

Commander Bellairs: Is that accepted by the India Office as a fair trial for this distinguished General?

Mr. Montagu: The hon. and gallant Gentleman must know it is not a question of a trial. The Commander-in Chief in India has a perfect right to dispense with the services of any officer.

Commander Bellairs: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that it is not in accordance with the rules of any military court that General Dyer should have no legal assistance and that he should not be able to cross-examine witnesses?

Mr. Montagu: I quite agree with the hon. and gallant Gentleman, but the Hunter Commission was not a military court and cannot be regarded as a substitute for a military court.

Sir H. Craik: Is it not the case, as was stated yesterday, that the Army Council has had the case of General Dyer before it, and has given time to General Dyer to give a further statement of his case before they come to judgment?

Mr. Montagu: Yes, that was the policy announced yesterday by the Secretary of State for War.

Sir H. Craik: It is not proper—

Mr. Speaker: We are going to discuss the matter to-morrow.

Acting Deputy Commissioner, Gujranwalla.

Colonel Yate asked the Secretary of State for India what action has been taken by the Government of India in the case of the Acting Deputy Commissioner of Gujranwalla, who is reported in the Majority Report of the Hunter Commission to have committed an error of judgment in refusing to give the police liberty to fire upon and disperse the mob engaged in burning the post office there?

Mr. Montagu: The Government of India, in paragraph 25 of their despatch, accept the opinion of the majority of the Committee. As stated in paragraph 41 of the despatch, they are asking the Local Government to take such action as may be necessary to mark their disapprobation.

Hon. Pandit Jagat Narayan—10th June

Lieut. Colonel Sir F. Hall asked the Prime Minister if Pandit Jagat Narayan, who in 1917 accused Sir Michael O'Dwyer of having imprisoned thousands of people without trial, and who subsequently undertook to make a public withdrawal of this false charge, has yet done so: if this person is identical with the Mr. Narayan who has signed the Minority Report of Lord Hunter's Commission on the Punjab disturbances; and, if so, will he state who was responsible for placing on the Commission, a person who had already, by his own confession, been guilty of false and seditious statements of a glaring character?

The Prime Minister : I should be much obliged if my hon. and gallant Friend would address this question to the Secretary of State for India.

Sir F. Hall : Perhaps the Secretary for India could answer the question now ?

The Secretary of State for India (Mr. Montagu) : I do not like to do so without preparing a carefully written answer, and if the hon. Gentleman will be good enough to put it down for Monday I will answer him.

Hunter Commission—14th June

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks asked the Secretary of State for India whether one of the Indian members of the Hunter Commission had been, shortly before his appointment, to investigate the actions of the Punjab Government, forbidden by that Government to enter the Punjab ?

Mr. Montagu : One of the Indian members applied in May, 1919, for permission to enter the Martial Law area to defend one of the accused before the Martial Law Commission. His application was refused by the Administrator of Martial Law.

On 16th June Sir F. Hall repeated the same question and Mr. Montagu replied :—

“ Pundit Jagat Narayan Singh, who signed the Minority Report of Lord Hunter's Committee, made a speech in which he brought this charge in 1917. On being informed of its inaccuracy in 1918 he offered to withdraw it publicly, but in view of the lapse of time the Provincial Governments concerned thought it unnecessary to ask him to do so. He was appointed to the Committee in 1919 by the Government of India, acting in close consultation with myself and with the Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces. The habit of bringing unfounded charges against the Government is not confined to India, although we could all wish that the willingness to withdraw them when disproved were less exceptional. If the hon. and gallant Member really takes the view that he appears to take of the matter, he will, of course, discount the Pandit's recorded opinion accordingly. If he wishes to know my views on that opinion, he will gather them from the Papers which have been presented.”

Sir F. Hall : May I ask my right hon. Friend whether he does not think it would have been more advisable to put somebody on this Commission who had not got a debit balance standing against his name ; and is he aware that perhaps not everybody right through the country has the same opinion with regard to

whether or not it is right for the right hon. Gentleman to put such people on the Commission.

Mr. Montagu : I can assure my hon. and gallant friend that every effort was made to get Indian representatives put on this Commission who were impartial. The fact that a very highly distinguished and esteemed member of the United Provinces Legislative Council made a mistake once, which he offered to withdraw, does not, in my opinion, show he was a partial inquirer.

Sir F. Hall : As that offer of withdrawal had been suggested, does not my right hon. Friend think it would have been advisable that the Government should have accepted it and not have put this gentleman on the Commission ?

Mr. Montagu : As a matter of fact, although it would not have affected my judgment on the subject, neither the Government of India nor I knew of this case when he was appointed, but I am not going to censure the Local Governments concerned when they advised this gentleman a year afterwards that it was not necessary to make a public withdrawal and that it was sufficient that he had offered to do so.

Commander Bellairs : Were the Government of the Punjab asked their opinion as to the qualifications of this gentleman to serve on the Commission ?

Mr. Montagu : That I do not know. I do know that this question of the unfortunate speech of this distinguished Gentleman was brought to the notice of the Government of India, after his appointment, by the Government of the Punjab, who at the time stated that they did not wish on that ground to object to his appointment.

Brigadier-General Dyer—21st June

Colonel Ashley (*by Private Notice*) asked the Secretary of State for War whether the Army Council have decided to restore Brigadier General Dyer to the Army ?

The Secretary of State for War (Mr. Churchill) : No, there is no truth in that statement, which has been published in a great number of newspapers. The Army Council are still awaiting a statement which Brigadier-General Dyer is being allowed to submit. He expressed an opinion that he would be able to make his statement by Wednesday last, the 16th, but he asked for a few more days' delay to enable him to complete his statement. That is how the matter stands. All statements to the contrary are without any kind of foundation.

Colonel Ashley : When the statement is investigated, will the Army Council be able to come to a decision on that statement, or will there have to be a further Court of Investigation ?

Mr. Churchill : That would be prejudging the discussion which is going to take place.

Sir D. Maclean ; In view of what the right hon. Gentleman knows of the progress of the proceedings before the Army Council, is there any likelihood that the debate on this subject will not take place next Monday ?

Mr. Churchill : Yes, I think that there is a considerable chance that we should not be able to have the debate next Monday. We certainly ought not to take any course which appears to deny reasonable facilities for the preparation of the statement, nor do I suppose for one moment that there would be any intentional delay in making the statement ; and after that there should be a certain period for consideration and discussion by the Army Council. I think it quite possible that I shall have to ask my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House to make representations to those concerned to postpone the discussion for a little longer in both Houses of Parliament.

HOUSE OF COMMONS—23rd June 1920

Punjab Disturbances

Brigadier-General Surtees asked the Secretary for India whether the Government of India propose to recognise the services of those officers, both civil and military, who in its opinion, contributed to the quelling of the disturbances in the Punjab and elsewhere in India, by any other method than the general expression of satisfaction mentioned in paragraph 43 of the Government of India's letter on the Hunter Committee's Report ?

Mr. Montagu : I have not received from the Government of India any proposal for further recognition. I will draw the attention of the Government of India to the hon. and gallant Member's suggestion.

Mr. Gwynne asked the Secretary of State for India whether Sir Michael O'Dwyer communicated day by day with the Government of India concerning the various outbreaks in the Punjab and the measures taken by General Dyer to deal with them ; whether this information was submitted forthwith to the India Office ; and if not, for what reason ?

Mr. Montagu : I received daily telegrams from the Government of India from the beginning of the disturbances up to the middle of May. These telegrams embodied the reports of the Punjab Government and, as I have already stated, were all, except two important messages, communicated to the Press here. General Dyer was in charge in only one area, and there was no mention of him by name.

in those telegrams, and only one mention of him as General Officer Commanding, Amritsar. Some movements of troops that were under his command are also reported in those telegrams.

Mr. Gwynne: If the right hon. Gentleman was receiving the communications daily from the Government of India, will he say why he stated in December that he knew no details except what he read in the newspapers?

Mr. Montagu: There has been a great deal of misunderstanding on the point. I can assure my hon. Friend that what I said then was true. I was referring to a question put by my right hon. Friend the Member for Peebles (Sir D. Maclean) on the publication of General Dyer's evidence in the newspapers. I then stated that I had published reports on the occurrences as I received them. If my hon. Friend will look at it, he will see that the matters dealt with in the published newspaper evidence of General Dyer were not covered in this report.

Lieut. Colonel Sir F. Hall: Does the right hon. Gentleman think that the manner by which this gallant officer has been treated is likely to assist officers in general in dealing with outbreaks?

Mr. Speaker: That does not arise out of the question.

Mr. Palmer: Is it not a fact that the right hon. Gentleman actually told the House that he knew nothing of these occurrences, and that he would wire for information with regard to them, and left the impression on us that he was entirely ignorant of the whole business?

Mr. Montagu: Perhaps the hon. Member will be good enough to look at the official Report on the question and supplementary question I answered. Perhaps he will look also at the speech I made immediately after the occurrence, and the telegrams which resulted. I think then he will be in a position to take part in the Debate.

Mr. Gwynne: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that he stated on 16th December: 'I thought I said I knew no details until I saw the account in the newspapers.'

Mr. Montagu: Every report I had received from the Government of India, with the exception of these two telegrams, was published. That is true. The occurrence to which my right hon. Friend drew attention was the details of the shooting by General Dyer at Amritsar. I had no information on that subject.

Lieut. Commander Kenworthy: Did the Government of India keep the right hon. Gentleman fully informed of events or did the telegrams hush up the most important part of the account?

Mr. Montagu: A great deal of this unfortunate controversy has arisen because there is an impression that I was accusing the Government of the Punjab or the Government of India of concealing

facts. I never made such an accusation, and I am prepared to defend their conduct in awaiting the Committee's report.

Mr. Gwynne asked the Secretary of State for India on what date he first interviewed Sir Michael O'Dwyer in regard to the outbreaks at Amritsar and discussed General Dyer's action; and whether at any time he interviewed Miss Sherwood, who was assaulted during the riots, and, if so, when?

Mr. Montagu: The answer to the first part is, I think, on the 30th June, 1916; to the second, yes, on the 7th October, 1919.

Mr. Gwynne: Will the right hon. Gentleman explain how it was that he was able positively to state in December, if he knew from detailed information, both from Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Miss Sherwood in June, "I said I knew no details until I saw the report in the papers." If he sent the report to the papers he must have known it before he saw it in the papers. Is that a correct way of giving information to the House?

Mr. Montagu: I suggest that the hon. Member's question shows the wrong headedness of the whole thing. Miss Sherwood could not possibly have given me any information of what General Dyer did because this gallant lady had been attacked long before all these incidents occurred. If the hon. Member wishes to accuse me of giving false information or making a statement which is not true perhaps he will raise the point in Debate, when I shall have an opportunity of answering him.

Mr. Gwynne: I shall have great pleasure in asking the right hon. Gentleman to explain how it is he is able to say he knew nothing at all of any details when he had seen Sir Michael O'Dwyer and had all the details from him six months before.

Mr. Palmer: Does the right hon. Gentleman suggest that he knew nothing of the Amritsar shooting until he read it in the *Daily Express*?

Mr. Montagu: No, I never said so. The fact that there had been shooting at Amritsar was known to me and was published to the world when it occurred in the telegrams I received from the Government of India. What I said in December and what I say now, is that I had no information as to the details, shooting without warning, and shooting to the exhaustion of ammunition, and the principles upon which General Dyer acted, and so forth. Those things came to me as a shock when I read them in the newspaper.

Sir W. Joynton Hicks: When the right hon. Gentleman saw the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, why did he not, in June and at that interview and other interviews, ask him for full details?

Mr. Montagu: I can answer that much better in Debate, and I should prefer to do so. I have many most important private

interviews at the India Office, and it is very difficult to keep in one's head a year after exactly what occurred, but I think I can satisfy the House, if not the hon. Member, that everything I have said is absolutely true.

Mr. Remer: Will the right hon. Gentleman publish the account which Miss Sherwood gave him before the debate takes place?

Mr. Montagu: How can I do that six months after I had the private interview with Miss Sherwood of which no record was kept? The step I took about Miss Sherwood, if the hon. Member wishes to know, was to tell, I think, two important London newspapers that Miss Sherwood was in London, and that it would be a good thing in the public interest if she were interviewed. I do not know what other steps I could have taken.

On June 25, 1920 Brig-General Surtees asked Mr. Montagu if, before the House discussed the affairs of the Punjab, he would lay upon the table copies of all memorials, and declarations sent by Anglo-Indians to the Viceroy and himself regarding General Dyer.

Mr. Montagu replied that the only message of the kind he could trace was as follows:—

Cablegram from the European Association of India, received in London, 9th June 1920—

"The Council of the European Association expresses indignation at the despatches of the Secretary of State and the Government of India on the Hunter Committee's Report. The Council considers the situation in India from 1918 onwards to be much more dangerous than is indicated by that Report, and consider that the Government of India and the Secretary of State have subordinated justice to political expediency. They consider that General Dyer was absolutely justified at Amritsar in considering the whole situation in India, and that, therefore, the doctrine of minimum force does not apply; that General Dyer's action stopped a revolution; that the refusal of Government to support its officers is destructive of sound government and will place all officers in an impossible position in any emergency in which responsibility has to be undertaken. The Council asks, therefore, that General Dyer should be exonerated from all blame, and should suffer no loss of rank or emoluments, and that Government's proposal to punish the officers who suppressed the rebellion shall be abandoned."

On June 28th Sir Frederick Hall asked the Prime Minister if, in view of the conflicting statements that had been made as to the extent and nature of the information furnished to the Secretary of State for India by Sir Michael O'Dwyer and others with regard to the occurrence at Amritsar in the spring of 1919 and

the dates at which such information was given, the Government would appoint a Select Committee of the House to inquire into the matter and to report after taking all available evidence.

Mr. Lloyd George replied that he saw no reason for the appointment of such a Committee. The matter could be brought up in debate.

On June 30th Mr. Rupert Gwynne renewed the attack on Mr. Montagu by asking him whether the Punjab disturbances in general, and General Dyer's action at Amritsar in particular, were debated at length in the Legislative Council at Simla during September 1919; whether reports of these debates were received by him, and if so, on what dates.

Mr. Montagu: The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. Many allegations were made by non-official members to which the reply of Government representatives was generally that these were matters on which judgment should be suspended till the Committee had reported. The debates were received in two parts on the 5th and 12th November.

Mr. Gwynne: Will the right hon. member say how, if that is the case, he could still state in December that he had no information on the subject of Amritsar except what he read in the papers.

Mr. Montagu: The hon. member still persists in misquoting. What I said on the 15th December was that I had no details of these occurrences, not that I had no knowledge whatever. I have given accounts to the House. If the hon. member suggests that on reading the allegations of hon. members of the Legislative Council of India, I should have communicated those as authentic to the House whilst there was at that moment a Committee of Inquiry sitting, I venture to differ from him.

Sir Richard Cooper: Will the right hon. Gentleman say how he was able to state positively that he had no information of the details when he had read the full account and that the discussion in the Legislative Council was a false discussion.?

Mr. Montagu: I cannot carry on a debate at Question Time but what I said was that I had no knowledge of the details of the occurrences.

Lieut.-Colonel Croft: Was not the right hon. Gentleman shocked?

Mr. Montagu: Certainly; I think the words I used were that the evidence as reported in the newspapers was profoundly disturbing. I think those were the words.

Mr. Plamer: You said "shocking".

Mr. Montagu: Well, I accept "shocking." I had no knowledge whatever that General Dyer had made those statements that he was reported to have made until I saw the account in the papers.

Mr. Gwynne asked the Secretary of State for India whether Sir Michael O'Dwyer informed him at his interview on 30th June 1919, that General Dyer had ordered his troops to shoot on the prohibited meeting at Jalianwala Bagh without further warning than that already given by him by Proclamation causing death casualties to the then estimated extent of 200 persons?

Mr. Montagu : So far as I can state with certainty the details of a conversation which took place a year ago, I am confident that nothing was said about warning. The casualties as ascertained at the time had already been published.

Mr. Gwynne : Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that Sir Michael O'Dwyer stated positively that he told the right hon. gentleman all the details, and he found he was then so well informed, and knew them as well as he did, of the shooting, and the casualties and the firing, and the crawling order ; and is he also aware that Sir Michael O'Dwyer wrote to him on 13th December of last year directly he saw the accounts in the papers that the right hon. Gentleman said he knew nothing about it and of the details ?

Mr. Speaker : The hon. Member has put a fresh series of statements and I think he ought to give notice of them.

Dr. Murray asked Mr. Montagu : Do all these questions not show that the time has come when the Debate on Amritsar should take place to settle all these things, and can he not say when it will take place ?

Mr. Montagu : The sooner it comes on the better I shall be pleased. I understand that General Dyer's statement to the Army Council is expected in the War Office to-day, and therefore I confidently hope it will be possible to hold the Debate next week.

On July 1st, 1920 Mr. Bonar Law announced that Thursday week, i. e., July 8th had been set apart for the Debate on the Vote for the Secretary of State for India. Members wanted two days, one, a Supply Day to discuss the Administration of India on the Vote for the Sec. of State for India, and another specially for the Amritsar Debate. This the Leader of the House could not promise.

On July 5th Mr. Palmer (*by Private Notice*) asked the Secretary of State for India whether, in view of the forthcoming debate on the shooting at Amritsar, he would be willing to include in a White Paper the letter of Sir Michael O'Dwyer dated Delhi, December 30th, 1919, and his letter marked "private and confidential," which was sent in reply.

The Secretary of State for India replied : I do not think it is necessary to issue a White Paper. I propose, however, to circulate with the letter of the 30th December, 1919, and the reply which

I caused to be sent by telegram through the Viceroy on the 2nd February, 1920. As the name of Sir T. Holderness has also been mentioned in this controversy, I propose to add with his permission a letter which he addressed to me on the 30th June last.

Mr. Palmer: Will the document include the letter marked "private and confidential"?

Mr. Montagu: I think that the Hon. Member is under a misapprehension. There was no letter. It was a telegram addressed to the Viceroy marked "private and personal."

Sir W. Joynson Hicks: Will the right hon. Gentleman add to these papers the report of the Brigade-Major which has been referred to all through the Hunter Commission, but has not been published in the papers so far as I can gather?

Mr. Montagu: I do not think that I can promise to publish any special papers in answer to a question asked without notice, but if a question is put down to-morrow I will answer it.

The following are the documents referred to:

Sir M. O'Dwyer's Letter to Mr. Montagu

Army in India Committee,

Delhi, 30-31 December, 1919.

DEAR MR. MONTAGU,

Since I wrote last week Reuter has been cabling summaries of the discussions in Parliament of the Punjab disturbances. I enclose one of these dated London, 16th December, which report the Secretary of State as saying *inter alia*, "he did not know the details (of the Amritsar occurrences) until he saw (the) reports in the newspapers." That telegram has led many people here to ask me if, when I reached England at the end of June, I took any action to inform the India Office of the position at Amritsar and elsewhere. The Press here, too, has been asking whether Meston and I, when we got home, did anything to explain the situation in India.

