

MAIDEN SPEECH OF 51873

Prof. N. G. RANGA

Made in Central Legislative
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Prof. N. G. RANGA

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Mr. N. G. Ranga (East Godavari and West Godavari *cum* Kistna : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : Sir, it is very difficult for me now to decide what to say, because I do not know how much time I am going to be allowed. It is already the closing time. Anyway, I must, first of all, protest against one of the statements made by the last speaker before I proceed with my own discussion. It is said that the movement that is being carried on in the country is doomed to failure. Sir, I am not so sure about it. I do not approve of it. We must realise, as honest people, that there are two parties in the country who are fighting, one is the Government, and the other is the Congress, and we do not know who is going to win. They are willing and anxious to see that it is a fight to the finish. We are anxious that these two parties should be brought together and made to accept reason, peace and conciliation. It is really too early, and it would be disastrous and even inadvisable and unwise for us to say that one party is going to win and the other party is going to lose.

Now, Sir, coming to the question of the Round Table Conference, I am one of those who have welcomed the great Viceregal announcement of 31st October, last, I am one of those who really thought that India stood to gain by not opposing the Simon Commission ; but what has happened till now since then ? In spite of the support that has been given to the Simon Commission by many people, who have been accused as being traitors to their own country, the Simon Commission to-day have hurled upon India a Report which is unjustifiable from whatever

point of view we may look at it. Now, so far as the Round Table Conference is concerned, everyone of us expected much from it. Everyone of us was convinced, or felt at the time when the great Viceregal announcement was made, that here was a chance by which India was going to attain Dominion Status. More than six months have elapsed, and yet to-day we are no nearer to Dominion Status than we were before the 31st October. We were expecting great messages from His Excellency the Viceroy, as well as the Secretary of State for India, and only the other day His Excellency the Viceroy made a sincere appeal for co-operation between Indians and the English. At the same time, he made a very ineffective appeal, because he was not able to satisfy a large majority of the people of this country as to the *bona fides* of his Government and the Government in England. Sir, what are we going to do in the Round Table Conference? Are we going to set up the future constitution for India? If so, is it not necessary that both the parties in this Conference, Indians on the one side and the English on the other, should be prepared to co-operate with one another on terms of equality, goodwill and good humour? Where is the good humour that is absolutely necessary? Where is the idea of equality or concession of equality from the English to the Indians? In India to-day we are faced with a nation-wide agitation with which most of us, I dare say, are not in sympathy. and we have made it clear on the floor of this House. At the same time there is that movement in this country, and this movement has had the support of the people, not to the small extent that has been put by one of the leaders of my own party, but it has the support of a large majority of the people of

this country, although it may be they have been misguided. Well. Sir, what have the Government been doing till now? Instead of giving a chance for the Round Table Conference to decide the future constitution of India, the English Government have chosen, Sir, to give wide publicity to this disastrous and mischievous Report, the Simon Commission's Report, by advertising it and by selling it cheaply. To-day it has been stated that the first edition has run out and the second reprint is coming out shortly and is expected to sell out. In addition to that, as my Honourable friend behind me just reminds me, the Secretary of State, Mr. Benn, has announced in the House of Commons that he is considering seriously the possibility and the necessity for getting this report translated into as many languages as possible, so that England can carry on as much mischievous, disastrous and useless propaganda against India on behalf of England not only in England, but also in all the countries of the world to justify the position of England and to justify diehardism of England. Sir, is this the atmosphere in which the Round Table Conference should meet? Is this the time when a Conference called the Round Table Conference should meet in England, where the future constitution of India can be discussed?

What is the part that is being played by the Government of India itself? Is the Government of India trying its best to see that the number of friends for itself and for the ideal of the Round Table Conference is increasing? Instead of that, as my Honourable friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir put it, they have attempted to try to increase their enemies. All their actions have resulted in increasing

the number of their own enemies in this country, although these enemies are as anxious as my Honourable friends on the opposite side of the House to have a strongly organised Government to maintain law and order in this country. If you go anywhere in the country from which I come, the Andhra country, you will find that there is not even one important person who is prepared today to stake all his property and all his position in supporting the Government. Why is it so, Sir? Only till the other day there were a number of people who called themselves co-operators, who called themselves Justicites and who came forth willingly and gladly to support the Simon Commission. And why should it be that all these millions of people should today be ranged on the side of anarchism, on the side of those people who are against the Government? What is the cause? It is all very well, it is all very easy for my Honourable friends on the other side to say that they are not responsible for this state of things, but that it is civil disobedience and its adherents who really are the cause for this uprising of anarchy and for this atmosphere of anarchy. On the other hand, let them have some patience and let me say to them that in none of the important cities in the Northern Circars on the Coromandel Coast, is it possible for any one to organise a meeting, whether it be for the peaceful purpose of co-operative movement, or for anarchical purposes, or for the purpose of the civil disobedience movement. Only the other day, when a co-operative conference was about to be held in Guntur, the police authorities prevented its being held on the plea that there was section 144 in force. This demon of section 144 is visiting every place. It is a contagious disease,

which is spreading from place to place. The whole of the country which I represent is now subject to the virulent attack of this demon of section 144, Criminal Procedure Code, as I would put it. In addition to that, you have what is known as a ban on the Gandhi cap. I can wear a Gandhi cap here, but I cannot wear it in Guntur. If I go there tomorrow, though I am a Member of this august Assembly, with this cap, I would be clapped in jail. Do you think that is a thing which any self-respecting Government; which any civilised Government, a Government which is really anxious that Indians should come to terms with it, that Indians should co-operate with it, that Indians should accept the olive branch as it now says it is offering, should do ?

