

[16th March 1927]

The Hon'ble the PRESIDENT : The hon'ble member's proposition is not in order at this stage. The only thing the hon'ble member can do is that if a demand is moved he can ask the permission of the Chair to move to adjourn the discussion to a future date, and if the Chair allows to move that motion he can move it.

CIVIL WORKS (TRANSFERRED).

ACQUISITION OF BADSHAHIGANJ BASTI, ETC.

Mr. H. A. GUBBAY : Sir, I beg to move :

That the Council do assent to a supplementary grant of Rs. 1,68,000 to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1927, in respect of Civil Works (Transferred).

This appropriation has the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor.

Sir, the schedule gives all the details.

The Hon'ble the PRESIDENT : The question is :

That the Council do assent to a supplementary grant of Rs. 1,68,000 to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1927, in respect of Civil Works (Transferred).

The motion was adopted.

SUPERANNUATION ALLOWANCES AND PENSIONS.

Mr. P. C. TALLENTS : Sir, I rise to move :

That the Council do assent to a supplementary grant of Rs. 72,845 to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1927, in respect of Superannuation Allowances and Pensions.

This appropriation has the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor.

Sir, the necessity of this grant has been explained in the printed schedule appended. There are just two points in it which I should like to emphasise. The first is that the excess required for superannuation allowances is required for voted pensions, payable in India ; and the second is that the other part of the excess, which is required for the payment of the commuted

[Mr. P. C. Tallents]

value of pensions is owing to the fact that the rules for the commutation of pensions have recently been liberalised, and more applications for commutation of pensions have been received and allowed.

Babu KRISHNA BALLABH SAHAY: Sir, I rise to oppose this demand. There are several things in this demand which we cannot understand. First of all, it is said that the excess is due chiefly to increase of pay since the war. If the increases are due to the war, I cannot understand why the increases take place seven or eight years after the war. The war came to an end in 1919 and since then we did not hear of these cases. Now we hear that the increase is due to the payment just made on account of reasons connected with the war. If I object to the demand on this ground, I also want to object to it on another ground, viz. that it is due to arrangements made since the reforms. Sir, I am not conscious of the arrangement that has been made whether the arrangement has been made in accordance with the recommendations of the Lee Commission or whether the increase is due to the Reforms themselves. If the increase is due to the Reforms, it provides us with another reason why we should condemn the Reforms themselves, because, after all, our province, for the matter of that our country, is too poor to bear this additional charge—what we have got to bear we must bear—but we must put in a word of protest against all increase of expenditure which are due to the Reforms, or to the war. With these words, Sir, I oppose the demand.

The Hon'ble Mr. E. L. L. HAMMOND: Sir, I should like to make it quite clear that this has nothing whatever to do with the Lee Commission. These are pensions payable in India to Indian servants whose pay is voted. As regards the increase being due to the war, hon'ble members will realise that not long ago the pay of our deputy magistrates and still more of the ministerial officers was raised owing to the increase of prices. The pension is calculated on what officers have been receiving for the three years previous to their retirement. After this increase of pay we have had to wait till the officers retired before the increase affects the pension charges and now this increased pay is being neglected in the increased pension. As the hon'ble the Finance Secretary has pointed out, we are also receiving more and more applications for commutation of pensions. Actually, it is probably beneficial to the Government and the tax-payers to have the pensions commuted, because our liability for further

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payment will then cease. But meanwhile the estimated cost of charges in respect of pensions this year has increased. You can never make sure how many pensions—how many Government officers—are going to retire, or how many of them when they do retire are coming up for commutation of their pension. As a result of the Reforms the pensions are now a provincial charge and not a central charge borne by the Imperial Government. The liability was formerly theirs, but to-day that liability is ours, perhaps as part of the first step on the road of provincial autonomy. This is the position.