At the time I got home I probably knew as much about the Punjab situation as any one in India or England, and I would not like you or any one else to think that I kept anything back. You will remember that you were good enough to give me two long interviews on 30th June (two days after I arrived), and on 24th July (those dates I get from my diary), a few days before I left town. On one or both of those occasions we went over all the main facts of Dyer's action at Amritsar, and the impression I then formed was that the India Office knew as much about all the material facts as I did.

I have a distinct recollection (though my diary is silent on this point) that at our conversation of 30th June I brought out the fact

that Dyer, on 13th April, having already formally warned people that he would disperse any gathering by force, did not think it necessary to give any further warning to the gatherings which assembled an hour or two later in defiance of his proclamation. I certainly explained then that two British police officers were with him when he fired and that the District Magistrate thinking a gathering in defiance of the proclamation impossible, had gone off to look after the 80 panic-stricken women and children who had been collected in the Fort for safety after the murder of Europeans on the 10th. I also said that Dyer's rough estimate of the death casualties was 200; but my memory was not clear as to whether he had fired 1400 or 1600 rounds.

The question of Dyer's so-called 'crawling' order was not discussed. I said it was quite indefensible, that I had asked for its cancellation directly I saw it, and so had the Commander-in-Chief, and my recollection is that you told me you had gathered this from copies of my letters to the Viceroy which he had sent on to you. After leaving you on the 30th June I went on to see Sir T. Holderness, and a few days later I saw Lord Sinha. I endeavoured to explain to them, as clearly as I could, the whole situation in the Punjab, and especially in Amritsar. I gathered from them also that India Office was already in possession of all the main facts though in some respects I was able to offer further explanation, e. g., as to the necessity of sending aeroplanes to Gujranwala, the exclusion of legal practitioners, and the treatment in gaol of the Editor of the *Tribune* regarding which Lord Sinha had received many letters and telegrams. Possibly Reuter's summary, as quoted above, may be giving to us here an incorrect impression. But, in any case, you will, I am sure, forgive me for trying—perhaps needlessly—to make it clear that I endeavoured to put the Secretary of State of the India Office in possession of such knowledge as I had. You may remember too, that I stated to you on the 30th June, a fact which was not perhaps mentioned in the telegrams from India and may not have been reported at the time, that the aviator at Gujranwala, on the 14th April, seeing the English Church in flames, had, very wrongly, dropped a bomb close to a mosque in the town, but fortunately, it did not explode. In writing all this I am less concerned with my own responsibility in the matter than with how others may be affected by any misunderstanding or obscurity.

Dyer, at the first interview I had with him (on the 16th April), told me everything about the Amritsar events on 13th April as frankly and as fully as the limited time I could spare him—when there was rebellion(!) all round—allowed. I did my best to report his version with my own comments to you and others of the India

Office on the very first opportunity. If I did not do so fully or clearly enough then the fault is certainly not his, but rests either with me or with those who were questioning me. But, as I have said above, there was even as far back as 30th June, little room for doubt as to the substantial facts, namely, the circumstances in which he opened and maintained fire on the prohibited assembly on the 13th April, covering death casualties which, at the time, he estimated roughly at 200 but which up to date inquiries put at 379.

Yours sincerely,

(Sd.) M. F. O'DWYER.

Telegram from the Secretary of State for India to the Viceroy, dated 2nd February, 1920.

Private and personal.—Following for O'Dwyer. I have received your letter of the 31st. December. Of course, I need hardly say that in the House of Commons I was not referring to conversations of which no record is kept and which cannot be a substitute for official information, nor did I make any complaint; indeed, I explained, and have explained frequently since, that I thought it was quite natural that I should have received no detailed information. Let me say that I certainly do not hold you in any way responsible. I have no recollection of, and such notes as I took do not contain, any statement about the two British police officers. But in any case the details I was referring to were these: That Dyer is reported to have stated in his evidence that the crowd might have dispersed without his firing on them, that he fired without warning, and that he stopped firing because his ammunition was exhausted. I do not remember that you ever dealt with these things.

Letter of Sir W. T. Holderness

30th June, 1920.

"Dear Mr. Mountagu,

As I am mentioned in Sir M. O'Dwyer's letter of 8th June, which appeared in the "Morning Post" of 9th June, (*for this letter see "Punjab Unrest—Before & After," App. P. 251*) as one of the officials of the India Office who were fully informed by him during the summer of 1919 of the disorders which had occurred in the Punjab in April of that year, and in particular of the circumstances of the action taken by General Dyer to disperse the crowd assembled in the Jallianwalla Bagh, I think it right, in justice to myself, to submit to you a few remarks on so much of his letter as concerns myself.

"Sir M. O'Dwyer writes, "I put all my information at the disposal of the Secretary of State, and also of Lord Sinha, Sir T. Holderness and others at the India Office. The impression I then

formed (in June and July last) was that as regards all the main facts the India Office was quite as fully informed as I was ; though I was naturally able to explain certain points, e. g., the reasons for using aeroplanes at Gujranwala, for the exclusion of legal practitioners from other province by the Martial Law authorities, etc."

"Indeed, all that time, my endeavour was to impress upon the authorities at the India Office the gravity of the situation in the Punjab, which to my mind they had not sufficiently realised."

"Lower down he quotes from a letter dated 30th December 1919 which he wrote from India to the Secretary of State, in which the following passage occurs : 'Dyer, at the first interview I had with him on the 16th April, told me everything as frankly and fully as the limited time I could spare him (when there was a rebellion all around, would allow. I did my best to repeat his version, with my own views and comments, to you and to others at the India Office on the very first opportunity. If I did not do so fully enough, then the fault is certainly not his, but rests either with me or with those who were questioning me. But, as I have already said, there was even as far back as 13th June, little room for doubt as to the substantial facts, viz., the circumstances in which he opened and maintained fire on the prohibited assembly on 13th April, causing death casualties which at the time he roughly put at about 200, but which the complete up to date enquiries put at 379.'

I gather that the interview which Sir M. O'Dwyer had with General Dyer was limited to a quarter of an hour, and that when Sir M. O'Dwyer left India in May the Punjab Government was still awaiting General Dyer's Report. (See Hunter Committee Report). General Dyer's Report was not made till August, 1919. It is this Report that contains the passage which gives the key to General Dyer's action and which is the centre of the controversy to which his action has given rise. "It was no longer a question of merely dispersing the crowd, but one of producing a sufficient moral effect, from a military point of view, not only on those who were present, but more especially throughout the Punjab. There could be no question of undue severity." (Hunter Committee's Report, page 30). Up to the time I remained in the India Office, General Dyer's Report had not reached it.

"I had the privilege of frequent conversations with Sir M. O'Dwyer during the summer of 1919, and learnt from him many particulars regarding the disorders in the Punjab that bore out his view that the situation had been one of extreme gravity. As regards General Dyer's handling of the Amritsar riots, I have a clear recollection that Sir M. O'Dwyer justified the casualties (then thought

to be about 200 killed) by the necessity for dispersing a hostile and dangerous mob, inflamed by the license and savagery which for several days had prevailed in the city and for regaining control over the populace. But I have no recollection that he considered the force employed to have been in excess of the immediate necessities of the case, and deliberately exercised in excess with the distinct object of producing a moral effect throughout the province. My recollection is fortified by the astonishment which I felt on reading the report of General Dyer's evidence which appeared in the *Times* of 15th December. I was by that time aware that a bitter controversy had arisen in India over circumstances of the Jallianwalla Bagh affair, and that the exact incidents were in dispute between the National Congress party and the Government. But the details given by General Dyer to the Commission came to me as a great surprise and were entirely unexpected.

"In conclusion, I would like to say, that if I had been called upon during the summer or autumn of 1919 to prepare a statement for publication regarding the Jallianwalla Bagh incident, and had framed it on the information verbally received from Sir M. O'Dwyer and on the scanty information transmitted by the Government of India, the narrative would have been of a different complexion from the account of the fact given by General Dyer. It would not and could not have included the critical features on which discussion has since centred. On the publication of General Dyer's evidence, the India Office would assuredly have been taken to task if it had forestalled the Committee's inquiries by publishing an imperfectly, and as some persons would have considered, misleading account of what actually had happened. The Government of India in their despatch forwarding the Committee's Report say that in view of the fact that a Committee was about to make a formal investigation, they had deliberately refrained from instituting preliminary inquiries. The India Office took the same view and I venture to think that its reticence has been justified by the event.

"It is perhaps superfluous to say that I kept you fully informed of my conversations with Sir M. O'Dwyer. My recollection is that while recognising the great value of the information placed by him at your disposal, you were as impressed as I was with the inadequacy of our knowledge of what really happened at Amritsar and elsewhere, with the conflicting character of the rumours and assertions appearing in the Indian and Anglo-Indian press, and with the necessity for awaiting a full inquiry on the spot by a strong Committee.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd.) T. W. HOLDERNESS.

On 7th July 1920, the day before the famous Amritsar Debate in the House of Commons, the Dyerites raised a howl against Mr. Montagu and plied him with questions.

Sir W. Joynson Hicks began the heckling by asking Mr. Montagu whether he would publish the Report of Major Briggs, the Brigade-major to General Dyer which was refused publication by the Hunter Committee owing to the death of the writer. Mr. Montagu said that the document referred to was not admitted as evidence by Lord Hunter's Committee and had never been communicated officially. It was appended to the statement submitted by General Dyer to the Army Council and will be published with that statement.

Then Viscount Curzon and others asked whether all witnesses including General Dyer called before the Hunter Committee was given an open opportunity of correcting the report of their evidence. Mr. Montagu could not give a definite reply, but said that Gen. Dyer's statement has been published.

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks asked by private notice whether Mr. Montagu was in a position to announce the decision of the Army Council in reference to General Dyer and if, and when, he proposed to publish General Dyer's statement.

Mr. Churchill (*War Minister*): I am about to lay a paper on the table of the House in dummy which will, I hope, enable hon. members to be in possession of General Dyer's statement in time for the debate to-morrow. With regard to the decision of the Army Council, they came to the following conclusion:—

The Army Council Decision.

"The Army Council have considered the report of the Hunter Committee, together with the statement which Brigadier-General Dyer has, by their directions, submitted to them. They consider that in spite of the great difficulties of the position in which this officer found himself on April 13th, 1919 at Jallianwalla Bagh, he cannot be acquitted of an error of Judgment. They observe that the Commander-in-Chief in India has removed Brigadier-Genl. Dyer from his employment; that he has been informed that no further employment will be offered him in India; that he has, in consequence, reverted to half-pay, and that the Selection Board in India have passed him over from promotion. These decisions the Army Council accept. They do not consider that further employment should be offered to Brigadier-General Dyer outside India.

Mr. Churchill also said that they have also considered whether any further action of a disciplinary nature is required from the Army Council. In view of all the circumstances they do not feel called upon from the military point of view, with which they are alone concerned to take any further action,

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks : Is my right hon. friend prepared to endorse the action of the Army Council and is he also prepared to defend it here-to-morrow ?

Mr. Churchill : Yes, certainly.

Lieut-Colonel Croft : Is it not a fact that General Dyer, after these events happened, was employed to take part in the operations in Afghanistan ?

The Speaker : The hon. and gallant gentleman is asking a question which has been answered before.

Commander Ballairs : Will hon. Members be precluded from moving the adjournment of the House with regard to the War Office decision at a later stage, in view of the fact that the discussion to-morrow is on the India Office Vote ?

The Speaker : I can only answer in the well-known Parliamentary phrase : "Wait and see" (Loud laughter in which Mr. Asquith joined).

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks asked Mr. Montagu how many appeals had been referred to the Privy Council by persons convicted of rebellion, murder, and other serious offences during the Punjab disturbances ; what had been the result of the appeal which had been heard ; and what steps he was taking to defend the remainder.

Mr. Montagu : There have been six appeals of 52 persons. One appeal of 21 persons has been heard and dismissed. The remaining five are pending. If proceeded with counsel of standing will be retained to defend them in accordance with the usual practice. My right hon. Friend the Attorney-General was one of those who acted in these behalf in the appeal which was dismissed.

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks : May I ask what is the position of the appeals ? Are they going to be proceeded with or not ?

Mr. Montagu : That depends upon the appellants. My legal advisers have, I think, pressed that the appeals should be proceeded with.

Dr. Muhammed Bashir.

Replying to Sir W. Joynson Hicks and Colonel Yate with reference to the case of Dr. Muhammed Bashir, Mr. Montagu said that Muhammed Bashir was sentenced to death by a Martial Law Commission in the Amritsar Leaders' case, which included the charge against him of inciting the mob in the attack on the National Bank. The sentence was reduced by Sir Edward MacLagan, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, to one of six years' rigorous imprisonment. The two High Court Judges appointed to examine cases tried by Martial Law Courts agreed that the part of the case against the doctor relating to the events at the National Bank rested on the uncorroborated testimony of an approver ; one Judge was of the opinion that there was sufficient evidence to justify a convic-

tion for waging war only, but the other Judge would not admit the sufficiency of the evidence to justify a conviction at all. The Punjab Government, in the circumstances, recommended the release of Dr. Muhammed Bashir and the Government of India accepted these recommendations.

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks: Can the right hon. Gentleman say what the conditions were, whether they had been fulfilled and whether this gentleman, who was convicted, sentenced to death, and let out, is the leader of an agitation in the Punjab against this country?

Mr. Montagu: The conditions were (1) that during the remaining term of sentence he would not commit or abet the commission of an offence against the State or public tranquility, (2) that during the same period he would not directly or indirectly take part in any movement directed against the State or public tranquility, or likely to lead to the commission of any offence of the nature described above. If any of these conditions be not, in the opinion of the Local Government fulfilled, the Local Government may cancel the suspension of the sentence. The hon. Member will perceive that under the terms of the condition, the Local Government have full discretion to act, and I would prefer to leave it to the Local Government to act.

Colonel Yate: Do the Government of India think it right to go against four judges and is it likely to uphold the judiciary of India when four judges out of five condemn a man and the Government of India order his release?

Mr. Gwynne asked Mr. Montagu if, when he first heard of the Amritsar occurrences, he thought it a matter for immediate inquiry and if so why he did not arrange for the commission to commence proceedings before 29th October.

Mr. Montagu: As I stated in this House on the 22nd May, 1919, the Viceroy had always contemplated an inquiry and in the first week of that month he intimated this fact to me. I said, however, on the same date, "Let us talk of an inquiry when we have put the fire out." Any subsequent delay was due to climatic conditions and to the obvious difficulties in selecting and arranging for such a committee.

Mr. Gwynne: Will the right hon. gentleman say on what date he considered the fire to be put out?

Mr. Montagu: I would not like to say that accurately in answer to a supplementary question, but I would suggest to the hon. Member that it was certainly not before martial law.

Mr. Gwynne: Does the right hon. gentleman suggest it was reasonable, taking into consideration all that he has said, to wait from April until the end of October before proceedings were started?

Mr. Montagu : I understand that that is one of the charges which the hon. Member will make in the debate. You cannot hold an inquiry of this kind in the Punjab during the hot weather, and you cannot ask people to serve on an inquiry the date of which has not yet been fixed.

Mr. Gwynne rose—

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member had better wait until to-morrow. He is in danger of spoiling his case by this preliminary canter.

Nevertheless Mr. Gwynne continued his cross-examination and next asked Mr. Montagu if it was his intention to publish the evidence of all the witnesses examined by the committee, or expected the House to form an opinion on extracts from evidence of a few witnesses, as set forth in the Blue Book Cmd 681.

Mr. Montagu : The evidence of witnesses examined by the Hunter Committee has been published and is on sale; except that of three witnesses heard "in camera." Members were informed, on a slip attached to the Report, which has been distributed, that copies of evidence would be supplied on application to the India Office.

Mr. Gwynne : Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that I have applied twice in the Vote Office for a copy of the evidence, and have been unable to get one?

Mr. Montagu : Nobody can regret more than I do the misfortunes of the hon. Member. I will see that he gets a copy of the evidence this afternoon.

Mr. Gwynne : Does not the right hon. gentleman think it is very important that we should all have it? Is it not usual for hon. Members to be able to get evidence of all important Commissions and inquiries in this House?

Colonel Wedgwood : Will the right hon. Gentleman let me have a copy too?

Mr. Montagu : There are, I think, five volumes. If I printed and distributed them to every hon. Member, I should be accused of unnecessary expenditure. If the hon. Member has found any difficulty in getting the evidence, it is rather remarkable that he waits till the day before the debate is to take place.

Mr. Gwynne said : Mr. Montagu must know that it is usual to send round such evidence. Continuing his questions Mr. Gwynne asked Mr. Montagu at what date and through what source he eventually became aware of the details of the occurrences at Amritsar.

Mr. Montagu : Brigadier-general Dyer's own reports were first received at the India Office in January, 1920, and the Committee's Report at the end of March. Earlier official reports had not given

the details in question. It was in the previous December that I read a newspaper cablegram reading what Brigadier-General Dyer had said in evidence.

Mr. Gwynne: Will the right hon. Gentleman kindly answer my question, which was from what source he eventually kept himself informed as to the details of the occurrence?

Mr. Montagu: Perhaps the hon. Member will be good enough to study carefully the printed report of the answer I have just read to the House.

Colonel Yate: Can the right hon. Gentleman explain why the Government of India did not send home General Dyer's Report?

Mr. Speaker: That does not arise out of the question.

Mr. Remer asked Mr. Montagu whether the contents of the leading Indian newspapers containing comments on the Amritsar disturbances and evidences given before the Hunter Commission were cabled to him, and particularly whether a full Report of General Dyer's evidence before the Hunter Commission on 19th November was cabled to him; if they were not cabled, on what date the newspapers published from April to July were received; and whether he made a careful study of them.

Mr. Montagu: I do not think it is a part of the duty of Ministers to explain what newspapers they read and with what attention they read them.

Mr. Remer further asked whether he would state the names of the two London newspapers he asked to interview Miss Sherwood in October last. Mr. Montagu's reply was: No. Sir, I do not think it necessary to give this information.

Mr. Gwynne asked if there was any reason to believe that the tribal rising in April and May 1919 had any connection with the disturbances throughout India and especially Punjab.

Mr. Montagu replied that he was not in a position to add anything to the information given in paragraph 12 of Chapter XI of the Hunter Report.

Brig.-Gen. Surtees asked Mr. Montagu if he had received any reports from Afghanistan and the border tribes, as to the activity of Bolshevik agents in those countries, and if that was resulting in a dangerous effervescence directed against British rule in India; and if he had found Bolshevik agents working in the more disturbed portion of that Empire.

