shall quote to this Assembly the opinion of a gentleman who, I venture to think, enjoys the confidence not only of the people but also of the Government; I mean His Highness the

Aga Khan. This is what His Highness says in a pamphlet which he wrote in the year 1920 on British policy in the East :

' Yet, if the principles underlying the Esher Committee's Report are put into practice, the military affairs of India will not even be under the control of the Government of India. The War Office and the Imperial General Staff will have the last word not only as to organization, but also as to utilization. ' This means ' I beg the House to mark these words—' that India will remain a dependency for ever ' . '

He proceeds, Sir, and I make no apology for quoting at length :

' I know we are told that the organization suggested by the Esher Committee will be common to all the Dominions including India ' .

The words that follow are pretty strong, but coming, as they do, from a gentleman who, as I said before, enjoys the confidence of the people as well as of the Government, should be carefully considered. He says :

' That statement is an insult to Indian intelligence, for, we are well aware of the jealous manner in which the other great Dominions insist on retaining control of their own affairs ' .

If there is real need for centralising in London the control of the Empire's military forces, why should not Canada and Australia be invited to lead the way in accepting this new principle ? We know they will never do so. Is it surprising that British sincerity is doubted by India ? I submit, Sir, and I submit with great respect, that the Government will do well in carefully considering the situation and in forming a correct estimate.

Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas : Sir, I move that the question be now put.
Under section 57, page 20, of the Manual, this can be done at any
5-6 P.M. time.

The Honourable the President : I have already told the Assembly that the Mover has the right of reply. I cannot now accept the motion unless it safeguards the Honourable Mover's reply.

Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas : I allow that : I meant to say, subject to the right of replying.

Rao Bahadur T. Rangachariar : I do not know whether any Member has a right to put such a motion when another Honourable Member is on his feet. I always understood that such a motion can only be put after a Member takes his seat.

The Honourable the President : The motion is in order at any time whether a Member be speaking or not. It is in the discretion of the Chair, interpreting the will of the House, to say whether the time has come to accept a motion to close the debate. If the Member who proposed the motion will say : ' at the end of Mr. Saran's speech and after the Mover has exercised his right of reply ' I will then accept the motion.

The motion was adopted.

Munshi Iswar Saran : Sir, I was saying when I was most agreeably interrupted by my Honourable colleague over there, that having regard to the nature of the Report made by the Esher Committee as well as having regard to the forces that we find in existence in India to-day, and also to the fact that India has now a different outlook and a different point of view from which it approaches this question, it will be well if the Government of India will inform the Secretary of State and the British Cabinet that the Esher Committee Report has roused most strong feelings in this country. There are only one or two observations which I shall, with your permission, make, and they are these: When the Honourable Mover criticised the system of appointing the Commander-in-Chief at the recommendation of the Chief of the General Staff in England, he took an exception to the principle. He has been met by the argument that there are sufficient men, who, in spite of these recommendations, will be able, in case of conflict, to look after the interests of India. I cordially accept that explanation. The Honourable Member who represents the Army in this Assembly has stated that up till now the practice has been that the Chief of the General Staff has been consulted as regards the appointment of the Commander-in-Chief. If that be so, then I ask in all seriousness, where is the necessity of putting it in black and white and of making it a condition? I submit with great respect: consult him—consult not only him, but consult all those from whom you expect to receive valuable help and advice, but do not do it in a form which will give the appearance as if the dominating voice was to be the voice of the Chief of the General Staff.