Babu DEVAKI PRASHAD SINHA: Sir, I shall be very short on this motion. I quite realise that it was impossible for the Government to foresee this excess expenditure, but, Sir, our opposition to this motion is not based upon any condemnation of the action of Government in coming with a supplementary demand. It is based upon the fact that they have adopted a principle which will always necessitate their coming up with a supplementary demand. They have adopted a principle which has introduced uncertainty in our financial affairs. The principle of commuting pensions is such that it would always put the Government into trouble. I quite agree with the Hon'ble Leader of the House when he says that it is impossible for the Government to foresee how many officers would like to commute their pensions. But if it goes on for a few years more, he will see that, the vast majority of the officers would like to commute. If you offer them such an advantage, and it is natural that they would make use of it. By adopting this principle of giving officers pensions at the commuted rate you are giving them the combined benefit of the pension system as well as of the provident fund system. I, Sir, have always advocated that our officers, to whatever rank and grade or service they may belong, should be given the benefit of provident fund. But, in this country the provident fund system is not as popular as it is becoming elsewhere, and, if you introduce the principle of the provident fund into the principle of giving officers superannuation pension, you will naturally be lodged into difficulty. Sir, we realise that by voting out this demand we will not be acting in a reasonable manner, but, Sir, we are not expected to be reasonable when any step is taken by Government without having the least regard for the feeling of those who are to bear the burden of extra expenditure. You have chosen to be unreasonable in the beginning and you cannot very well blame us if we are unreasonable now. For these

[B. Devaki Prashad Sinha]

reasons. I support the opposition to this motion, we want Government to provide for such expenditure by certification or other extraordinary powers which they possess, we prefer that this grant should be sanctioned on the sole responsibility of the beaureaucratic Government rather than be sanctioned by elected representatives of the people. For these reasons I join hands with the hon'ble member in opposing the motion.

Babu GUR SAHAY LAL: Sir, I do appreciate that Government have been put into a position so as to place these supplementary demands at this stage because more applications for commutation of pensions were filed. I do appreciate that Government had no option but to present this supplementary demand; but certainly it is the sheer fault of the Government to bring this matter towards the close of the year. My second ground, which has just been urged, is that, when you have adopted a wrong policy, we are reaping the consequence of it and we are asked to give our consent to adopt the same. I think that for a province like ours—which is one of the poorest provinces—we should proceed cautiously, especially when every year our financial difficulties are increasing. Still we are adopting a policy by which we are burdening our province. Although the Hon'ble the Leader of the House has assured us that all this money will go to the Indians and not a pice of it will go to England or to the persons who can very well be said to be untouchables, but still we have to consider the difficulty and the future burden with which our province will be saddled. Therefore, I also share the opposition and will say that we should not be a party to such a grant which will burden the province and with a policy which has been adopted and adopted wrongly.

Babu JAGAT NARAYAN LAL: Sir, I do not want to be long in my opposition to this demand. What I do want most emphatically is to offer my opposition to this demand before it is put to vote. In the budget debate there was some discussion over this head and I feel that if we had the time and really if we had the power, it was really the head which we should cut down altogether. I am not at all concerned with the difficulty with which Government have been landed, because the difficulty is a creation of their own. I feel that the way in which the superannuation allowances are increasing the alarming rate at which the increase has been going on—is very very objectionable, and that it is a head which should be completely thrown out by the House, at this stage, because the Government have agreed to

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commute the pensions and to make up the deficit caused thereby they have brought forward this demand. I should like to take this opportunity of entering my strong voice of protest against the alarming rapidity with which this is increasing and the additional injury which has been caused to the budget and to the finances by restoring to this method of commutation which has necessitated an increased expenditure.

The Hon'ble the PRESIDENT: The question is:

That the Council do assent to a supplementary grant of Rs 72,845 to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1927, in respect of Superannuation Allowances and Pensions.

The motion was adopted.

EXPENDITURE IN ENGLAND.

LEAVE SALARIES AND EXCHANGE.

Mr. J. D. SIFTON: Sir, I rise to move:

That the Council do assent to a supplementary grant of Rs. 8,335 to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1927, in respect of Expenditure in England.

This appropriation has the recommendation of His Excellency the Governor.

The explanation of the excess expenditure by the High Commissioner is contained in the schedule circulated.

Mr. JIMUT BAHAN SEN: Sir, I rise to oppose this motion. The reason which actuates me to oppose this motion is this. Ever since the Lee Commission made these recommendations about leave allowances and passage allowances the number of officers going on leave

Mr. J. D. SIFTON: Sir, it has nothing to do with the Lee Commission recommendations or with any officers who have been affected by the recommendations of the Commission.

Mr. JIMUT BAHAN SEN: I was just pointing out that this is a reserved department.

The Hon'ble the PRESIDENT: There is a difference between reserved and non-voted. There are certain things which this Council cannot touch.

Mr. JIMUT BAHAN SEN: What I was urging, Sir, that ever since the Lee Commission made those recommendations the number of officers taking advantage of those recommendations