Mr. Montagu: I have received reports on Bolshevik activities in the regions mentioned in the question. I know the Government of India are carefully watching the propaganda, which is, of course, dangerous in any country. I am consulting them as to the publication of a statement on the subject.

The Amritsar Debate

In the House of Commons

Supply Day—8th July 1920

The House went into Committee of supply, Mr. Whitley in the Chair. On the vote of £53, 500 to defray the charges up to March 31, 1921, for the contributions towards the cost of the Department of the Secretary of state for India—

Mr. Montagu said: The motion that you have just read from the Chair is historic. For the first time in the history of this House the Committee have had an opportunity of voting or of paying the salary of the Secretary of State for India and it is signalized by a very large desire for a reduction. (Laughter). I gather that the intention is to confine the debate to the disturbances which took place in India last year. That being so, after more careful consideration in India, I have come to the conclusion that I shall best discharge my Imperial duty by saying very little indeed. The situation in India is very serious owing to the events of last year and owing to the controversy which has arisen upon them. I am in the position of having stated my views and the views of His Majesty's Government, of which I am the spokesman. The despatch which has been published and criticised was drawn up by a Cabinet Committee and approved by the whole Cabinet. I have no desire to withdraw from or to add to that despatch. Every single body, civil and military, which has been charged with the discussion of this lamentable affair has come, generally speaking, to the same conclusion. The question before the Committee this afternoon is whether they will endorse the position of His Majesty's Government of the Hunter Committee, of the Commander-in-Chief in India, and of the Army Council or whether they will desire to censure them. I hope the debate will not take the shape of a personal criticism of the personnel of any of them. It is so easy to quarrel with the judge when you do not agree with his judgment.

Sir E. Carson :—And with an officer too.

Mr. Montagu :—The Hunter Committee was chosen after the most careful consideration with one single desire and motive to get a tribunal impartial to discharge the most thankless duty to the

best of their ability, was, I maintain, such a body. I resent very much the insolent criticisms that have been passed either on the European members, civil and military, or upon the distinguished Indian members, each of whom has a record of loyal and patriotic public service. The real issue can be stated in one sentence, and I will content myself by asking the House one question. If an officer justifies his conduct, no matter how gallant his record is—and everybody knows how gallant General Dyer's record is—by saying that there was no question of undue severity, that if his means had been greater the casualties would have been greater, and that the motive was to teach a moral lesson to the whole of the Punjab, I say without hesitation, and I would ask the Committee to contradict me if I am wrong because the whole matter turns upon this, that it is a **doctrine of terrorism**. (Lieutenant-Commander Kenworthy—Prussianism). If you agree to that, you justify everything that General Dyer did. Once you are entitled to have regard neither to the intentions nor to the conduct of a particular gathering, but to shoot and to go on shooting with all the horrors that were involved in order to teach somebody else a lesson, you are embarking on terrorism to which there is no end. (Cheers.)

I say further, that when you pass an order that all Indians must crawl past a particular place, when you pass an order to say that all Indians must forcibly or voluntarily salaam any officer of His Majesty the King, you are enforcing racial humiliation. I say, thirdly, that when you take selected schoolboys from a school, guilty or innocent, and whip them publicly, when you put up a triangle where an outrage, which we all deplore, has taken place and whip people before they have been convicted, when you flog a wedding party, you are indulging in frightfulness, and there is no other adequate word which could describe it.

If the Committee follows me on these three assertions, and I shall be only too glad if there be any answer, this is the choice and this is the question which the Committee has put to it to-day before coming to an answer. Dismiss from your mind, I beg of you, all personal questions. I have been pursued for the last three months by some people and by some journals with personal attack. I do not propose to answer them to-day. **Are you going to keep your hold upon India by terrorism, racial humiliation and subordination, and frightfulness, or are you going to rest it upon the goodwill and the growing goodwill of the people of your Indian Empire?** I believe that to be the whole question at issue. If you decide in favour of the latter course, well, then you have got to enforce it. It is no use one Session passing a great Act of Parliament which, whatever its merits or demerits, proceeded on the principle of

partnership for India in the British Commonwealth, and then allowing your administration to depend upon terrorism. You have got to act in every Department, civil and military, uninterruptedly upon a desire to recognise India as a partner in your Commonwealth. You have got to safeguard your administration on that Order passed by the British Parliament. You have got to revise any obsolete ordinance or law which infringes the principles of liberty which you have inculcated into the educated classes in India.

That is one choice, to adhere to the decision that you put in your legislation when you are criticising the administration. **There is the other choice, to hold India by the sword, to recognise terrorism as part of your weapon, as part of your armament to guard British honour and British life with callousness about Indian honour and Indian life.** India is on your side in ensuring order. Are you on India's side in ensuring that order is enforced with the canons of modern love of liberty in the British democracy? There has been no criticism of any officer, however drastic his action was, in any province outside the Punjab. There were 37 instances of firing during the terrible, dangerous disturbances of last year. The Government of India and His Majesty's Government have approved 36 cases and only censured one, censured one because, however good the motive, I believe that it infringed the principle which has always animated the British Army and infringed the principles upon which our Indian Empire has been built.

Mr. Palmer—It saved a mutiny.

Mr. Montagu.—Somebody says that it saved a mutiny.

Captain W. Benn.—Do not answer him.

Mr. Montagu—The great objection to the rule of force is that you pursue it without regard to the people who suffer from it and that having once tried it you must go on, and that every time an incident happens you are confronted with the increasing animosity of the people who suffer. There is no end to it until the people in whose name we are governing India, the people of this country, and the national pride and sentiment of the Indian people, rise together in protest and terminate your rule in India as being impossible on modern ideas of what an Empire means.

The Alternative to Terrorism.

There is an alternative policy which when I assumed office I commended to this House and which this House has supported until to day. It is to put the coping stone on the glorious work which England has accomplished in India by leading India to a complete free partnership in the British Commonwealth,—to say to India: "We hold British lives sacred, but we hold Indian lives sacred too. (Cheers). We

want to safeguard British honour by protecting and safeguarding India too, that our institutions shall be gradually perfected whilst protecting you and ourselves against revolutions and anarchy in order that they commend themselves to you." There is a theory abroad on the part of those who have criticised His Majesty's Government upon this issue that an Indian is a person who is tolerable so long as he will obey your orders, (Cries of "No," "Shame" and "withdraw") but if once he joins the educated class, if once he thinks for himself, if once he takes advantage of the educational facilities which you have provided for him, if once he imbibes the ideas of individual liberty which are dear to the British people, why then, you class him as an educated Indian and as an agitator (Cheers). What a terrible and cynical verdict on the whole!

Mr. C. Palmer.—What a terrible speech!

Mr. Montagu.—As you grind your machinery and turn your graduate out of the University you are going to dub him as belonging, at any rate, to the class from which your opponents come. (Hon. Members—"No.")

Colonel Ashley.—On a point of order. May I ask the right hon. Gentleman to say against whom is he making his accusation?

The Chairman.—That is not a point of order. We are here to hear different points of view, and all points of view. (Cheers)

Brigadier-General Cockerill.—On that point of order, Mr. Chairman, are we not here to discuss the case of General Dyer? What is the relevancy of these remarks to that?

The Chairman called on Mr. Montagu to resume his speech.

Mr. Montagu.—If any of my arguments strike anybody as irrelevant—

Mr. Palmer.—You are making an incendiary speech.

Mr. Montagu.—The whole point of my observations is directed to this one question, that there is one theory upon which I think General Dyer acted, the theory of terrorism and the theory of subordination (Cheers). There is another theory, that of partnership, and I am trying to justify the theory endorsed by this House last year. I am suggesting to this House that the Act of Parliament is useless unless you enforce it both in the keeping of order, and in the administration (Cheers). I am trying to avoid any discussion of details which do not to my mind affect that broad issue.

I am going to submit to this House this question, on which I would suggest with all respect they should vote: Is your theory or rule in India the ascendancy of one race over another, of domination and subordination—(Hon. Members,—“No”)—or, is your theory that of partnership? If you are applying domination as your theory then it follows that you must use the sword with increasing

severity—(Hon. Members—"No")—until you are driven out of the country by the united operation of the civilised world. (Cheers and interruption), (An Hon. Member—"Bolshevism"). If your theory is justice and partnership, then you will condemn a soldier, however gallant, (Mr. Palmer—"Without trial.") who says that there is no question of undue severity, and that he is teaching a moral lesson to the whole country. That condemnation, as I said at the beginning, has been meted out by everybody who has considered this question, civil and military. As far as I know, no reputable Indian has suggested any punishment, any vindictiveness, or anything more than the repudiation of the principles upon which these acts were committed. I invite this House to choose and I believe that the choice they make is fundamental to a continuance of the British Empire and vital to the continuation, permanent I believe it can be, of the connexion between this country and India. (Cheers.)

Sir E. Carson.—I think upon reflection, that my right hon. Friend who has just addressed the House will see that the kind of speech he has made is not one that is likely in any sense to settle this unfortunate question. (Cheers.) My right hon. Friend, with great deference to him, cannot settle artificially the issue which we have to try. He has told us that the only issue is as to whether we are in favour of a policy of terrorism and insults towards our Indian fellow subjects, or whether we are in favour of partnership with them in the Empire. What on earth has that to do with it? (Cheers.) (Lieutenant Commander Kenworthy—"Everything.") I should have thought that the matter we are discussing is no grave both to this country and to our policy in India that we might, at all events, have expected a Minister of the Crown would have approached the matter in a much calmer spirit than he has done (Cheers).

An Hon. Member.—He ought to resign.

An Hon. Member.—So should Ulster. (Interruption.)

The Chairman.—All round the House there seems to be a lack of understanding as to the seriousness of this matter. Let me remind the House that this is the first occasion on which we have had these Indian Estimates—that is to say, the salary of the Secretary of State—by deliberate act of the House, and for public reasons—put on the British Estimates, and we ought, I think, to recognise that occasion. (Cheers.)

Sir E. Carson.—If I thought that the real issue was that which was stated by my right hon. friend, I would not take part in this debate. There would be no dissension from the proposition that

he has laid down in this House (Cheers). But it does not follow because you lay down a general proposition of that kind that you have brought those men, on whom you are relying in extremely grave and difficult circumstances, as your officers in India, within the category that you yourself are pleased to lay down. As to whether they do come within those categories is the real question. My right hon. friend begs the question. (Cheers) After all, let us even in the House of Commons try to be fair, some way or other, to a gallant officer of 34 years' service—(Colonel Wedgwood—Five hundred people were shot)—without a blemish upon his record, and whatever you say, and mind you this will have a great deal of effect on the conduct of officers in the future as to whether or not they will bear the terrible responsibility, which they have not asked for, but which you have put upon them. We may at least try to be fair and to recognise the real position in which this officer is placed. (Cheers) So far as I am concerned, I would like, at the outset, to say that I do not believe for a moment it is possible in this House, nor would it be right, to try this officer. (Cheers.) To try this officer, who puts forward his defence as I saw it for the first time an hour ago, would be a matter which would take many days in this House. Therefore, you cannot do it; but we have a right to ask: Has he ever had a fair trial? and to put this further question before you break him and send him into disgrace: Is he going to have fair trial?

You talk of the great principles of liberty which you have laid down. General Dyer has a right to be brought within those principles of liberty, and he has no right to be broken on the *ipse dixit* of any Commission or Committee, however great, unless he has been fairly tried—and he has not been tried (Cheers). Do look upon the position in which you have put an officer of this kind. You send him to India, to a district seething with rebellion and anarchy. You send him there without any assistance whatever from the Civil Government, because the Commission have found that the condition of affairs was such in this district that the Civil Government was in abeyance, and even the magistrate, as representing the civil power, who might have been there to direct this officer, had gone away on another duty. I cannot put the matter better than it was put before the Legislative Council of India on September 19 last by the Adjutant-General of India:—

"My Lord," he said, "my object in recounting to this Council in some degree the measures taken by the military authority to reconstitute civil order out of chaos produced by a state of rebellion is to show there is another side to the picture, which is perhaps

more apparent to the soldier than to the civilian critic." Now mark this: "No more distasteful or responsible duty falls to the lot of the soldier than that which he is sometimes required to discharge in aid of the civil power. If his measures are too mild he fails in his duty; if they are deemed to be excessive, he is liable to be attacked as a cold blooded murderer. His position is one demanding the highest degree of sympathy from all reasonable and right-minded citizens. He is frequently called upon to act on the spur of the moment in grave situations in which he intervenes, because all the other resources of civilians had failed. His actions are liable to be judged by *ex post facto* standards, and by persons who are in complete ignorance of the realities which he had to face. His good faith is liable to be impugned by the very persons connected with the organisation of the disorders which his action has foiled. There are those who admit that measures of force may have been necessary, but cannot agree with the extent of the force employed. How can they be in a better position to judge of that than the officer on the spot? It must be remembered that when a rebellion has been started against the Government it is a tantamount to a declaration of war, and war cannot be conducted in accordance with standards of humanity to which we are accustomed in peace." (Cheers.) That was a statement of the position of General Dyer. He went to Amritsar on April 10, and found the place and all the great towns in the immediate neighbourhood in a state of rebellion. On April 11 and 12 murders of officials and bank managers were rife. The civil power had to abandon its functions, and he was asked to make up his mind, as best he could, how to deal with the situation. Now he is to be broken because it was said that he made up his mind wrongly. Yes, Sir, the armchair politician in Downing Street

Colonel Wedgwood: What are you?

Sir E. Carson: I am not a Bolshevik anyhow—

The armchair politicians in Downing Street (cheers) had, no doubt, a very difficult task to perform. I do not content that in no case should they overrule what an officer had done in the spot, but they ought to try to put themselves in the position of the man whom they asked to deal with difficult circumstances. That officer had to decide whether the occurrence was a riot, or an insurrection, or a rebellion, or a revolution, or a part of a revolution. There is a great deal to show, even on the face of the report, that it was at all events the precursor to a revolution. Different rules officially laid down were applicable to each of those different matters. What is the error of judgment? It is admitted that he acted in perfect

good faith and in most difficult circumstances with great courage and great decision; but the fault found with him is that, while he thought that the circumstances necessitated that he should teach a lesson to the country all round, the Committee thought that he ought to have dealt with it solely as local matter. That is the difference—and for that you are going to smash and break an officer who has done his best. In reference to the very action which you are going to break him for, or have broken him for, after his 34 years of honourable service, you have to admit it may have been that which saved the most bloody outrage in that country, which might have deluged the place with the loss of thousands of lives and may have saved the country from a mutiny to which the old mutiny in India would have appeared small. Admit, if you like, in your armchair that he did commit an error of judgment, but was it such that alone he ought to bear the consequences? That is the way I prefer to put the matter because I cannot believe you can betray the case here. I am sure I shall have the assent of any man who has had to do with government and thinks the matter out, when I say that if you are going to lay down here to-day this doctrine for your officers who are put into these situations—"before you act, no matter what state of affairs surrounds or confronts you, take care and sit down and ask yourself what will Downing Street think, what will the House of Commons say to us, when they have been stirred up six months afterwards". If that is to be the position of your officers and you make a scapegoat of them because there is an *ex post facto* statement of the events, you will never get an officer to carry out his duties towards his country.

I remember, when I was First Lord of the Admiralty, I recalled a Commander-in-chief because I thought he had, of two courses, taken one which was very harmful to the duty he had in hand. He came and saw me afterwards and asked me for an explanation. I said, "you are perfectly entitled," and I handed him his own report and I said to him, "Let us not talk, I as First Lord, or you as an Admiral, but read your own report and tell me did you do the best thing under the circumstances for the Admiralty and for your country? He said, "No, Sir. The reason I took the course was because I did not know whether I would be supported by the Admiralty." I said to him, "your observation goes to show me that I was right in recalling you because if you would not take the consequences, and act in the way you thought right, you are not fit to be a commander". Yes, sir, but you have to deal with human nature in the men you put into all these difficult places. Do not let them suppose that if they do their best, unless on some very grave consideration of dereliction of duty, they will be

made scapegoats of and be thrown to the wolves to satisfy an agitation such as that which arose after this incident.

You must back your men; and it is not such a distinction as I have already shown, that is the origin of this matter as to this error of judgment, that will ever give confidence to those faithful and patriotic citizens who have won for you and kept your great Empire beyond the seas. The most extraordinary part of this case is as to what happened immediately after this incident occurred, and I beg the house to pay attention to this part of the matter. We all know perfectly well how differently every body views the situation when the whole atmosphere is different and when the whole danger has passed away. What happened immediately afterwards?

My right hon. Friend said that nobody in authority, as I understood him, approved of General Dyer's action. I will tell you who approved it. Brigadier General Dyer, in his statement says:—

"On 14th April, 1919, I reported the firing in the Bagh to Divisional Head quarters in the report B. 21.

"On the next day or the day following, my Divisional Commander Major-general Beynon, conveyed to me his approval.

"The Lieutenant Governor about the same time agreed with the Divisional Commander."

May I state here that I am very proud of him as an Irishman, and I am very glad at all events that it is not an Irish man who has thrown over his subordinate?

What followed?

"On the 21st April with the concurrence of the authorities, I went on a special mission to the Sikhs.

"On 8th May 1919 I was sent on active service in command of my Brigade to the frontier.

"On about the 28th May, 1919, I was detained to organise a force for the relief of Thal, then invested by the Afghan Army. On this occasion I had an interview with General Sir Arthur Barret, commanding at Peshawar. I had by then become aware that the influences which had inspired the rebellion were starting an agitation against those who had suppressed it.

"Sir A. Barret told me he wanted me to take command of the relief force. I told him that I wished, if possible, to be free from any anxiety about my action at Amritsar, which so far had been approved. He said 'That's all right, you would have heard about it long before this, if your action had not been approved.' I give the precise words as nearly as I can.

"About the end of July, 1919, I saw the Commander-in-Chief. He congratulated me on the relief of Thal. He said no word to me

of censure about Amritsar, but merely ordered me to write a report on it, which I did. This report is dated the 25th August, 1919.

"On the 25 September Major-General Beynon in his report on the rebellion made to Army Headquarters repeated his previous approval of my action, and added a testimony to my other services in connection with the rebellion.