Sir, I must say with your permission, that the Honourable Member who represents the Government was perfectly right when he reminded us of the Imperial responsibility. No Indian, Sir, who claims and who aspires for Swaraj only, thinks of rights. He is ready to bear his legitimate share of the Imperial responsibility. He does not expect that India will have a position in the Empire, and, at the same time, not have her share of the burden of the Imperial responsibilities put upon her shoulder. But we do claim, and we claim most emphatically, that you should treat us as you treat the other Dominions. Why talk of our responsibilities alone? We do not forget them. I pray you to think of our rights as well. In the words of an article which appeared, not in an Indian paper, but in an Anglo-Indian paper—I mean the *Times of India*, which, I believe, has a reputation for sobriety, for thoughtfulness and for soundness of judgment, there is a unanimity of opinion among the thinking men all over the country, be they Indians or be they Englishmen, in regard to the report of the Esher Committee. I wish, with your permission, to conclude my remarks by quoting a few words from the same article:

‘The cardinal feature in the military policy of India should be that the Indian army must be maintained in India, for India and by India’.

Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Aiyer : Sir, I have only a very few observations to make by way of reply to those which have fallen from Sir Godfrey
5-14 P.M. Fell. He observed that there was a remark in my speech which might perhaps sound like a reflection upon the holder of the office of Commander-in-Chief, that I perhaps meant that he could not be expected to arrive at an independent judgment for himself as to what should be done under particular circumstances. I would only observe that the circumstances under which the Commander-in-Chief in India would be appointed under the

recommendations of the Committee's Report have been considered even by distinguished military men to be such as to be likely to interfere with the free exercise of that judgment.

I would only quote one sentence from a paper contributed by Major-General Younghusband to the *Asiatic Review* :

'The Commander-in-Chief is not only, however, to owe his appointment to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, but he is in all Imperial military questions under his orders.'

That is the view which he evidently took of the effect of these recommendations.

To pass on from that, it was observed by Sir Godfrey Fell that the main line which the Esher Committee took in their Report was in regard to the necessity for consulting Imperial needs and requirements. I have only one or two observations to offer with reference to that remark. The primary function of the Army in India is two-fold,—to repel external aggression and to maintain internal security. That has always been recognised to be the primary duty of the Army. I quite recognise that there is another duty which may be cast upon the Army in India, as it may be cast upon the Armies of other parts of the Empire, and that is, the need for going to the rescue of the Empire whenever it may be threatened. I fully recognise that obligation. But, in meeting that obligation, we should be placed on the same level as the other portions of the Empire. We should not wish to incur any greater responsibility than the Self-governing Dominions in that matter. I am anxious that any remarks which we may utter here should not lead any hostile nations or powers to suppose that India will ever desert Great Britain in the hour of trial or in the hour of danger. But, if you analyse this Report, you will see that the framers of the Report have been throughout obsessed by this consideration, that the centre of gravity of international politics has shifted to the Near East. If it has shifted, it is not due to India's conduct. If new problems have been created, they are not of our seeking. They are the result of European Diplomacy and of European politics, of new schemes of treaties which you may have entered into for purposes of your own. Whenever there is any danger threatening the Empire, we should be satisfied that those dangers have not been of your seeking, and that it is forced upon us by other Powers without any provocation. If the United Kingdom wants to play high games of international politics, to dictate the fates of Powers in Europe, to parcel out kingdoms everywhere in the world, or to create or solve problems in the Near or Middle East, to play the rôle of saviours of oppressed nationalities or creeds, or to peg out new spheres of influence or to spread the benefits of western civilisation, then we shall not encourage you by any promise of support with our man power.

The Honourable the President: The question is, that the following Resolution, as amended, be adopted :

'This Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council that notwithstanding anything contained in Parts I and II of the Report of the Esher Committee, the Army in India should be entirely under the control, real as well as nominal, of the Government of India, and should be free from any domination or interference by the War Office on matters of military policy, organization or administration and that such co-ordination, as may be desirable between the military policies or organizations of different parts of the Empire, should be secured by discussion and agreement, at Conferences at which India is adequately represented.'

The motion was carried.

The Honourable the President: I would remind Members that a ballot for Bills and Resolutions for days set down in March 5-20 P.M. will be held at noon in this Chamber to-morrow and will be presided over by Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy.

The Assembly then adjourned till Saturday, the 19th February 1921.