Again today we are told that there is local self-government in this country. We are told, "Look here, the Simon Commission have recommended provincial autonomy, You are going to get it. Why don't you go to the Round Table Conference ?" Well, Sir, what are we having in that part of the country from which I come ? In Guntur, the Collector issued a mandate to the Municipality of Guntur, stating clearly that, unless each and every member of that house voted in favour of the removal of the National Flag by a particular date — that was the 21st of last month — unless this was done, each and every member was liable to be arrested. It is a statutory body. It is a public body and that body has already taken that particular decision, namely, to hoist the National Flag on the Municipal Office. Now here are the members who are threatened with arrest. Do you want to convert all of them into anarchists ? Or do you want

them to remain loyalists, moderates and co-operators ? This has happened in my district. If they decided to keep the flag flying, they would have been clapped in jail. and you would have accused them as being irresponsible people, as being mad people. On the other hand, they have, except for two courageous people, rescinded their own past Resolution and they have passed another Resolution saying that they are prepared to remove it. You are prepared to applaud them, I suppose. Sir, no self-respecting Indian in this country, who has got one decent drop of blood in him, can congratulate them. At the same time I sympathise with them. I do not expect them, I do not want to advise them to become unwise, to become mad people. Sir, there were police excesses everywhere. I went to several p'aces myself. I have seen broken heads, I have seen broken limbs of several people. I have seen many people lying down in the hospitals in villages like Angalur, Gudlavalleru, Kautaram, Gudivada, Ellore and other places. In addition to that, I have seen doors broken, windows broken, houses broken into, and women insulted. It does not stop there. There were *dhobies* who were threatened with imprisonment if they washed *khaddar* cloths. All people were beaten there, whether they were *khaddar* clad people or foreign cloth clad people, wherever they were found. Look at the humour of the police action. They simple go to gathering of five or six people and ask them to disperse. When they start dispersing, the police begin to beat them. To avoid this beating, if they run, they are still beaten until they are able to get into their houses. I know of cases where people were taken by their pig-tails out of their

homes into the streets and insulted as being cowards for having run away from the police. Is this the kind of action, is this the kind of behaviour that a civilised Government should exhibit in this country, if the Government of India expect to establish a proper atmosphere for the Round Table Conference ?

Again there were police excesses in Rajahmundry. As my Honourable friend Sir Cowasji Jehangir has put it, certainly there might have been exaggerations, and to some of the responsible and authorised exponents of British law formed themselves into a body of inquiry to inquire into the police excesses and stop the exaggerations, if any. And what did the local authorities do ? They simply sent them an order informing them that they should not form themselves into a committee of inquiry. When they refused to abide by this police decision, the great demon of section 144 was hurled upon them, and so they had to stop their inquiry. Is this the atmosphere that you are creating ?

As my Honourable friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir has put it, it is not the number of people who have been hurt, killed or insulted which is the most important thing, but it is the kind of atmosphere that is being created in this country which really matters. Can any one of the Honourable Members of this Assembly, however proud, however aristocratic, and however great he may be, go to any place in the Andhra country today and tell them to go to the Round Table Conference where they will get all kinds of reforms and more power for their own country? Can you talk sense to them? Can you make them realise the benefits that they are deriving from this peaceful Government? Can you make them see the necessity for law and

order? Not at all, because the people have gone almost mad; mad, because they have been asking for freedom and they have been denied it; they have been asking for constitutional advance, and they have been denied it. They have been expecting more improvement, and what has been offered today is nothing. This Commission's Report is a regular insult to the self-respect, to the manhood and also to the hopes and desires of Indians. Sir, we cannot go on at this rate.

I really want a Round Table Conference, I want it at once. I want peace and goodwill to reign between England and India. I know that England, of all the Imperialistic countries, is the best. I was in England for six years, and I can claim to have as many English friends as my English friends in this House can claim to have Indian friends for themselves, friends for whom I have got great regard, friends with whom I have moved for years. And yet, Sir, I cannot understand the attitude of Government here and their supporters in England in bringing about the kind of atmosphere that we are now having in this country. If we are to have peace and goodwill to reign between these two great countries and nations, what we should try to do is somehow or other to get hold of these people who are today making a mad and desperate attempt to grasp at the fruit of freedom and liberty. Government may say, "How are we to get hold of these people, when you yourselves say that they are mad and will refuse to grasp the hand of fellowship which we offered in October 31?" Sir, what did the British Government do in Ireland? They asked the professed Irish rebels, some of them condemned to death, to come and meet, their responsible officers and

Ministers. You can ask the Congress to do the same thing. You can ask them to stop this agitation and say that you are prepared to offer this particular promise of implementing the scheme of Dominion Status at the forthcoming Round Table Conference. Is that more indecent and undignified than the offer which was made by the mighty British Government to the professed rebels of Ireland?