And so this officer was on, put day after day into more difficult positions. After he had carried out this work at Amritsar, I believe he was promoted to a higher command. He had not only that, but, as I gather from the evidence, he received the thanks of the native community for having saved the situation, the thanks of some of those, at all events who, when the danger was over and everything was peaceful, turned upon him and said he ought to be punished. Yes, when that agitation began, everything took a different turn, and the extraordinary part of it all was—and I am not going into details of what has been going on by way of question and answer in this House for the past three or four weeks—that all through these months my right hon. Friend never even knew the truth of the affair. That is really a most extraordinary matter. He had at the India Office during these months Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Ex-Governor of the Punjab, meeting him day by day and getting his reports day by day from India, and he never took a single step until this agitation broke out in India—an agitation which only broke out after the situation had been practically saved. That is a most unfortunate matter. If there was anything to be investigated, if there was punishment to be meted out, it ought to have been an immediate matter, not only in justice to General Dyer but in justice to the Indian people. What is the good, six or seven months afterwards, of trying to placate these people by going back, after all these months, on everything that was done by the Lieutenant Governor, by the Commander-in-Chief, and by the immediate Divisional Commander, and telling them that they were wrong. What do you get by it? Was there ever a more extraordinary case than that of a man who comes forward and tells you: I won the approval of my Divisional Commander and the Lieutenant Governor of the Province. I was given promotion, I was sent to do more and more difficult jobs, and eight months afterwards, you tell me I shall never again be employed because I have disgraced myself by inhumanity and an error of judgment?" (Cheers)

I suppose he will have to bear his punishment. [Hon. Members "why?"] The Secretary for War and the Army Council have said it. Let me say this: whatever be the realities of the case, however you may approve of the doctrines laid down by my right hon. Friend

—and I do approve of them—however you may approve of the Hunter Commission—and I find it difficult myself, having read the report of the commission, to agree with some of the conclusions that they came to. For instance, I find it difficult to agree with their conclusion that there was no conspiracy to overthrow the British—

Lieutenant-Commander Kenworthy : you are an expert in that.

Sir E. Carson :—The hon. member opposite may be sure he is so beneath contempt that—(*Interruption*)—I wonder.....

How many members of the House and of the Government really following out the conspiracy to drive the British out of India and out of Egypt it is all one conspiracy. It is all engineered in the same way and for the same object. I hold in my hand a document which was sent to me by somebody in America few days ago. It goes through the whole of this case in its own peculiar way—this case of the 13th April, in which you are going to punish General Dyer because you were not satisfied that there was a conspiracy to overthrow British power, for that is the finding of the commission although I notice that even on that question on which General Dyer had to make up his mind, they are themselves a little uneasy, because they say :—

“Apart from the existence of any deeply laid scheme to overthrow the British, a movement which had started in rioting and become a rebellion might have rapidly developed into a revolution.”

Because General Dyer thought he ought to prevent it developing into a revolution you have now broken him. I have read the article, and I ask my right hon. Friend to look at the document entitled “Invincible England,” and see what it says :

“There is no idea of putting England out of India, but Asia is waking up. Its participation in the Great War, the grossly immoral tactics used by the great European Powers, and the conquest of Asian Territory, the realisation that the revolutionary elements of India, Ireland, Egypt and other nations have shaken the supposed invulnerability of England, is already morally loosening the hold of Europe on Asia. England still retains her territory. She has also grabbed Turkey, but her expulsion from Asia looms largely on the horizon. Russia has relinquished her sphere of influence in Persia, and has assured India that the present Russia is not like the ambitious nation of the past, and has no expansionist ideas. She has abandoned all the privileges improperly acquired from China by the late Government.”

And then it goes on :—

“Uncertainty, as concerns India, is in the air. Its influence on the situation is unmistakable. Arms are lacking, it is true, but India has the will and determination to expel England.”

If, that is true—and I am not arguing the causes or the policy of the Secretary of State in trying to alleviate the situation there by the Act passed last year—all these matters are outside the domain of the soldier. But for Heaven's sake, when you put a soldier into these difficult positions, do not visit upon him punishment for attempting to deal to the best of his ability with a situation for which he is not in the slightest degree responsible. (Cheers.) If he makes an error of judgment, approach it with the full idea that if he is *bona fide* and you can see it was impossible for him in the circumstances to have calmly made up his mind in the way you would do, then you may censure him, but do not punish him, do not break him. (Cheers.) I should like to ask my right hon. Friend, if men are to be punished for an error of judgment such as occurred in this case, how many of those right hon. Gentlemen would now be punished sitting on the Treasury bench (Loud cheers.) I hope we may not get off on false issues.

I am speaking here with reference to a soldier, whom I believe I saw once, whom I otherwise do not know at all. I am speaking of a man who in his long service has increased the confidence he had gained of those under whom he was serving, who had won the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province, who was acquainted with the whole facts—and who had got the approval of the Divisional Commander and of the Commander-in-Chief. I say to break a man under the circumstances of this case is un-English.

Mr. Churchill (President, Army Council).—I shall certainly endeavour to follow very carefully and strictly the advice my right hon. Friend has given, that we should approach this subject in a calm spirit, avoiding passions and attempts to excite prejudice. Members ought to address themselves to the subject with a desire to do to-day what is most in accordance with the long view of the general interests of the British Empire. There has not been for many years a case of this kind which raised so many grave and wide issues, or in regard to which a right and wise decision is so necessary. There is the intensity of racial feeling which has been aroused on both sides in India and every word we speak ought to have regard to that (Hear, hear). There are the difficulties of military officers, who in these turbulent times have been, or are likely to be, called upon to handle their troops in the suppression of civil disturbances; there are the requirements of justice and fair play towards an individual (cheers); and there are the moral and humanitarian conceptions involved. All these combine to make the task of the Government and of the Committee one exceptional seriousness, delicacy and responsibility.

I will deal first of all with the action of the Army Council, for

which I accept full responsibility. The conduct of a military officer may be dealt with by three perfectly distinct ways. First of all, he may be removed from his employment, relegated to half-pay, and told that he has no prospect of being employed again. This may be done to him by a simple administrative act. It is sufficient for the competent superior authority to decide that the interests of the public service would be better served if some one else were appointed in his stead to justify and complete taking off of such a step. The officer in question has no redress. He has no claim to a court of inquiry or a Court-Martial. He has no protection of any kind against being deprived of his appointment, and being informed that he has no further prospects of getting another. This procedure may seem somewhat harsh, but a little reflection will show that it is inevitable. There is no excuse for superior authority not choosing the most suitable agents for particular duties, and not removing unsuitable agents from particular duties. During the War, as every member of the Committee knows, hundreds, and probably thousands of officers have been so dealt with by their superiors; and since the war, the tremendous contraction of the Army has imposed similar hardships on hundreds, and possibly thousands of officers against whom not one word of reproach could be uttered, and whose careers in many cases have been careers of real distinction and of invariable good service. This applies to all appointments in the Army, and I have no doubt, in the Navy, too, and it applies with increasing severity in proportion as the appointments are high ones. From the humble lance corporal who reverted to a private by the stroke of the pen, if the colonel thought he would prefer some other subaltern, up to the highest general or field-marshal, all officers are amenable to this procedure in regard to the appointments which they held. The procedure is hardly ever challenged, and it is not challenged by General Dyer in his statement. It is accepted with soldierly fortitude, because it is believed, on the whole, that the administration of these great responsibilities is carried out in a fair and honest spirit.

Indeed, when one thinks of the hundreds of officers of high rank who in the last year have had their professional careers brought abruptly and finally to a close, and the patience, good temper and dignity with which this great personal misfortune has been borne, one cannot help feeling a great admiration for the profession of arms to which those officers belong. That is the first method by which military officers may be dealt with. Under this procedure the officer reverts automatically to half-pay, and in a very large proportion of cases, having reverted to half pay, he applies to be placed on retired pay, because, especially in the case of senior

officers retired pay is often appreciably higher than half-pay. The second method is of a more serious character, and affect, not the employment of an officer, but his status and his rank. Here, it is a question of retiring an officer compulsorily from service, or imposing on him some reduction or forfeiture in his pension or retired pay.

In this case the officer is protected under article 527 of the Royal Warrant, by the fact that it is necessary for three members of the Army Council to approve the proceedings, and by certain rights of laying his case before them. All the same the Secretary of State for the time being, by virtue of his office, has the power to make a submission direct to the crown, and advice that an officer be retired compulsorily, or simply that his name be removed from the list, His Majesty having no further use for his services.

Mr. Bottomley : What has all this to do with General Dyer—I mean with the specific case we are dealing with ?

Mr. Churchill : I have great respect for the Committee, and I do not believe it will refuse to allow a minister or a Government to unfold a reasoned and solid argument to its attention ; and I am surprised that my hon. Friend, who himself takes a not undistinguished part in debates, should not appreciate that fact, and should not be willing to facilitate my doing so.

I was saying that is the second method, in which the personal reputation of an officer is undoubtedly affected. The third method is of a definitely penal character. Honour, liberty, life are affected. Cashiering, imprisonment, or the death penalty may be involved, and for this third category, of course, the whole resources and protection which the judicial procedure, lawful tribunals and British justice accord to an accused person are brought into being.

Those are the three different levels of procedure in regard to the treatment of the conduct of officers. Although my hon. Friend has not seen the relevance of it, I think it right at the outset, to unfold these distinctions very carefully to the committee, and to ask the committee to bear them attentively in mind.

Coming to the case of General Dyer it will be seen that General Dyer was removed from his appointment by the Commander-in-Chief in India, that he was informed, as hundreds of officers had been informed, that there was no prospect of further employment for him under the Government of India, and that in consequence, he reverted automatically to half-pay. These proceedings were brought formally to the notice of the Army Council by a letter from the India Office, which recommended further that he should be retired from the Army, and by a telegram from the Commander-in-Chief in India, which similarly recommended that he should be ordered to retire. That was about a month ago.

At a latter stage it was brought publicly to the notice of the Army Council by the published despatch of the Secretary of State for India, which stated that the circumstances of the case had been referred to the Army Council. The first step taken by the Council was to direct General Dyer—we had an application from him that he desired to take this course—to submit a statement of his case for their consideration.

The statement is, I think, in the possession of the Committee at the present time. We asked him to make that statement, and we accepted his request that he should be allowed to make it, because we felt that if any action was to be taken against him, apart from removing him from his appointment and employment in India, it was essential that he should furnish a statement in his own behalf and should be judged upon that and not upon evidence which he had given as a witness in any inquiry before which he had been summoned without having any reason to believe that he was cited as an incriminated party.

The conclusion of the Hunter Committee might furnish the fullest justification for removing him from his appointment.

Commander Bellairs : No, no !

Mr. Churchill : I am expressing my opinion. When my hon. and gallant Friend is called, he will express his opinion. That is process which we call Debate. But if any question of retiring General Dyer from the Army was to be examined, direct statement from him in his own defence was indispensable. The conclusion reached by the Army Council, which have been communicated to the House, was reached unanimously and speaks for itself. It must be remembered, however, that the Army Council must deal with these matters, mainly, from a military point of view. They had to consider the rights and interests of officers and also to consider the effects of any decision which they may come to upon the confidence with which officers will do their duty in the kind of extremely difficult and tragical circumstances in which General Dyer and a good many other officers of the Army had in recent times been placed.

The Army Council have to express an opinion of General Dyer's conduct from what is primarily a service standpoint. Their function is one of great responsibility, but at the same time it is one of a limited and special responsibility.

Nothing could be more unjust, that to represent the Army Council as seeking to raise a constitutional issue, or setting themselves up against the paramount authority of the Govt. of the country. I very much regret to have seen that that suggestion has been made. It is quite unmerited and uncalled for. Asked to express their opinion, they were bound to give it sincerely and plainly

from their special stand-point. Their conclusions in no way affected the *Final freedom of action* of the cabinet. The cabinet has many interests to consider far outside and beyond the scope and authority of a body like the Army Council which is an administrative body, a subordinate body, and which is not at the same time a judicial tribunal. If the Cabinet with their superior authority and mere general outlook, took the view that further action was required against General Dyer beyond the loss of employment, beyond the censure pronounced by the Hunter Commission, by the Government of India, and by the Secretary of State's despatch, which was a cabinet document bearing the considered opinion of the Government; if it was thought further action of a disciplinary character was required, the cabinet were perfectly free to take it without any conflict of powers arising from the subordinate administrative Army Council, and the Supreme Executive Council of State.

I made it perfectly clear to my colleagues on the Army Council, that in assenting to the conclusion to which we came, as an Army Council, I held myself perfectly free if I thought right and if the cabinet so decided, to make a further submission to the Crown for the retirement of General Dyer from the Army.

Lieut. Colonel Croft : And the converse may be true, also. The cabinet upset the whole decision also in the other directions ?

Mr. Churchill : Certainly. The cabinet can certainly alter the employment of any officer. I now come to explain and to justify the decision of the Cabinet. This is the question I have been asking myself and which I think the House should consider. Were we right in accepting, as we have done, the conclusion of the Army Council as terminating the matter so far as General Dyer is concerned, or ought to have taken further action of a disciplinary or quasi-disciplinary character against him ? Here, for the first time, I shall permit myself to enter, to some extent, upon certain aspects of the merits of the case.

However we may dwell upon the difficulties of General Dyer during the Amritsar riots, upon the anxious and critical situation in the Punjab, upon the danger to Europeans throughout that province, upon the long delays which have taken place in reaching a decision about the officer, upon the procedure that was at this point or at that point adopted, however we may dwell upon all this, one tremendous fact stands out—the slaughter of nearly 400 persons, and the wounding of probably three or four times as many at the Jallianwalla Bagh. That is an episode which appeared to be without precedent or parallel in the modern history of the British Empire. It is an event of an entirely different order

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from any of those tragic occurrences which take place when troops are brought into collision with the civil population. It is an extraordinary event, a monstrous event, an event which stands in singular and sinister isolation. Collisions between troops and native populations had been painfully frequent in the melancholy aftermath of the Great War.

My right hon. Friend has reminded the House that in this particular series of disturbances there were 36 or 37 cases of firing upon the crowd in India at this particular time, and there have been numerous cases in Egypt. In all these cases the officer in command is placed in a most painful, difficult and different position.

"I agree absolutely with the opinions quoted from the Adjutant General in India as to the distasteful, painful, embarrassing, torturing situation, mental and moral, in which the British officers in command of troops were placed, when he was called upon to decide whether or not he should open fire, not upon the enemies of his country, but on those who were his countrymen or who were citizens of our common-Empire. But there were certain broad lines by which I think, an officer in such cases could be guided. First of all the officer might ask himself, "Is the crowd attacking any thing or anybody? Are they trying to force their way forward to the attack of some building or troops or police, or are they attempting to attack some band of persons or some individual who has excited their hostility?" The question is, "Is the crowd armed?" By armed I mean armed with lethal weapons.

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks: How could they be in India?

Mr. Churchill: Men who take up arms against the State must expect at any moment to be fired upon. Men who take up arms unlawfully cannot expect that the troops wait until they are quite ready to begin the conflict.

Mr. Donald: What about Ireland?

Mr. Churchill: I agree, and it is in regard to Ireland that I am specially making this remark or until they have actually began fighting. Armed men are in a category absolutely different from unarmed men. An unarmed crowd stands in a totally different position from an armed crowd. At Amritsar the crowd was neither armed nor attacking (Cries of Oh!). When I use the word "armed", I mean armed with lethal weapons, or with firearms. There is no dispute on that point. "I was confronted," says General Dyer, "by a revolutionary army." What is the chief characteristic of an Army? Surely it is that it is armed. This crowd was unarmed. There is another test which is not quite so simple, but which nevertheless has often served as a good guide to officers in these difficult situations—I mean the doctrine that no more force should be used than is necessary

to secure compliance with the law. The officer should also confine himself to a limited and definite objective—that is to say, to prevent a crowd from doing some thing they ought not to do, or to compel them to do something which they ought to do.

My right hon. Friend (Sir E. Carson) will say it is easy enough to talk like this, and to lay down these principles here in safe and comfortable, and in the calm atmosphere of the House of Commons or in armchair in Downing street or Whitehall. But it is quite a different business on the spot in great emergency, confronted with a howling mob, with a great city or a whole province, quivering round with excitement. (Cheers.) I quite agree. Still these are good guides, and sound simple tests, and it is not too much to ask of our officers to consider and observe them. After all, our officers are accustomed to accomplish more difficult tasks than that. Over and over again we have seen British officers and soldiers storm entrenchments under the heaviest fire with half their number shot down before they entered the position of the enemy, the certainty of a long bloody day before them, and a tremendous bombardment crashing all around; we have seen them taking out their maps and watches, and adjusting their calculations with the most minute detail. They had been seen showing not merely mercy, but kindness to prisoners, observing restraint in the treatment of them, punishing those who deserved to be punished by the hard laws of war, and sparing those who might claim to be admitted to the clemency of the conqueror, and they had been seen exerting themselves to show pity and to help the wounded, even to their own peril. They had done all that thousands of times; and in requiring them in moments of crisis dealing with civil riots, when the danger is incomparably less, to consider these broad, simple guides, I do not think we are taxing them beyond their proved strength.

Commander Bellairs: what about the women and children?

Lieut.-colonel Croft: There are no women and children in the trenches.

Mr. Churchill: I am bound to say I do not see to what part of my argument that remark applies. I say I do not think it is too much to ask a British officer in this painful, agonising position, to pause and consider these broad, simple guides—I do not even call them rules—before he decides upon his course of conduct. Under circumstances, in my opinion infinitely more trying, they have shown themselves capable of arriving at right decisions.

If we offer these broad, positive guides to our officers in anxious, and dangerous times, if there are guides of a positive character there is surely one guide which we can offer them of a

negative character. There is surely one general prohibition which we can make. I mean, a prohibition against what is called "frightfulness." By frightfulness I mean inflicting great slaughter or massacre on a particular crowd of people with the intention of terrorizing not merely the rest of crowd, but the whole district or the whole country. We cannot admit this doctrine in any form. Frightfulness is not a remedy known to the British Pharmacopœa.

I yield to no one in my detestation of Bolshevism and of the revolutionary violence which precedes it. I share with my right hon. Friend (Sir E. Carson) many of his sentiments as to the world-wide character of the seditious and revolutionary movement with which we are confronted. But my hatred of Bolshevism and Bolsheviks is not founded on their silly system of economies, or their absurd doctrine of an impossible equality. It arises from the bloody and devastating terrorism which they practice in every land into which they have broken, and by which alone their criminal regime can be maintained. I have heard the hon. member for Hill (Lieut. Commander Kenworthy) speak on this subject. His doctrine and his policy is to support and palliate every form of terrorism as long as it is the terrorism of revolutionaries against the forces of law, loyalty and order. Governments who have seized power by violence and usurpation have often resorted to terrorism to keep what they have stolen, but the British Empire, where lawful authority descends from hand to hand, generation after generation, does not need such aid. All such ideas were absolutely foreign to the British way of doing things.

