

(iii) They use British ranks in the same way as the University Training Corps.

(iv) They receive the same conveyance allowance as the University Training Corps.

(c) No. They are trained on the same lines as the University Training Corps.

THE PARSİ PIONEERS.

850. ***Mr. N. M. Dumasia:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether they are aware that Colonel Lavie represented at the time of formation of the Parsi Pioneers that the battalion enjoyed the same rights and privileges as those enjoyed by British territorial regiments?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether military authorities had authorised Colonel Lavie to make such representation as aforesaid?

Mr. E. Burdon: The Government of India have no information and are making inquiries the results of which I will communicate to the Honourable Member.

CONVERSION OF THE PARSİ PIONEERS INTO A TERRITORIAL BATTALION.

851. ***Mr. N. M. Dumasia:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether the military authorities have now decided to convert the Parsi Pioneers into an ordinary territorial battalion?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether they are aware that such a decision has caused great discontent and irritation in the Parsi community?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state whether they are aware that the Parsi Pioneers have declined to accept that decision on the ground that it is a breach of promise made to them?

Mr. E. Burdon: (a) The conditions on which the 11th Battalion, 2nd Bombay Pioneers, was formed are given in the statement on the table. These terms were, I may mention, accepted by 8 leading Parsi gentlemen of Bombay, and Government see no reason why these terms should be altered.

The unit was constituted under the Indian Territorial Force Act and, therefore, already forms one of the units of the Indian Territorial Force.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Statement showing terms and conditions on which the 11th Battalion, 2nd Bombay Pioneers, was formed.

1. That a technical unit of the Indian Territorial Force be formed in Bombay from the Parsi community exclusively and recruited under the conditions laid down for the Indian Territorial Force generally.
2. That the rules should provide for the continuous training of this unit on lines approximating to those laid down for the University Training Corps.
3. That as such training would differ in character from that prescribed for the infantry branch of the Indian Territorial Force the Parsi unit should belong to another branch.
4. That the unit should be designated the Bombay Pioneer Battalion.
5. That the unit should be allowed the same choice as regards uniform as the University Training Corps (British).
6. That when called out or embodied for training or service it should be given a special scale of rations, the British service scale being suitable for this purpose.

7. That the unit should be officered by gentlemen of the Parsi community, but that in the first instance European Officers for the post of Commanding Officer and second in command should be eligible.
8. That a regular officer should be appointed as adjutant.
9. That headquarters should be provided by the Government together with all clothing, equipment, as in the case of other units.
10. That the unit will be subject to all liabilities as regards service as other units of the Indian Territorial Force.
11. That as soon as may be practicable a Cadet Company of the Battalion be formed in order to give preliminary training to prospective recruits.

AMALGAMATION OF THE PARSI PIONEERS WITH THE TERRITORIAL FORCE.

852. ***Mr. N. M. Dumasia:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether an option has been given to the Parsi Pioneers to agree either to the disbandment of the Parsi Pioneer battalion or to its amalgamation with the Territorial Force such option to be exercised within a month of the notice?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether they are aware that a large majority of the members of the Parsi Pioneers have decided to resign rather than accept conditions of service that they regard as humiliating and different from those originally promised?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state whether the period of the option will expire on the 10th March?

(d) Will Government be pleased to state whether the military authorities would see their way to extend further the period within which the option is to be exercised until the committee proposed by Mr. Venkata-patiraju has reported upon the steps to improve and expand the Indian Territorial Force so as to constitute an efficient second line of reserve of the regular army and to remove racial distinctions?

Mr. E. Burdon: (a) No option of the kind has been imposed. As a result of a meeting held in Bombay on the 17th December 1923, at which two prominent members of the Parsi community were present, it was decided that as there appeared to be some misapprehension regarding the liabilities of members of the battalions under the Indian Territorial Force Act, the members should be called upon to complete and sign a certificate declaring that they fully understood their liabilities for service and training as soldiers of the Indian Territorial Force and that they were desirous of completing their engagement.

Those members who are not willing to sign the certificate will be allowed to take their discharge. One month has been allowed to members in which to decide whether they will sign the certificate or not.

(b) The Government of India have no precise information on the point.

(c) and (d). The time limit given by the local authorities was to expire on the 15th March, but in the meantime, His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief has issued instructions that no final decision is to be taken locally regarding the future of the battalions. A report has been called for, which will be submitted for the orders of the Government of India, and the Government of India will also consider the suggestion which I understand the Honourable Member to put forward, namely, that outstanding questions relating to the Parsi Battalions should be examined by the Committee which he has mentioned.