Again. Sir, I wish to put another question. How are you going to end this impasse which, as you say, these civil disobedience people have brought about? Is it by the breaking of heads or is it by conciliation, by bringing them round to follow the path of wisdom and responsibility in their actions? We have got Dr. Ansari, one of the greatest of Congressmen, an ex-President of the Congress ready to help as far as possible and mediate between the Government of India and Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Motilal. If again Government wish to take that course, a glorious opportunity has been given by Mr. Slocombe, the special representative of the *Daily Herald*, by his interviews with Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Motilal. He showed to the British Government and also to the Indian Government that these people, who are supposed to be mad, have got some sense in them and are prepared to come to terms with the British Government. Are not the Liberal leaders, men like my leader here, Mr. Jayakar, anxious that Dominion Status should be achieved for India? They have asked for it time and again. What more is being asked today by Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Motilal? Nothing more than the 'Substance of Independence'. What else is it but Dominion Status as it is understood in the Dominions and also in England by responsible politicians and statesmen?

Every one is anxious to have the same thing. Why is it so difficult for Government somehow or other to assure the people that they can go to the Round Table Conference without any injury to their Ideas or to their conception of self-respect? Why do they not take this initiative? Is it beneath their dignity? Is it not their duty somehow or other to bring back the people who are going mad? Bring them back again into your fold and see that these people are able to enjoy the peaceful, progressive, civilised and respectable form of Government which they desire. In these circumstances, since the British Government and the Government of India have failed to implement a scheme of Dominion Status, since the British Government and the Government of India have failed to bring about conciliation in this country amongst the different sections of the people and themselves, I think it is really beneath the dignity of any self-respecting Indian to go to the Round Table Conference. It is not proper for us to go to that Conference, however beneficial, however useful and however tempting it may be. I know the Honourable the leader of the Independent Party, Mr. Jinnah, is very very confident of his own powers of advocacy and his ability to go to the British people and convince them of the reasonableness, the sacredness and the justice of his own case for Dominion Status. But, Sir, I wish to tell him most respectfully and humbly that it the whole of the civil disobedience movement is not able to reason with the British Government and the Government of India, although it is supposed to be a mad movement, would it be possible for one Mr. Jinnah, however intellectually great he may be, to convince the British Government who

have already made up their minds about the Round Table Conference and also about the Simon Report? Would it not be better for him, intellectually eminent as he is, to stand by the side of the people and say, 'Do not go on in that mad rush, but come and let us fight with this Government. It may be the Government is Satanic, but it has still a bit of reasoning capacity in it. Let us go and attack it' Of course up till now, there have been very few signs of reasoning powers in the Government of India. At the same time, of course you should not take my expression 'Satanic form of Government' to be absolutely and literally true, because it consists of human beings who are agents of the Satanic Government, and it may be possible for us to convince these human beings in some sub-conscious way, to change the very character of this form of Government. That is why I am extremely anxious that my leader Mr. Jayakar, and also Mr. Jinnah should remain here on the floor of the House and say it is beneath their dignity to go to the Round Table Conference.

There is yet another point. In the Viceregal announcement that has been made, it is stated that the representatives of India should go to England to confer with—not the representatives of the British Government—but the representatives of the British people. This is a new expression; and it jars on my ears. Hitherto we have been given to understand that our people are to go into that conference with the representatives of the British Government and we were not given to understand, or even to guess, that the conference was to be between the people of India and the people of England. Sir, if it is going to be the latter conference, I can assure you,

if it were to be given to me to forecast events, that nothing more than the Simon Commission recommendations will be got for India in its future constitution.

Secondly, Sir, the Viceroy, in his announcement, said that people of all different parties will be welcomed and invited, but he did not state that the leaders of these different parties in the country are going to be consulted in a responsible manner before the representatives for the Round Table Conference are selected. The Honourable Mr. Jinnah gave the warning to the Government, that Government should try its best to see that it did not get into a mess and that it selected proper representatives of the people who could deliver the goods. Sir, I wish to address a question to him as to how far he can feel confident that Government will show reason and sense in selecting responsible people to represent India. even if we are to ignore, for the time being, the followers of the civil disobedience movement and Gandhiji himself? Can he feel confident, taking the Government's past into consideration, that the Government have got that much of wisdom or sense as to invite only such men as can really deliver the goods on behalf of the different communities of which this country is composed? Can he feel sure about it? I do not? I do not; and that is another reason why I suppose this particular motion. I would like to oppose the whole of this motion. If that is not permitted, I should like to support the cut. There is a mischievous suggestion on the floor of this House by one responsible speaker that this cut should be withdrawn. I protest against that; I do not approve of it; it is the sacred duty of every one of the elected Members

of this House, as was indicated by Mr. Jinnah to vote for this cut in order to show in an emphatic manner our indignation, our dissatisfaction and our disillusionment against the past as well as the present policy of the Government.

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by

Lr. R. BACHINA