These observations are mainly of a general character, but their relevance to the case understood, and they lead me to the specific circumstances of the fusillade at the Jallianwallah Bagh. Let me marshal the facts. The crowd was not armed, except with bludgeons, and it was not attacking anybody or anything. When fire had been opened on it, it tried to run away, but it was pinned up in a narrow space, considerably smaller than Trafalgar square with hardly any exits when one bullet would drive through three or four bodies. The people ran madly this way and that and the firing was only stopped when the ammunition was on the point of exhaustion, enough being retained to provide for the safety of the force on its return journey. If more troops had been available, says this officer, the casualties would have been greater in proportion. If the road had not been so narrow, the machine guns and the armoured cars would have joined in. Finally when the ammunition had reached the point that only enough only remained to allow for the safe return of the troops, and after

379 persons had been killed and when most certainly 1,200 or more had been wounded, the troops, at whom not even a stone had been thrown, marched away. I do not think it is in the interests of the British Empire or Army to take a load of that sort for all time upon our back. We have to make it absolutely clear that this is not the British way of doing things (Cheers.)

I shall be told that it "saved India." I do not believe it for a moment. The British power in India does not stand on such foundations. I am going to refer to the material foundations of our power very bluntly. Take the Mutiny as the datum line. In those days there were normally 40,000 British Troops in the country and the ratio of British troops to Native troops was one to five. The Native Indian Army had a powerful Artillery, of which they made tremendous use. There were no Railways, no modern appliances, and yet the mutiny was effectively suppressed by the use of a military power far inferior to that which we now possess in India. Since then the British troops have been raised to 70,000 and upwards, and the ratio of British to Native troops is one to two. There is no native artillery of any kind. The power and the importance of the artillery has increased in the meantime 10 and perhaps 20 fold. Since then a whole series of wonderful and powerful war inventions have come into being, and the whole apparatus of scientific war is at the disposal of the British Government in India—machine-guns, the magazine rifle, cordite ammunition, which cannot be manufactured as gunpowder was manufactured except by a scientific power, and which is all stored in the magazines under the control of the white troops. Then there have been the great developments which have followed the conquest of the air and evolution of the aeroplane. Even, if the railways and telegraphs were cut or rendered useless by a strike, motor lorries and wireless telegraphy would give increasingly the means of concentrating troops and taking them about the country with an extraordinary and almost undreamed of facility. When one contemplates these solid, material facts, there is no need for foolish panic or talk of its being necessary to produce a situation like that at Jallianwalla Bagh in order to save India. On the contrary, as we contemplate the great physical forces and the power at the disposal of the British Government in their relations with the native population of India, we ought to remember the words of Macaulay—

"and then was seen what we believe to be the most frightful of all spectacles, the strength of civilisation without its mercy." Our reign in India or anywhere else had never rested on a basis of physical force alone upon it.

The British way of doing things has always meant close co-operation with the people of the country. In no part of the British Empire have we arrived at such success as in India whose princes spent their treasure in our cause, whose brave soldiers fought side by side with our own men, whose intelligent and gifted people are co-operating at the present moment with us in every sphere of government and of industry. In Egypt there has recently been a breakdown of the relations between the British and the people, and we are trying to rebuild that relationship laboriously and patiently. We have plenty of force, if force were all, but what we are seeking was co-operation and good will. If such a rupture between the Government and the people had taken place throughout the Indian Empire, it would have been one of the most melancholy events in the history of the world. That it has not taken place is, I think, largely due to the constructive policy of His Majesty's Government, to which my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for India has made so great a personal contribution. I was astonished by my right hon. Friend's sense of detachment when, in the supreme crisis of the war, he calmly journeyed to India and remained for many months absorbed and buried in Indian affairs. It was not until what I saw in Egypt, and, if you like, what is going on in Ireland to-day, that I appreciated the enormous utility of such service, from the point of view of the national interests of the British Empire, in helping to keep alive that spirit of comradeship, that sense of unity and of progress in co-operation, which must ever ally and bind together the British and Indian peoples.

I do not conceal from the House my sincere personal opinion that the conduct of General Dyer at Amritsar deserved not only loss of employment and the measured censure which the Government have pronounced, but also to be marked by a definite disciplinary act namely his being placed compulsorily on the retired list. But we have only to turn to the statement of General Dyer; we have only to cast our mind back to the most powerful passage in the speech of my right hon. Friend (Sir E. Carson) to see that such a course was barred. It is quite true that General Dyer's conduct has been approved by a succession of superiors above him, who pronounced his defence, and that at different stages events have taken place which it may well be argued amounted to virtual condonation so far as a penal or disciplinary action is concerned (Hear, hear). General Dyer may have done wrong, but, at any rate, he has his rights, and do not see how, in face of such virtual condonation, it would have been possible, or could have been considered right, to take disciplinary action against him. For these reasons the Cabinet found themselves in agreement with the

conclusions of the Army Council, and to those moderate and considered conclusions they confidently invite the assent of the House. (Cheers.)

Mr. Asquith: I have heard this afternoon so much sound and excellent doctrine from the Treasury Bench, notwithstanding an occasional deviation in one or two of his intercalary perorations from my right hon. Friend (Mr. Churchill) who has just sat down, that I shall content myself with two or three observations. The issue as far as the Debate has gone, is reduced to a very narrow point. I assume that we have heard, as we always do hear from such a consummate advocate as my right hon. and learned Friend (Sir E. Carson), the full strength of the case that can be made against the Government decision. To what does that case amount? My right hon. and learned Friend has not attempted to justify General Dyer's action on the merits. He made no attempt of any sort or kind to meet the points which have been submitted to the Committee by the Secretary of State for War. He had two suggestions and two only, to support his general allegation of hardship and grievance. The first was an extraordinary one—that General Dyer had not had a trial. General Dyer's case has been considered on his own evidence before the Hunter Committee. [Hon. Members: "No!"] By what I think was an unfortunate decision, many of the witnesses who were available were not called and examined.

His case was considered on his own evidence before the Hunter Committee. Both of the Majority and Minority agree in their condemnation, and their judgment is supported and endorsed by the Government of India. It is confirmed not only by the Secretary of State but by the full Cabinet here. Then he represents his case as he has done in the last few weeks, in an *ex parte* statement of his own, to the Army Council. The Army Council reconsider the case, and come to the same decision which had been arrived at by other authorities. To say, in all the circumstances, that he has not had fair hearing and ought to have another opportunity of saying whatever he can say in his own defence, seems to me to be an abuse of language (Hear, hear). It is undoubtedly the case that he had been commended at the time by his superior officer and by the Lieutenant-Governor. Whether they were then in full possession of the facts, I do not know: whether they were impartial judges in the circumstances, I do not know. There was much of feverish, hectic excitement in the atmosphere. They had very little opportunity of making dispassionate inquiry into the case. I have heard nothing from the right hon. and learned member (Carson) which could in any way impugn the correctness and force of the decision concurrently arrived

at by so many authorities. The case is as simple a case as has ever been presented in the House.

Undoubtedly on the 10th April—I do not go into the larger question whether there was or was not evidence of a conspiracy in the Punjab—very serious riot occurred which involved both arson and murder that was put down. During the three days which elapsed from the 10th to the 13th of April there had been no outbreak. My right hon. Friend spoke of these days a very dark and ripe with murder. I do not know from what evidence he was speaking. I know of no such evidence of any sort. On the contrary, the riots were put down on the 10th. The 11th and 12th passed in perfect tranquility, or, at any rate, there was no further offensive.

Here I must offer a word of criticism on a point which has not so far been referred to at all in the course of the discussion. I feel that it is deeply to be deplored and reprehended that the civil authority abdicated its function and handed over something very much in the nature of a *carte blanche* to the General in command. It is the worst example, and in India particularly, it is a very bad example. The civil authorities were guilty of a gross dereliction of duty in divesting themselves, or trying to divest themselves, of their functions, and handing the whole thing over to the discretion of the military authorities. I cannot help thinking that if the civil officers at Amritsar had, at the beginning of the transaction, taken a proper sense of the duty which the law of their office imposed on them, and had controlled and directed, or at any rate supervised, subsequent military operations, it is quite possible that this terrible incident of the 13th might never have occurred. (Chees). It is only fair and just to General Dyer to say this, in what I conceive to be a most terrible error of judgment, and even worse, he had not, in this very critical and responsible situation, the advantage which he was entitled to have and which the Executive ought to have given him, of the assistance and advice of the civil authority familiar with all the local circumstances, and ultimately responsible for the maintenance of order.

But that criticism having been made, two days passed in tranquility, at any rate without further outrage. The General saw fit to prohibit the holding of a public meeting and he went round the town with an escort and with drums for the purpose of communicating that prohibition to the population. The meeting, nevertheless, was held. As my right hon. Friend has just pointed out, it was a meeting of unarmed persons. I think that I am right in saying that there were women and children there as well as men.

[Hon. Members : No]

Sir W. Joynson-Hicks: There were no women or children.

Mr. Asquith: Be it so. I believe that there were boys, but be it so. It was an unarmed crowd, in a closed space, from which the exit were few and narrow. There is no evidence, nor could there be, that the bulk of the people were aware of the Proclamation which had been issued earlier in the day. General Dyer with his troops, giving no warning of any sort or kind, fires indiscriminately into this mass of people until he has practically exhausted the whole of his available ammunition. There has never been such an accident in the whole annals of Anglo-Indian history nor, I believe, in the history of our Empire (Hear, hear). To ask the House of Commons to reverse the considered decision given after hearing everything that General Dyer had to say or put forward to all these great responsible authorities, to reverse that decision upon no new facts—to take General Dyer's statement and judge him on that—is not only to fly in the face of the presumptions of evidence and the rules of common sense and the practice of all civil and judicial tribunals, but is something much worse than that. It is for the House of Commons to take upon itself on behalf of the British Empire as a whole, the responsibility of condoning and adopting one of the worst outrages in the whole of our history (Cheers). For my part, so far as I can command any authority or confidence among others in this House, it is an occasion on which I ask my hon. Friends to give their hearty support to the Government in the course which they have taken. (Cheers).

Mr. Ben Spoor: I beg to move that Item A (Salaries, £ 6,500) be reduced by £ 100. I hoped that Mr. Montagu would have dealt at greater length with the extremely grave situation in India and the result of the happenings of last year. I would like to say how very much I appreciate, and all the members of the Labour Party appreciate, the very definite declaration of the Secretary of State with regard to the question of the Hunter Report. I will only add this, that if the spirit which infused the right hon. Gentleman's speech infuses and directs the policy of the Government in India in the months ahead, there is some chance of peaceful relations being established between India and England. I am glad the right hon. Gentleman reminded the House how extremely grave the situation is there. I wondered as I heard some of the rather unseemingly interruption of time, whether those who took part in the interruptions realised what was happening in India at this moment, whether the interrupters knew that there was a wave of unrest that was full of dangerous possibilities, whether they realised that the Reforms that were passed through this House and became an Act last year, and which it was hoped would shortly

come into operation in India, were seriously prejudiced by the attitude of the Indian people as a direct result of the policy that led up to Amritsar. In this Debate, I hope that the committee will not lose sight of the attitude of the Indian people themselves. I am quite sure that the sentiment of which we have had abundant evidence this afternoon, the sentiment of sympathy with some officers to whom direct reference has been made, is a sentiment not shared by many people outside this House. I would like to suggest to any Indian who may be present in the Chamber—

Mr. Palmer : Is it in order for an hon. member to address the gallery, and not the Committee?

The Deputy-Chairman : I am sorry that for the moment I was not paying attention to the hon. Gentleman's remarks. If he will proceed, I will listen carefully.

Mr. Spoor : I am extremely sorry if I have said anything not in accordance with ordinary procedure in our Debates. If what I have said was not in order I withdraw it. I will put the matter this way. I would be extremely sorry if I thought that people outside the Commons, whether British or Indian, believed that the sentiment of which we have had evidence this afternoon represented in any real degree the feeling of the people of this country. A fortnight ago the Labour Party held a great conference and passed a resolution on that subject which some people no doubt thought was of an extreme character. It asked for the recall of the Viceroy, the impeachment of Sir M. O'Dwyer, the trial of officers against whom allegations have been made, and the repeal of repressive Legislation and coercive Legislation which more than any thing else has contributed to the present unhappy state of affairs in India. That resolution expressed the considered opinion of Labour Party outside the House of Commons. It was a resolution framed by men not unfamiliar with the Indian situation, and it commanded the unanimous support of the whole Conference. In all seriousness, I submit that that resolution and the sentiment that was in evidence at the conference much more correctly express what I believe to be the general feeling of the public in this country than the exhibition we have had here this afternoon. Sir E. Carson said : "Let us be fair to a distinguished soldier." I want to be let them be fair to the hundreds of Indians who have lost their lives, and to the children who were bombed from the air by British Officers.

I am quite sure that no reasonable being could attempt for a single moment the defence of many of the horrible acts that took place, and when we ask for justice for our own generals and officers—and I hope justice will be done to them—let us also insist upon equal justice for the people of India themselves. I would

like to refer to the broad fact of the Indian situation as it existed in the time immediately preceding these events. Those of us who took any part in the Indian debates last year had abundant evidence of the extraordinary outburst of political opinion, the extraordinary awakening of political consciousness, to which reference has been made already to-day. During the war promises were made to the Indian people, and in a measure an attempt was made in the Act of last year to give effect to those promises. Yet, at the same time that we were promising the people of India that we would apply the Principle of Self-determination to the country and give them Home Rule, those activities were countered by repressive legislation throughout India and more particularly in the Punjab; they were countered not only by repressive legislation, but by Acts that have been rightly described here as Acts of unrestrained Prussianism. The inevitable happened. The Secretary of State for India in his despatch has condemned General Dyer severely. He speaks of him as having on one occasion violated every canon of civilised Government. Even the Government of India seems to regret the inhumanity of this British officer.

Sir J. D. Rees : why "Even the Government of India?"

Mr. Spoor : If the hon. Member will wait a moment, I will answer his query. I am going to suggest that the Government of India share a great measure of responsibility for this tragedy. The Government of India were behind the policy that led up to those unfortunate events. But even the Government of India regretted the inhumanity of General Dyer. I want to suggest that Amritsar is not an isolated event any more than General Dyer is an isolated officer. These are not things that can be judged apart, if they resulted from a certain policy that some men have pursued, from a certain mentality that some men seem to possess in India in a most extraordinary degree. Talking about the curious mentality of some Anglo Indians, may I be permitted to quote one short paragraph from the evidence of the Brigadier-General Commanding the Delhi Brigade? It is taken from volume one page 172 of the evidence.

"Composed as the crowd was of the scum of Delhi, I am of opinion that if they had got a bit more firing given them it would have done them a world of good, and their attitude would be much more amenable and respectful, as force is the only thing that an Asiatic has any respect for."

I put it that if that is a typical example of a British officer in India—

Colonel Wedgwood : It is not.

Mr. Spoor : If it is not a typical example, I would ask, is that British officer still in India? Is he still in a position of authority

or has he been called upon to resign? I said that the happenings in India resulted from certain policy on the one hand, and a curious mentality on the other. As far as the Punjab was concerned, the policy was obviously that of Sir Michael O'Dwyer. On page 92 of the Hunter Committee Report the Minority point out that his speech in the Legislative Council in September 1917 was regarded as an attack on the educated classes, that he prohibited during his administration certain political leaders from entering the Punjab, and that he put the Press Act more rigorously into operation in the Punjab than elsewhere. In a word his administration was tyrannical. He revealed no qualities of statesmanship.

Sir Charles Oman : That is not the report, but the Minority Report to which you are referring?"

Mr. Spoor : Yes. He revealed no qualities of statesmanship : he showed always a blunt reliance on force. It was Sir Michael O'Dwyer who was primarily responsible for the use of aeroplanes at Gujranwala. In connection with that raid, I believe, bombs were actually dropped into the play ground of a school. According to the Congress report, all disorder that had occurred in Gujranwala had actually ceased before the aeroplanes arrived and began their bombardment. I submit that Sir M. O'Dwyer and those like him typify that kind of Anglo-Indian who is the greatest menace to the security of the Empire and the greatest barrier to the progressive realisation of responsible Government in India. Behind Sir M. O'Dwyer we have the Viceroy and he cannot by any manner or means evade his responsibility in this crisis.

Earl Winterton : On a point of order. It is not in order to criticise the action of the Viceroy of Ireland save on a substantive motion. I submit that by the rulings of successive speakers it is equally out of order to criticise the doings of the Viceroy of India in his executive capacity without putting down his substantive motion.

The Deputy-Chairman : The Noble Lord is quite right. It is not in order to discuss the conduct of the Viceroy except upon a motion put down for that purpose.

Colonel Wedgwood : When the Mesopotamia Report was discussed in this House the conduct of the Viceroy was attacked then, and no ruling was made that such an attack was not to be allowed. I think we ought to protest at once against the idea that we are not to be allowed to criticise the actions of the Viceroy and Executive of India in this Debate.

Mr. Spoor : I was speaking of the Viceroy as the president and representative of the Indian Government. The Indian Government as the overruling authority, cannot possibly evade their responsibility.

ties in this matter. I am one of those—and I am sure there are many others in the House—who do not like the idea of General Dyer being made a scape-goat of in connection with these matters. The truly responsible persons must be discovered, and, without vindictiveness, they must be punished in justice to the people of India. Therefore, when I use the name of the Viceroy, I refer to him in his capacity as President and Governing Head of the India Government. I do submit respectfully, one is not only entitled, but almost compelled, to make references to the Ruling Head of India in a Debate of this character, if we are to allocate responsibility in the fairest possible way. What I was going to say with regard to Lord Chelmsford I will leave unsaid in deference to your ruling.

The Deputy-Chairman : The hon. Member must not discuss the actions of the Viceroy. He is entitled to refer to the actions of the Government of India.

Mr. Spoor : I think it is quite clear that what one is criticising is the policy for which the Government of India have to be responsible and a policy which has contributed far more than has yet been admitted in this House to the serious situation that at present exists in this country. We, therefore, ask that the Viceroy and Sir Michael O'Dwyer should be dealt with in a way that would secure justice for the Indian people. I referred just now to the curious mentality of some Anglo-Indians. There may be some climatic explanation—one cannot tell—but the fact is they are of the most extraordinary mentality which seems to possess some of those in positions of authority out in that country. India may be governed by consent ; she will never again be governed by force. (Cheers) Any attempt to do so is to act contrary to the often declared principle that has governed the policy of his Majesty's Government, not only in India, but in all parts of the Empire. Every contributory cause to that extraordinary mentality must be removed. There were three courses open to the Government. The first is that which would be advocated by those who believe that General Dyer and his colleagues had saved the country. The first course—a frank approval of the Head of the Indian Government, Sir Michael O'Dyer, General Dyer, and the other officers implicated. The second course is the one which has apparently been followed up to now by the Secretary of State for India, that is to say, approval of the Indian Government and approval of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, but condemnation of General Dyer, who, after all, is the instrument of their will. The third, and the only logical course, is to be found in the pursuance of the liberal spirit which is supposed to inspire the Reforms of last year, and which we were told this afternoon aims at leading the people of India into Liberty. If this last course is followed it

obviously involves the condemnation of all those who have been responsible for this reactionary policy. We, of the Labour Party, and I speak for all my colleagues, stand for the last course as the only one which is consistent with our national honour and obligation. It involves the recall of the Head of Indian Government, the trial of Sir. M. O'Dwyer, General Dyer and others implicated, a trial in His Majesty's Courts of Justice. I may, in passing, submit that they will probably have a more judicial hearing and receive a more impartial trial there than they are likely to secure from the columns of "Morning post" or the columns of the "Times."

Last of all, and to me it is really more important, our Government should take action in this matter and immediately repeal all that repressive and coercive and totally unnecessary legislation which has defaced the Statute Book in India, and which has had no other effect than to promote continual irritation and dissatisfaction. Unless that legislation is immediately repealed and the people of India are made to realise that they are in the Empire on equal terms, so far as their ordinary rights are concerned, with every British citizen, there is not the slightest hope of peace in that country. If the Government do not do this, then it is impossible to say what the consequences will be and the situation in India will not improve. I have referred to the feeling of bitter indignation that swept and is still sweeping over India, and are you not going to remove that feeling by calling on the British General who happened to lose his head to resign? You have got to do a great deal further. You will only do it by showing, unmistakably, that the policy of governing India by a military policy and by getting rid of the prehistoric mental outlook which possess individuals out there, is the foundation of unrest in India. I wonder how familiar members are with the movement that has recently been initiated in India, and which is calling upon the Indian people to refuse to co-operate in the working of the Act that was passed last year. It is a movement which has spread with great rapidity, and it is a movement which has the support, not only of the Extremists, but also of moderate men, and it is a movement which, if it is persisted in and developed, will most certainly make the working of Reforms altogether impossible. I am one of those who want to see the people of India really free. I hope to God they are not going to wade through blood to get that freedom; but if we want to destroy this non-co-operation movement, and to remove the justification for it, we can only do so in so far as we are prepared to do justice to the people of India in regard to the tragedies of last year. Some of us hope much from the Reforms which were passed. Some of us believed we were present at the birth of a new understanding between East

and West. Those hopes will never be realised, unless the Government is prepared to act with courage and decision, and unless the Government is prepared to repudiate in the most emphatic manner possible those men whose policy, if continued, will surely wreck all possibilities of co-operation between an awakened India and ourselves.

Lieutenant-General Sir Hunter Weston, as one who had served with native troops in India, appealed to the Committee to exercise moderation in what they said about the regrettable occurrences in India, and with a due feeling of responsibility and of the harm that might be done by intemperate speeches on either side. There was a great danger of exacerbating feeling between the British section of the population of India and that conglomeration of different races, different religions and, indeed, of different civil nations which they were apt to class as one, as the people of India. There was undoubtedly present a certain strain in the relations between the British population in India and certain sections of the Indian races, and to still further aggravate that feeling would be to do the gravest disservice to their country. General Dyer by his record had shown himself to be a man and an officer well able to deal with threatening situations without the use of force. The evidence contained in the Report of Lord Hunter's Committee could not be used against any man in any Court of Law, either civil or military, and, therefore, it should not be used as the basis of defence or attack in that House or outside. In principle, the use of the military in aid of the civil power was the same in that country and in India. To allow anything in the nature of "frightfulness" was abhorrent to the British Nation, and therefore to the British Army. If both the Commander-in-Chief in India and the Army Council had decided that General Dyer should be relieved of his command, the Committee might be sure that he had been treated fairly, and that no good could be done to him, to the Army, or to the country by attacking a decision made by responsible soldiers, who had the full confidence of the Army and the Nation, and had the facts fully before them and the best legal advice at their disposal.

He appealed to those who desired to defend an eminent soldier not to attack those other eminent soldiers who had to adjudicate on the case, and especially not to say anything which could be quoted in the difficult days ahead as showing that members of Parliament approved anything which could give colour to the assertion that the British Army might be used as an instrument of oppression. Upon those members, whose sympathy with the relatives of those who lost their lives at the Jallianwala Bagh prompted them to condemn General Dyer utterly, and to call upon the Government to

punish him still further, he urged moderation in the expression of their opinion, remembering that harm might be done by their words in embittering feeling in India and adding to the difficulties of those who in the future would have to uphold law and order.

The situation with which General Dyer had to deal had been in existence for some time, and before his arrival, had led to the murder of Europeans, to an assault upon an English woman, to loss of life among the natives, and to much damage to property. The terms of written order given to him by the civil authority on his arrival on April 11, were : "The Troops have orders to restore order in Amritsar and to use all force necessary. No gathering of persons nor procession of any sort will be allowed. All gatherings will be fired on." That notice was given out to several of the citizens on April 11. On the afternoon of April 13 having received notice from the Superintendent of Police that a crowd was assembling in the Jhallianwala Bagh, a park in Amritsar city, General Dyer marched to the spot, and found a huge assembly of many thousands of people, who appeared to him to be in a dangerous mood. A determined rush might easily overwhelm his little force of 50 native soldiers armed with rifles, and 40 armed only with kukris. General Dyer and his little band were entirely isolated in the city. Narrow streets were behind him, his flanks and rear were open to attack, and no reinforcements were within reach. If this little band, who were the sole guardians of law and order, had been overwhelmed, there was nothing to hold in check instigators of crime and insurrection, nothing to prevent the recurrence of the loot and murder and arson which had raged in the city only three days before. (Hear. hear.) Any hesitation on General Dyer's part, any failure to use, and to use at once, the necessary force might have been the spark that would light the conflagration of another mutiny. No one who had not been placed in a similar situation should venture to condemn General Dyer. (Cheers.)

Lieutenant Colonel James said that, as it appeared to him, the question was one affecting not so much the Indian Empire as justice. When General Dyer put in his statement to the Army Council, one should have thought that the natural thing would have been to send for him and ask for oral explanations. He understood that procedure was never followed at the War Office, and he thought that alone vitiated the virtue of appeal. Unless they could have a man face to face with the president of the tribunal they could not form a proper judgment on his case. General Dyer was faced with an unparalleled situation and the only judge of the amount of force which should be used at the moment was he himself. (Cheers) To say that there was no evidence of a general conspiracy in India

was just as absurd as it would be to set up a board of inquiry in Ireland at the present moment, and to say that there was no evidence of constables being killed, for the simple reason that they had not been caught (Laughter and cheers). He asked hon. Members to stand for the cause of justice, fair play and moderation towards the great mass of the loyal Indian peoples, who would be the first to suffer if they in that House did not stand by their own people. (Cheers.)

Sir W. Joynson Hicks : I came down to the House very fully intentioned to make a very moderate statement, and to deal in my remarks with the wider question of the future of our government in India, rather than to speak on the actual case of General Dyer. I should like to congratulate the hon. and gallant Gentleman who has just disappeared so rapidly after making his maiden speech ; the whole House, I should say, will like to hear him again. I should like to refer for one moment to the hon. and gallant Member for Northampton, and the very fine speech in which he put the case of General Dyer admirably. He described the Amritsar events of that awful afternoon of 13th April. Yet I do not know whether every one in the Committee heard the beginning of the speech. He appealed to the hon. Members as Members of this House, to support the decision of the Army Council because the Army Council has come to a decision. Really, the second part of the speech of my right hon. Friend was a complete justification for anyone who votes against the decision of the Army Council. I want to say at once that as a member of this House I am not prepared to abdicate not merely my rights but my duty of taking part in this debate, and of supporting my convictions by my vote, and, if necessary, voting against the decision of the Army Council, which has been put forward for justification on the ground that it is a decision of the Army Council. What is the House of Commons for ? What is this Debate for ? I am glad to see that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State acknowledges the correctness of what I say as to what is the right and the duty of the House of Commons. We are here to debate questions, and to say what we believe to be right, not merely to confirm the views of some other body.

After all, we are, as I think the right hon. Gentleman the member for Paisley (Mr. Asquith) once described the House of Commons to be . "The great inquest of the Nation." We are the best Court to which General Dyer, or any other person aggrieved by the action of any Government Department, can come. General Dyer has appealed to the Commander-in-Chief. He has appealed to the Secretary of State. He has appealed to the Army Council. In the last resources he appeals to us. We have to decide the case. We

have to decide one way or the other. My hon. and gallant Friend made a powerful appeal for moderation in regard to this matter. I do not intend to attack the Secretary of State. But I think I must say that a more disastrous speech—and I say that with a sense of responsibility and the hope that my words may be believed—has never been made on the Amritsar affair. I had just returned from a visit to India and to Amritsar, and the opinions I am expressing as to the events which took place there are held by at least 80 per cent. of the Indian Civil Service throughout India and 90 per cent. of the European people. (Hear hear.) The Secretary of State for India has, for some time past, entirely lost the confidence of the Indian Civil Service. (Cheers.) It is a very serious matter, and the speech of the Secretary of State on this afternoon will have utterly destroyed any little shreds of confidence which was left to him, not merely in the minds of the Indian Civil Service, but in the minds of the British Army in India. (Cheers.) It is difficult in the face of the speech to make a moderate speech, which was merely one long vituperation of General Dyer in his action in India, and one long appeal to racial passions. (Cheers.)

The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Paisley asked for a defence of General Dyer. He asked whether there was any body in this House prepared to say that General Dyer did right. I am prepared to say so. I am backed up in that opinion, as I say, by 80 per cent. of the Indian Civilians and by 90 per cent. of the European population.

Mr. Mills : Where did you get those figures ?

Sir W. Joynson Hicks : In India. I devoted my time in India to seeing and speaking to every one I could, both agitators as well as the governing classes. I did my best to form an accurate opinion. There is one person whose opinion I think may carry weight with this House. Hon. Members had heard of the lady missionary who had nearly been killed in Amritsar on 10th April. I refer to Miss Sherwood. She has told the whole of the facts of the case, how she has lived for 15 years amongst the Indian population, how she was torn from her bicycle while riding to from her work, how she was battered from head to foot, how she was left for dead, and how subsequently she was carried into a house, and after being there a little while had to be carried to another.

Mr. Mills : By Indians ?

Sir W. Joynson Hicks : By Indians, who were themselves attacked for having so carried her into the house. Miss Sherwood after her return to England, I think I am correct in saying, went to see the Secretary of State for India, and declined to accept any money compensation. She would not take

blood-money from this country. I have seen her. I have seen General Dyer and Sir M. O'Dwyer. Miss Sherwood has asked me to read to the House of Commons a letter which she has written, and I crave the indulgence of the Committee while I read it. It is a letter from an Englishwoman on the spot who, even after her ill-treatment, still hopes and intends to go back to the Punjab. She says :

"I have lived in the Amritsar neighbourhood for nearly 15 years, and my work in connection with the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society has brought me into close contact with the homes of the Punjab, both in Village and City. Moreover, I was superintendent and manager of the City Mission Schools for over 600 girls, Hindu and Muhammadan, at the time of the riots. As is known to you, I was almost killed on the 10th of April and was, in fact, left for dead in the streets of Amritsar. I was picked up and carried into the fort, where I lay for 19 days before I could be removed to England. During that time I heard all about the further riots and the shooting on the 13th from people who were in touch with what was happening. In March people of Amritsar bazars were talking of striking. The prospect of the police even joining it was discussed."

I want the Committee to realise the position of affairs in Amritsar and the whole of the Punjab.

"Never mind if they don't, we ourselves will fight", is a translation of the actual words used. On the day I was wounded, I saw men tearing down poles from shop awnings and seizing hold of anything likely to serve for a weapon, and a rushing out of the city to a given rendezvous."

"To teach the people that a wrong was done them (as sedition-mongers are doing, backed by English people) is a cruel and wicked thing, and far from mending matters will make them infinitely worse. No Indian in writing or conversation with me has referred to the repressive measures as other than meet and right under the circumstances. I should like to say that, loving the people as I do, having worked amongst them for years, and still hoping to go back to India, I am convinced that there was real rebellion in the Punjab, and that General Dyer saved India and us from a repetition of the miseries and cruelties of 1857."

I have letters from five other English missionary ladies who were in Amritsar at the time, and who went through this terrible time. All asked me to implore the House of Commons not to do this great wrong to General Dyer. One account says :

"The children had no milk, but only bully beef, and there were no sanitary conveniences in the fort. We had a terrible time,

recalling the days of Mutiny which was a very, very bad time for Englishwomen and children." *Another account :

"I was 16 days in the Amritsar Fort in April, 1919, in consequence of the deplorable riots which took place, and I wish to do my part in strongly protesting against the injustice being done to General Dyer, who, I believe, did his duty and saved us from unspeakable horrors. I have lived in India longer even than Miss Sherwood, and love India's people very dearly, but in such crises only those on the spot can judge as to what action to take, and they, according to British tradition, should be justly treated" c

What was the condition of affairs before General Dyer struck his blow—this inevitable and necessary blow on 13th April? One would imagine, from all that is being said, that General Dyer, a blood-thirsty English officer, found this gathering perfectly peaceful on the Jallianwala Bagh, and had said. "We must destroy this crowd, we must fire merely for the love of firing." The whole of Northern India was in what amounted to revolt and rebellion in the early part of April, 1919. From Calcutta to Peshawar and from Lahore to Bombay there were sporadic revolts and riots all over the country.

Colonel Wedgwood : Why? what were the causes?

Sir W. Joynson Hicks : I am not going into the causes. What we have got to face are facts with which General Dyer had to deal, the knowledge that was within General Dyer's brain when he was called upon by the Civil Authorities to take a hand in this disposal. I know there are political causes. I know there are political troubles in India, and there will be far worse political trouble in India in the near future.

Colonel Wedgwood : After they have read your speech!

Sir W. Joynson Hicks : I am trying merely to give to the Committee what I believe to be the facts of the case. I want hon. Members to realise that General Dyer knew that he had charge of this whole district. In Lahore the capital, there had been riots. I want to refer to those, because I notice in *the Times* newspaper this morning a leading article pleading for moderation, and asking why it was not possible to adopt the same methods at Amritsar as had been used in that quelling of the mob at Lahore on April 1910 and '12. If the leader writer in *the Times* had read the evidence given before the Commission, he would have seen that Lieut. Colonel Johnson who was in charge at Lahore, gave evidence before the Commission in which he said that he considered the quieting of Lahore was due 60 per cent. to the action of General Dyer at Amritsar. The action at Amritsar of General Dyer spread all through the Punjab and particularly quieted the town of Lahore. In Amritsar itself when these riots

broke out they were directly anti-British and anti-Christian. The crowd attacked one of the English banks and murdered the English manager, and the English assistant they beat to death. They piled up the furniture and set fire to the whole place. Then they went to the Alliance Bank and murdered the Manager. Afterwards they visited both the Town Hall and the Post Office and set fire to them. I brought back photographs of these places given to me by the Lieut. Governor of the Punjab, and they showed these burned buildings where the bank managers were murdered, and building after building occupied by English residents and Christians were burnt.

The telegram system was attacked and the railways, and wherever they could get hold of an English guard on the railway he was beaten to death. They went to an army hospital to get hold of another lady missionary and she only escaped through the kindness and loyalty of her Indian friends. They went to Indian christian church and burned that. The Religious tract Society's Depot was burned, and they tried to get hold of the Church Missionary Society Girl's School. The state of things there on the 10th and 11th of April did amount to a rebellion. The difference between myself and the Secretary of State for War is, whether there was a rebellion or not? If there was no rebellion but merely a local riot, then General Dyer could be rightly convicted of inhumanity and cruelty, but if there was a rebellion, as I submit there was, then General Dyer's action was justified. It was a rebellion which might have led to almost anything, in fact, it was an open rebellion.

It is not a question in these circumstances as to how far General Dyer should have gone, because he was at a war with a section of the people of India, and a section of the people of India were at war with general Dyer. The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Paisley (Mr. Asquith) said that nothing happened between the 10th, and the 13th of April. At that time the whole city was in the hands of the military, soldiers had to be poured in, and the reason why General Dyer had only a few troops was because the troops were guarding every available place, protecting the European population. The whole city was picketed during the 11th and 12th of April. It was all one continuous operation, and not merely incidental firing on the part of General Dyer's force. The native populace had every possible warning. During the riot the military had to shoot in Amritsar, and some men were killed, and at their funeral on the 10th the following notice was issued.

"The troops have orders to restore order in Amritsar and to use all force necessary. No gatherings nor procession of any sort will be allowed. All gatherings will be fired on. Any persons leaving

the city in groups of more than four will be fired on. Respectable persons should keep indoors." On the night of the 11th of April General Dyer arrived, and on the 12th he marched round the city with as large a show of force as possible. As he marched the inhabitants were insolent and spat on the ground as the troops passed, and amid all this provocation General Dyer did nothing to them, and the most extreme opponent of General Dyer could not find fault with him up to this point. He did his best not to take the extreme measures on the 12th which he was forced to take on the 13th. One or two extracts from the reports of the Committee which investigated the disturbances in the Punjab will show exactly what took place on the 13th when the following proclamation was issued :

"The inhabitants of Amritsar are hereby warned that if they will cause damage to any property or will commit any act of violence in the environs of Amritsar, it will be taken for granted that such acts are due to incitement in Amritsar city, and offenders will be punished according to Military Law. All meetings and gatherings are hereby prohibited, and will be dispersed at once under Military Law."

On the 12th instant my right hon. Friend said that nothing happened, but a force had to be sent out to bring in two ladies, and during the day the telegraph wires were cut between Chbeharta and Amritsar, between Kharsa and Gurusar, and between Kharsa and Chbeharta. In spite of all that happened on the 10th, in spite of all the firing that took place, the rebels were quietly taking means to isolate Amritsar and prepare themselves for anything that might take place on the following day. On the 13th General Dyer went round Amritsar, and at 19 places he called a halt, and by sounding a drum he summoned the people and at those 19 places he read out another proclamation which was drawn up in English and in the vernacular as follows :

"It is hereby proclaimed to all to whom it may concern that no person residing in the city is permitted or allowed to leave the city in his own or hired conveyance or on foot without a pass. No person residing in the Amritsar city is permitted to leave his house after 8. Any persons found in the city after 8 are liable to be shot. No procession of any kind is permitted to parade the streets in the city or any part of the city, or outside of it, at any time. Any such processions or any gathering of four men will be looked upon and treated as unlawful assembly and dispersed by force of arms, if necessary."

It is idle to say that these proclamations were not known to the whole of the population. I have spoken with men on the spot who were on the police force at the time, both Native and English ; and not only these, but the Indian official as well in

Amritsar, supported General Dyer to the utmost in the action he was taking, and none of them will dispute that the inhabitants of that city knew of this proclamation and knew of the danger they would be subject to. In spite of those proclamations word was brought to General Dyer that this crowd was assembling in the Jallianwala Bagh. It is true that it was impossible for more than a few troops to get through the narrow opening into this place at the same time, but the right hon. Gentleman is not correct when he said the crowd could not get out at the other end because they could get out the garden and over the walls. There was only one entrance for the troops, and General Dyer and his troops came in at this narrow entrance. He knew that the telegraph wires had been cut and that Amritsar was isolated. He knew that there was a crowd being addressed by an agitator, the same agitator who was condemned for his connection with the murders on the 10th, but who, I regret to say, was pardoned by the India Government. He was haranguing the mob and doing his best to excite them. General Dyer had only 50 men armed with rifles and about 40 with cutlasses or knives. What would this House have said if he had waited and allowed the crowd to charge him? The mere force of numbers and the mere impact of the crowd would have swept General Dyer and his force absolutely out of existence if they had attacked him. The Europeans were behind General Dyer, and I am sure hon. Members would have condemned him and rightly condemned him if he had allowed himself to be overwhelmed by that mob.

It is not for me to say what some of my hon. Friends would have done, but it is not for hon. Members who do not know the facts to say that they would have acted differently. I do not know any man who would say that with such responsibility upon his shoulders, and with the knowledge that General Dyer had, he would have dared to have abstained from firing in the way he did. It is said that General Dyer's force fired without any cessation, but if you look at the report of the Brigade-Major of his forces who has since died, it will be seen that he says :

"We began to fire upon the crowd, which broke into two bodies. Things were getting very serious indeed, and looked as if they were going to rush. Fire was ordered first on one lump of crowd which looked the most menacing and then on the other."

Those are the words of this officer who was merely making his formal report, and he says that the crowd looked as if they were going to rush them. What has happened since? Was General Dyer assailed by the people of the Punjab for the action he took? Certainly not. They afterwards came to him in their thousands

and thanked him for what he had done. They thanked him for the action he had taken. He was made a Sikh—one of the highest honours given to men. He was employed by the Government to march round the whole district, and pacify it—this blood-thirsty man who is said to have wantonly shot down so many of their fellow country-men, was the man who was selected to do his best in friendly conversation with them. I assert that General Dyer was and is to-day beloved of the Sikh Nation. I should like to say one word with regard to the speech of the Secretary for War. He made great play with the statement that the crowd were not armed with lethal weapons. Any one acquainted with conditions in India would have known it was impossible under the Arms Act for them to be armed with guns. Nevertheless, they imported into Amritsar hundreds of thousands of ironshod bamboo canes which they proposed to use. It was suggested by the right hon. Gentleman that if the object of General Dyer was to disperse the crowd, his action was uncalled for and unnecessary. I say, on the other hand, if it was to stop or to put an end to rebellion, then he was entitled to judge of what was to be done in military fashion.

The hon. Gentleman said that nobody with any reputation in India had suggested the punishment of General Dyer or other officials concerned. Has he seen the report of a meeting which took place in the Kingsway Hall, London, on the 3rd June? It was attended by gentlemen who are supporting my right hon. Friend to-day. It was addressed by an hon. Member of the Legislative Council—the Hon. Mr. Patel. May I here utter a word of warning to the hon. and gallant Member for Newcastle—under-Lyme (Col Wedgwood) in this connection. I happened to be in the Legislative Council at Delhi when the Hon. Mr. Patel was making a speech not quite so bad perhaps, but one in which he quoted a speech of the hon. and gallant Gentleman, and then turned round and said, "These are the noble words of a noble man." After that I went out. This is what Mr. Patel said at the meeting in London the other day.

"When the Indian people are informed that the Government have the fullest confidence in Lord Chelmsford and a high appreciation of Sir M. O'Dwyer's energy, do you suppose they will be impressed by Mr. Montagu's platonic condemnation of some of the excesses under Martial Law? No; they will judge you by your deeds, not by your words, and if you have confidence in Lord Chelmsford, they will have no confidence in you. Lord Chelmsford must go. It is a fresh insult and outrage to Indian sentiment that the Government should express their confidence in such a Viceroy."

There was another speech made by a Mr. Horniman, who was expelled or deported from India, and it was almost equally as bad. I will refer to only one further speech, and that was delivered by an Indian lady, Mrs. Naidu, who gave a description of alleged action of our troops at Amritsar. If hon. Members really believe in the increasing goodwill of certain sections of the people of India, I want them to realise what this woman said and said in the presence of two English Members of Parliament—the hon. Member for Newcastle (Major Barnes) and the hon. Member for Glasgow (Mr. Neil Maclean) on the 3rd June 1920 at the Kingsway Hall. Mrs. Naidu said :

"Women, whose faces had never been touched by the curious sun or the moon, were dragged into the market place. My sisters were stripped naked; they were flogged; they were outraged; and yet you dare talk of the auction of souls."

Neither of the two hon. Members bounded up in his seat as I should have expected any English Member of Parliament would have done. One of them in fact, the hon. Member for Newcastle, said :

"We have just listened to a very, very wonderful speech which had that greatest power a speech can ever have, to get past the head to the heart, and that is where it arrived."

Immediately, I got that report I wrote to General Dyer and Sir M. O'Dwyer, and I am authorised by those two gentlemen to say in this House of Commons that that statement, as far as their knowledge goes, and I think their knowledge is conclusive in the matter, is absolutely and totally untrue. Let English Members realise that that is the kind of incitement to hostility to our rule in India which is indulged in by extreme sections of the Indian Community. This was going on last year, and it is going on to-day. When I was at Peshawar there was a placard posted up in that city, which itself is too liable to disorder and crime, calling upon the Indians to rise and destroy the British forces. It said :

"Your hearts will soon be soothed by the entire annihilation of British Imperialism and the complete destruction of these enemies of humanity."

This placard was posted up in Peshawar in March, 1920, and it goes on :

"Active resistance will crush the viper's head. Burn their offices, mutilate their railways and telegraphs, induce the Police and Army to work with you and slay these dogs of Britain everywhere you find them."

I want to make an appeal to this Committee on behalf of the Englishmen and Englishwomen in the Civil Service, and in the Army, who are upholding our flag there under very great difficulties.

We hear a great deal of the responsibilities of Empire, but what is too often referred to is the responsibility to the native races on the part of the Government. There is, however, a responsibility also to the Europeans. You send these men out, you allow their women and children to go out there to live in scattered areas, spread all over the country—often miles and miles away from any help, and they are only enabled to live and to rule by the knowledge of the fact that there is in India a British Army on which they can rely in the last resort. I appeal to this Committee, not merely on behalf of them, but on behalf also of the soldiers in India, who feel strongly with regard to the action which the Army Council has taken into the case of General Dyer. They feel that when the next riot takes place they may be called upon in similar circumstances to come to a somewhat similar decision. Are you going to tell them that this House of Commons has supported the action of the Army Council in the case of General Dyer, and are you going to tell them also that in the future in any action they may take they will not have the support of Great Britain? We must trust the men on the spot. We send out our best men to India to the Civil Service and to the Army, and we have to trust them not once or twice, but at all times.

Mr. Bennett: A meeting took place in this city not many weeks ago attended mainly by Englishmen whose lives have been spent largely in India. As reported to me, the speech of the Chairman of that meeting may be summarised in these words: "We English have got to live with the natives, and the best we can do is to get on good terms with them, and say as little as we can about these disturbances." With part of that sentiment I cordially agree. We have to pursue a policy of moderation. There are obstacles in the way of that policy and in the way of a good understanding between the two races. Some of them are raised by hon. Members opposite, some by hon. Members around me. So far as hon. Members opposite are concerned, I deprecate the agitation—premature and purely fictitious—on this question which they have carried on. The meetings that have been held have been artificial in character. I have a letter from Mr. Horniman, who has been referred to to-day, a journalist who was expelled, and, in my opinion, properly expelled, from Bombay. In that letter he writes to a newspaper in Bombay to the effect that he is "working the press in this country for all that is worth." He goes on further to say "you may trust me to keep the Press of England up to the mark."

That discounts a great deal of what we read in the English Papers. On the other hand, we have got a mischievous Press in

England poisoning the wells against the Secretary for India. I think we have seen some co-operation in that unworthy purpose in some of the questions which have been put in this House during the last few days. The great obstacles to a friendly understanding, which is profoundly to be deferred therefore, come from two sides. Two eminent Members of the legal profession, one representing the higher and the other the less high branch of the profession, have shown what I may call the forensic astuteness in concentrating the discussion to-day upon the case of General Dyer. That made an appeal to our fair-mindedness; they put before us the case of an honourable officer, who has served his country for 34 years, and who, they think, has not had justice. I have read fully the statement which General Dyer laid before the Army Council, and have given it my best consideration, and I am satisfied that there is every warrant for the decision which has been come to in regard to him. I notice one thing that was not known to me before—namely, that General Dyer was for some years on the staff as instructor in Military Law. That rather disturbs me. I want to know how many officers of the Indian Army have received the benefit of his teaching in military law, and how many of them have imbibed the peculiar principles to which he has given expression. For instance, is it generally believed, amongst the officers of the Indian Army, that, in cases of trouble it matters little whether there is to be excess of shooting or not? He says excess does not concern him. "I was not concerned with excess," I think he says, "because I had in view the effect which it was necessary to produce upon the public feeling in the Punjab."

I am not going further into the question of General Dyer. I want to take the discussion away from General Dyer altogether for the time being, and to call the attention of the committee to the exercise of Martial Law in the Punjab at this time, the conditions under which Martial Law was exercised and the lessons to be derived from it. We shall waste our time if we simply stand here condemning or exonerating particular individuals. We want to find what happened, and to guard in the future against the consequences of the errors that have been made. I will ask hon. Members to study carefully the evidence given by a number of the officers who were appointed as Area Military Officers to carry out Martial Law, after the control had been handed over by the civil authority. The committee recognised, of course, the serious dangers which follow from the institution of Martial Law. The ordinary rules of evidence are suspended, but what is worst of all is that a number of men are put in positions of judicial authority who necessarily have no experience of exercising such authority and are utterly incapable of doing so properly.

Martial Law may be a matter of military necessity. Owing to pressure of circumstances it may be inevitable, but it is a thing to be avoided so far as it possibly can be. I want the committee to endeavour to get some grasp of the conditions under which Martial Law was carried out, and of the kind of men who were occupied in carrying it out. I wish to make no personal attacks on them, and I shall as far as possible avoid naming any of these officers, but the errors of their administration and their want of judgment and, at times, even of common-sense, must be made known. There was a young officer—I fancy he must have been a very young soldier indeed—who invented a number of minor punishments. These punishments have been called “freak punishments” and I think that is a term which sufficiently does justice to them. He invented skipping as a means of minor punishment—very minor, I think we must say. In other case, finding that a culprit before him was given to poetry, he ordered to him to write an ode in his honour. He also ordered that one after another of the persons who came before him should touch the grounds with their foreheads. He justified himself for that by saying that it was a common thing, and he believed it was done all over India. If that is so, I hope the Government of India have had their attention directed to it, and we should like to have an assurance that no longer are men humiliated by being made to touch the ground with their foreheads.

We get more serious things than this. A military officer exercising authority under martial law had to deal with a case in which martial law notices had been stripped from the wall of a school. He had no evidence as to who was guilty of this irregularity, but he thought he could find out, or, at any rate, that he could administer justice, by ordering that some of the bigger in the school should be picked out and whipped. His own admission before the Committee was, “They were not necessarily guilty but it was their misfortune.” Then he was asked, “Were warnings against defacement of notices written or oral? I do not remember,” he said, “but what does it matter?” Questions of life or death may come before these tribunals, and some importance must be attached to the regularity of the procedure and when an officer gives an answer indicating that he does not care whether an order is written or oral, it is a clear indication of the general prevalence of slipshod procedure in these courts. Again, and I think this is still more serious, we read that at Lahore a whipping triangle was set up before the accused persons were tried. That seems to be an anticipation of events scarcely consistent with a judicial attitude of mind. Worse still, also at Lahore, gallows were erected before the court opened. There again, is the sinister anticipation of the issue which, I think, is discreditable to all who are

associated with it. If we want a historic parallel to that, we should find it in the case of the Duc d'Enghien, whom Napoleon had tried at Vincennes, and for whom a grave was dug before the trial began. I put this case of the erection of a gallows before the opening of the court on a par with that sinister episode in the procedure of Napoleon. In another case, a Deputy Commissioner in Gujranwalla caused the leaders, or those who were believed to be the leaders of the popular party, to be handcuffed and chained, marched through the streets to the station, and sent to Lahore in a goods truck. The same official arrested Gover Singh, aged 60, as a hostage, because his three sons were missing. An order was passed confiscating his property, and a warning was issued that any one attempting to reap his crops would be shot.

These are matters to which hon. Members here attach no importance. They concentrate the whole of their thought and care upon vindicating General Dyer, and proving that he has been very badly treated. I think they would spend their time a little more usefully, and would be more fully performing their duties in regard to India, if they would inquire into the methods by which martial law was administered at that time. I think we ought, in following these proceedings, to note the mentality of the men who were engaged in them. What can you say of the mentality of a man who, over and over again, will tell you that the people of the Punjab like martial law? We have heard of eels getting used to be skinned, but when it is said that the people of a province like martial law, it only shows what extraordinary persons were put in charge of the administration of martial law at that time. "People liked my administration." "People liked martial law, especially the masses." Another officer who had not been saluted by some children—the pupils of a school—gave orders that the whole of the boys in that school should for a week be made to come and salute him at his office, and should, in addition, salute the Union Jack. If that officer had set himself to devise means by which the children of that town could be made as long as they lived to hate the Union Jack and the people who ruled under it, he could not have adopted a more efficacious procedure. Because the pupils in one group of colleges were suspected of tearing down a martial law notice, the whole of the students—a thousand all told—were made for a whole week to march 16 miles a day to the military headquarters. That is the rising generation in India. Those are the students, the class of people who in Italy, for instance, took a prominent part in the *risorgimento*. What *gaucherie*, what stupidity there must be amongst this school of officers in the Punjab, who will take these men and make them hate England

and English officers! We have heard a great deal about General Dyer, and the dangers that would have arisen if he had not been as stern as he was, but no one in this Committee, so far, has seemed to contemplate the danger to British rule that follows proceedings of this kind. I maintain that those who uphold this procedure, or who ignore it, and concentrate their attention in a wrong fashion on the problem, are doing every harm to British rule. The proceedings I am describing do not stand alone. There is a whole group of blunders and oppressions and hardships of this kind which seem to me to provide material for a hymn of hate against England, and nothing short of it. I ask hon. Members to study that aspect of the question, and not to concentrate upon General Dyer. I will give another instance. We have heard—reference was made to it in the speech of Secretary of State—of a particular officer who arrested a wedding party and had them flogged because they were in excess of the number allowed to pass in the streets. The officer said this whipping of the wedding party was the only regrettable incident that occurred in his jurisdiction under martial law. He must have had dense mind and a strange perception; because it was this officer who had been responsible for this marching backwards and forwards of students and for a number of other acts of oppression which were only too characteristic of the reign of martial law in that part of country.

We have had in the Report of the Commission an exoneration of the Government of Sir M. O'Dwyer from the charge that he had exercised undue pressure in recruiting and the loan campaign. As to recruiting, it is fair to Sir M. O'Dwyer to recognise that there was a quota which the various administrations were expected to work up to in their recruiting operations, and it is also fair to say that when these were brought to notice measures were taken to prevent their repetition, and it is also fair to say that one witness before the commission said that those who were guilty of exercising pressure in recruiting were native officials of some standing. As to the loan operations, I do not accept the finding of the Commission in regard to that, because I have here a circular which was issued in the Punjab administration giving instructions as to the way in which encouragement was to be given to the loan, and this passage occurs:

"Deputy Commissioners will find much assistance in estimating the contributions that they ought to get from various places by going to the Income Tax Officer and getting the Income Tax Returns, which will furnish a fairly reliable index to the financial conditions of individuals who are expected to help the loan."

In India, as I understand, Income Tax operations are as confi-

dential as they are in this country, and we can realise the possibilities at all events of a somewhat oppressive officialism if we contemplate the officers of the Government in charge of Loan operations going to the Income Tax Officer, and asked him to give a return of the incomes of this or that individual. I cannot, in view of that circular, join in the acquittal of the Punjab Government of the charge of having exercised undue pressure in some, at all events, of their operations.

We have had a good deal said to-day as to the Punjab having been saved by the operations of General Dyer. What evidence have we of that? What inductive process based upon known facts have we which leads legitimately to the conclusion that a great rising, equal to that of the Mutiny of 1857, was imminent, and that these severe measures had to be taken to prevent it? The Punjab knows something of conspiracy as Bengal knows a good deal of conspiracy. We had a conspiracy seven or eight years ago and another of the same kind occurred a little later. There was organised dacoity carried out with the object of seizing arms and the money with which to buy arms. It was accompanied by attempts to corrupt the native army, by attacks upon the regimental armouries, and attempts to get arms from them, and by the manufacture of bombs, and I believe classes were opened to teach what may be called political chemistry—the manufacture of bombs. But there is absolutely no indication of the existence of any preparations of that kind during the troubles in the Punjab. We have evidence, too, which will not be questioned, as to the condition of the villages and of many towns even after these troubles had taken place. We have the statement of General Benyon that he had gone through all the villages in the neighbourhood and that he found the villagers were quiet and willing to co-operate with him in watching the railway lines. On page after page there is evidence that in the rural districts the people were as a whole quiet, and orderly and well-behaved. Not only so, but I have every reason to believe that the Government of the Punjab, even at the worst time, had confidence in two things. They trusted the Army, and their trust was fully justified. The Army was absolutely loyal during the whole of the proceedings. They also trusted the village populations. On the whole, they were quiet and orderly, and there were no signs, in large areas of the rural part of the Punjab, of any tendency towards insurrection. Therefore, I hold that this purely hypothetical danger, to which General Dyer points as his excuse for an act of gross and excessive severity, did not exist. I have as much reason to say there was no danger as hon. Members opposite have to say that there was, and in any case the findings of the Committee is with me. The Commit-

tee had much fuller opportunities for inquiring into the facts. The Committee came to the conclusion that there was no evidence of a widespread conspiracy. We had confirmation of that in Delhi. Immediately after the Afghan invasion a meeting of 40,000 people was held in Delhi at which the conduct of the Amir was condemned, and the Deputy-Commissioner of Delhi states his opinion that meeting was sincere. That is a fact which discourages belief in anything like a widespread movement towards conspiracy.

We have heard a great deal about General Dyer, but I have not heard one word from those who defended him as to the 300, 000, 000 millions of people who live in India, and what they think. The most remarkable thing to me has been that hon. Members have taken up the interests of one individual, and have concentrated all their thoughts on one individual, but have turned an absolutely blind eye to what the people of India think. That is not a reasonable way of dealing with a great question of this kind. We have to live with these people, and we have to be on close terms with them that we have been before, and they will have some reason to complain if they read this Debate and do not find one word as to what the people of India think of these happenings. It is no sign of real interest in India when a number of hon. Members become excited, as they did this afternoon, over the interests of an individual, and are so absolutely indifferent to the bearings of our discussion upon the people of India. We have been told that India was conquered by the sword and is being held by the sword. That doctrine is absolutely repudiated by every historical authority of any importance. We began as a trading nation. We did not go as a military nation, and we should have accomplished nothing in India but for the co-operation of Indian agents. Why should we vaunt this doctrine of holding by the sword in the face of a people whom we want to make a free people, whose liberties we are enlarging? During the enquiry we had the Commandant of a regiment stating that we can influence the Asiatic only by force. That is a view which is at the back of all these happenings and the operation of Martial Law. There has been an idea that the native of India is an inferior person who has to be held in restraint by coercion. The Secretary of State for India seems to have aroused the anger of certain hon. Members by a speech which I regard as a dignified and noble vindication of the liberal policy which has been pursued in India. What hon. Members have seen to justify them in speaking of it as an appeal to racial prejudice I do not know. The appeal to racial prejudice has come from their side. There is no warrant for the condem-

nation which has been passed upon a speech which is worthy of the subject and worthy of the occasion. Recently, we have had an opportunity of refreshing our memories on some of the achievements and speeches of the Earl of Beaconsfield. I came across a passage in which he reminded the people of this country that we were proud of our Empire, and the chief reason for being proud of it was that it had been based on sympathy as well as on force. Let us never forget that. Unless we get the sympathy and good-will of the people of India our task is ended or will be ended in a short time. We cannot contemplate a future in which the normal condition of things in India is one of antagonism between the people and the Government. If we are to continue the Dyer policy, the result must necessarily be no progress in India and no improvement in the relations between the people of India and the Government. The other day I had a letter from India, in which the writer—an Englishman who had lived the better part of his life there, and in whose judgment I place the most absolute confidence—said ; "Dyer is the greatest asset that the extremists in India have got." No truer word has been contributed to this discussion. Dyerism will be an enormous help to those who are trying to oust the British Government from its place in India, and hon. Members who have been censuring the Secretary of State for India for the generous and sympathetic words in which he spoke of the people of India ought to realise that we reached a point at which most critical issues have to be decided. We have to ask ourselves whether we are to be on terms of friendship with the people of India or whether we are to go on dealing with them in a way in which so many officers have dealt with them. Those who have looked too lightly and with approval in too many cases upon the action of General Dyer, have a scale of value of their own* of human life, in which they place the Indian below the European. This is not a political question, but a question of human values, and until we get rid of that idea and recognise the sacredness of European life, we shall be suspected by the people of India, our actions will be unfavourably coloured, and our policy in that country will be a failure.

I appeal to those hon. Members on the other side of the House who have put themselves in antagonism to the policy of the Government to realise that it is they and not those who are supporting the Secretary of State, who will be responsible if in the time to come we should ever lose India. God grant that the connection between this country and India may long continue, that it may never cease, that India being a self-governing country, will at the same time remain an integral part of the British Commonwealth. But at the same time

we have to make it worth the while of the people of India to retain their place in that Commonwealth, and if they are to be treated as serfs, to be treated as too many of them were treated in those troublous times, the day of our rule will come to an end. I hope that hon. Members on that side who concentrate so much on the individual aspect of this case will realise its political importance and will realise that one at all events of the lessons which we have derived from this experience is that we must never again allow the military authorities to get out of touch with the civil authorities. Let hon. Members, if they want to see how things should be done, turn from Amritsar to Ahmedabad in the Bombay Presidency and see the success of an entirely different method. There the civil authority never lost touch with the military authority. The result was that within forty-eight hours the military authority was enabled to withdraw its orders suspending assemblages, and the abnormal condition of things was brought to an end. The real lessons which the Government have to learn is to follow the example of Ahmedabad and never again allow the military authorities to get into such entire detachment from the civil authority as it was allowed to do at Amritsar, with consequences of the most deplorable kind.

Brigadier-General Surtees urged hon. members to remember the effect that speeches and decisions in that House would have upon natives in all parts of the Empire. If British prestige were destroyed the Empire would collapse. In 1865 Governor Eyer saved the European inhabitants of Jamaica by prompt and strong action, for which he was persecuted as General Dyer had been. General Dyer had a similar idea in his mind. Europeans on the spot were the best judges of the situation. "We could not surrender India even if we wished to do so, yet if a plebiscite were taken to-morrow as to who should rule India, the result would be against us. If we did not hold India by moral suasion we must hold it by force, possibly thinly veiled, but undoubtedly by force." He believed that General Dyer, by his action saved the Empire from serious danger. As Mr. Palmer had rightly said they had a most deplorable speech that day from the Secretary of State for India which would go out to our great Dependency as an encouragement to lawlessness and those forces of disorder which every sane and patriotic Englishman was anxious to see laid to rest in India. His attitude would feed the flames of antagonism against him in a manner which, in his more reserved moments, he would sincerely regret.

Mr. Palmer : I think we are to be congratulated that during this dinner hour some one of more sober thoughts has addressed

himself to this tremendous question. Every one will feel that they are face to face with a crisis, as far as India is concerned. I imagine there is not a man in this House who does not realise that we hold in trust a great and mighty population in India, and that it is our duty to treat them with generosity and with justice. This debate has revealed that, while the vast body of the population of India are loyal subjects of the Crown, there is in India, as in other parts of the world, a vast organisation determined to bring down the strength and might of the British Empire. It was this distinguished general who was called upon at a moment of great emergency to settle for himself how he should deal with a crisis. No one who has read the evidence can fail to realise that throughout the Punjab and other parts of India there was a concerted attempt at revolution. General Beynon can be quoted in favour of General Dyer—

"The strong measures taken by General Dyer at Amritsar had a far-reaching effect and prevented any further trouble in the Lower Division Area."

We have had to-day a most deplorable speech from the Secretary of State for India, a speech which, I think, will go out to India as an encouragement to disloyalists and those forces of disorder which every sane and patriotic Englishman is anxious to see laid at rest. We know that during the War India provided some of the most gallant of our troops. It is not fair to suggest there are people here who believe that the great and loyal Indian population only to be kept down and repressed, and that we will not treat them as citizens of the Empire. One thing that has impressed me very much was this—that while General Dyer, able to visualise what was happening, realising the atmosphere in which he was moving, did his duty, severely, yes, but for the sake of the British Empire and for the sake of the people of India, a right hon. Gentleman sitting in oriental aloofness in Whitehall, a year after, and 6000 miles away, is pleased to measure the less or more of the severity applied by that gallant soldier. They actually passed strictures upon other gallant officers who did not exercise sufficient severity in the circumstances in which they were placed. On the one side you have the right hon. Gentleman in this House, far away from the scene, smug and safe here, censuring this gallant officer for the extra severity which, in his particular judgment, he thought it right to display, and we have on the other side actually criticism, if not censure, of other gallant officers, because they were not sufficiently severe in putting down sporadic risings. Let me quote, in one case with regard to Delhi—

"Firing continued no longer than was necessary to achieve the

legitimate object of restoring order and preventing a disastrous outbreak of violence”

That is a commendatory statement. Here is another one in regard to Ahmedabad—“The force used against the rioters was certainly not excessive. If greater force could have been applied at an early stage the commission of an atrocious murder and much destruction of property might have been prevented.”

Here is another in regard to Gujranwala.

“In failing to order the police to fire upon and so disperse the mob surrounding the burning Post Office, the Acting Deputy Commissioner appears to us to have committed an error. If effective measures had then been taken to disperse the mob and restore order, the later incidents of the day might have been avoided.”

It passes ones comprehension to understand the position. If an officer in the exercise of his discretion uses a little more or less severity according to the measure of the Secretary of State for India, he is broken on the wheel—no trial, no possibility of defending himself, and even his statement to the Army Council is carefully put out after we have had an announcement that he is condemned. That announcement went out last night to the world, and I came here at 8 o'clock this morning to get hold of General Dyer's statement. A more manly and splendidly frank and open statement I have never read. Here we have the right hon. Gentleman, the Secretary for War, sitting in his oriental aloofness in Whitehall, denouncing General Dyer for what he did, and we have in the Hunter Commission Report criticisms of other officers for failing to take effective measures immediately to put down disturbances. The right hon. Gentleman, the Secretary for India, made a deplorable speech. It will go out to India, to the seething masses there, who are ready for trouble and revolution, that there are large masses of opinion in this country who think that the Indian is to be down-trodden. That is not so. The right hon. Gentleman has done a great thing to India in the great measure of freedom and reform that he has brought about. That measure of freedom was passed by the House of Commons and by the very men whose opinions he has denounced to-day. Instead of coming down to this House to-day with a statesman-like and reasonable speech he fed the flames of antagonism in a manner which I feel sure in his more reserved moments he will sincerely regret. An hon. Member said just now that no regard had been given to Indian opinion and yet we know that a vast mass of sober patriotic Indian opinion was with General Dyer and applauded him for the splendid severity of his action before the right hon. Gentleman and the Government gave way to the clamour of revolution, and six months after these events, set up a

committee. I have had some letters from people in India who were concerned in these tremendous and troublesome days. An hon. Gentleman referred in terms of praise to what happened in Ahmedabad. I have a letter here from a lady in which she says :—

"I was in Ahmedabad at the time of the Amritsar riots, when we experienced riots of similar nature, and I have not the least hesitation in saying that the prompt action taken by General Dyer in the Punjab saved our lives. The British police-sergeant who was the very first victim in Ahmedabad, had his hands cut off, and he was then hacked to pieces. At a small station, a loyal native who gave the order to fire on the mob, was tied to a chair with the official records piled around him, and they then poured kerosene oil on him, thus burning him alive. I expect you know that they burned down most of the other Government buildings, but although the guard on the Bombay Bank fired on them the building was left untouched owing to the fact that the securities of the natives were in the bank. We people are powerless to help the man who, by a great decision made in a few minutes, saved us all from a fate too horrible to think of."

That is the testimony of a woman who was in India at the time. I have had many other letters from those who were with General Dyer. One man writes :

"I have had the pleasure of serving under this General, and a better or kind hearted man you could not wish to meet. I went all through the Amritsar and Lahore riots with the motor transport section, and consequently saw a lot of events that happened ; and only those that were in those riots could realise fully the danger it meant to the empire. This General had only one alternative, and that was to deal with a firm hand. If he did not give the orders he gave, there would not be many of the garrison alive to-day to tell the truth."

There are many other people, I could quote, who says that General Dyer saved India. In my opinion, for what it is worth, there was an incipient revolution which might have grown into immense and mighty proportion and greater proportion even than the great Indian Mutiny. Every evidence shows that that was so. I think it is rather a commentary on the turn of the wheel that it should be the business of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for war, who is responsible for more errors of judgment than any man sitting on the Treasury Bench, and responsible for the loss of more lives than any man sitting in this House, to get up and denounce this gallant man who, in my opinion, saved India from grave trouble and saved the women from grave outrage and saved India for the Empire. Some hon. Gentlemen

who may have not given a deep study to all the documents including the report of the National Council which was well worth reading, do not, I think, realise what was happening there. Not only was Amritsar the centre of this thing, but throughout the whole of the Punjab there was a deep and concerted movement to overthrow the British Raj. Here is one case which is worth mentioning. In a city of Punjab frightened women had taken refuge in one of the rallying points, as they were called, waiting eagerly for the arrival of the troops, and whilst there, notice were issued by the natives stating that there were 80 women and children waiting to be ravaged. In fact, no girls' school was sacred. Then there was the remarkable letter written by the Archbishop of Simla, who is not a politician, and not a man who is seeking to make dialectical points in this House to break a gallant officer for the sake of saving their own position. He is a Right Reverend prelate of the Church who has the respect and affection of thousands of the natives of India. No man in this House who has only sense of responsibility can fail to appreciate what he wrote. I ask hon. Gentlemen who as a rule associate themselves with the Government to pause before they go into the lobby to support the right hon. Gentleman to-night. This is a matter which cannot easily be settled by mere argument in this House. It goes much deeper—it goes down to the very bed-rock of our great Empire. I appreciate what the right hon. Gentleman said, and with much of his speech I agree, but the whole tone and temper of that speech inflamed the Committee more than I have seen it flamed in 35 years' experience. We are sincere in this matter, and I grant that he is. We feel that General Dyer has been sentenced without trial. Cannot the Government see some way by which justice can be meted out to this honourable and gallant officer by which we can yet have an inquiry where he can put his case and defend it, as he has never yet had a real opportunity of doing? If that suggestion, which I throw out, could be accepted by the Government, many of us who feel very deeply on this matter would have our feelings somewhat alleviated. I ask hon. Members to forget the past and to remember the British Empire, and to realise throughout the vast spaces of the world. We ask our gallant soldiers to uphold the British flag, and if a man goes a little beyond what we consider to be just and fair, do not break him on the wheel without trial, but give him a fair chance of being heard. Reprimand him if you will, and say to him he exceeded the legitimate needs of the case, and that in the circumstances in which he was placed he may have overdone the severity, but let us realise that we shall not hold our Empire together if, whenever we get clamour from revolution arise, a gallant soldier

who has done his duty is to be broken at the dictate of the Treasury Bench.

Lieutenant Commander H. Young unreservedly supported the action of the Government of India and the Secretary of State. They were dealing simply with a question of the exercise of professional discretion by a soldier. He would fain take every point in favour of General Dyer up to the critical moment of the opening of fire at Amritsar and assume that he was right in opening fire. But as to the continuance of the firing, it was common ground that the shooting was more than necessary to disperse the meeting. It was carried on for another purpose—for the sake of intimidation. That was an extension of the simple, definite, well established rule of the use of minimum of force for the immediate circumstances which ought not to be countenanced either in the interests of officers in charge, for it extended their area of judgment from the situation immediately before them to the situation in its widest possible aspect, or in the interest of the civilian population, for whom the rule was the charter for the protection of their lives, liberties, and safety from unduly violent action.

Colonel Wedgwood : I know I am regarded as an anti-patriot in this House of Commons—as one opposed to the interests of his own country, of course. Old Members of this House know that that is not so. If ever there was a time in which it behoved those who love England to speak out, it is to-day. Hon. Members have discussed this question of General Dyer as if it concerned only him : but General Dyer was only an incident. What we are discussing or ought to be discussing, is whether India is to have a chance to remain part of the British Empire. That is the question that I do beg hon. Members to take into account. Do you desire to see the British Empire preserved ? If we do, we must remember that it can only be preserved by the co-operation of the Indians and not by any other means. Some are carried away by the idea that the safety of English men and women comes first. It does not come first. Every man who went out to France to fight in the War knew perfectly well that his safety and the safety of his relatives and friends was of no importance whatever. They knew that the honour of their country came first. And there is a profound antagonism between honour and safety. General Dyer no doubt acted as if the safety of English men and women should come first. I think that was the wrong thing to do. It is more important to save the national honour than to save any particular item in the nation. I would rather say, for the interests of our country, that Englishmen and women had been shot down at Jallianwala by Indians than that Indians had been shot down by Englishmen,

The principal charge I make against Dyer is not that he shot down Indians, but that he placed on English history the gravest blot since in days gone-by we burned Joan of Arc at the stake.

I am not speaking from an Indian point of view, but solely from an English point of view. Where a question of National honour is concerned we must look at it with English eyes and I beg hon. Members to realise that by doing this action General Dyer has injured our honour and that is his crime. The safety of life is of no importance, the safety of women and children, even, is of no importance compared with the honour of England, and every member knows that that is so. The complaint is not that General Dyer committed this crime. It is not just a question of punishing General Dyer. I agree with Mr. Gandhi, the great Indian, representing, I think, all that is finest in India, when he said: "We do not want to punish General Dyer; we have no desire for revenge; we want to change the system that produces General Dyers." That is what we must do. It seems to me that it is hopeless now, after this Debate. I could hope in the old days that the Indians would listen to what I said and would take it as coming from a friend. Now they will have faith no longer—because I am an Englishman. But this I would urge upon the Indians—to remember that revenge is the aim of fools. What really matters is to change the system that produces crime. That is why I welcomed the tone and speech of the right hon. Gentlemen opposite. After all, we do not care whether General Dyer is punished or not. What we want to do, what we want to put before the minds of the Indians is that, with the help of Indian co-operation and their control of their own destinies, they will be in charge, in future, of law and order in India and will be able to prevent these things happening. That is the only hope in the present situation. "I do not believe that hon. Members understand and what the feeling is in India at the present day. When we were passing the Bill for India, I had the brightest hopes for the future of India as a self-governing dominion within the British Empire, but since that time the situation day by day has gone worse. The worst thing of all is that 80 percent of the Anglo-Indian opinion backed General Dyer, and were against the Secretary of State. That is what perpetually, and day by day is making the Indians enraged, antagonistic, anti-English and Sinn Féin. If they decide that they will take no part in the new constitution, that they will boycott it, then it is all up with the British Empire in India. I will read this telegraph which I have received among other messages. It is from a mass meeting in Bombay,—

"Hunter Report and Despatches rudely shaken deepest faith in British justice, unless Parliament vindicates character British rule by condemnation and repudiation Punjab official miscreants."

I know that is strong language—

"Britains moral prestige, of greater consequence than military strength, will be irretrievably lost and peoples' hearts alienated from British rule."

That message was sent by Jamnadas Dwarkadas who is a "moderate." That is the feeling of the moderates there about the course adopted by the extremists in England. It is an illustration of what I have said, that hon. Members do not understand what is the feeling in India. They do not understand how near we are to Sinn Fein in India, and that it will become more and more difficult to secure a settlement. The hon. Member for Twickenham (Sir W. Joynson Hicks) put the finishing touch upon the whole affair. He spoke with a certain authority, for though the voice was the voice of the hon. Member, the words were the words of Sir Michael O'Dwyer. He spoke as though the future relationship of the Indian and the English was worth nothing, as though what was important alone was our caste rule in India. Rule by force, by a class, must now come to an end all over the world. No one need fear military uprising in India. A military uprising is absolutely impossible in these days of aeroplanes, armoured cars, roads and railways, and wireless telegraphy. Such an uprising would be absolutely impracticable. What we are face to face with there is not a military uprising, but simply passive resistance. Once you get people refusing to take part in Government, you may carry on for a few years, but in the end you will find yourselves where the Irish Government is to-day—and without an Ulster!

You have got this situation before you in India. What are you going to do? Is the only message that the English Parliament has to send to India this, that the only day on which we discussed Indian affairs was taken up with discussing the right and wrong of a British General? That is no message for India. It may be good enough for thoughtless people who want simply to create a little sensation for the moment. The speeches that have been made will attract attention. Every word that is said here to-day will be read in India. We cannot help it even if we would. To my mind every speech ought to be delivered to appeal to Indians, to show them that the people in England condemn this affair at Amritsar, condemn the horrors of the Military law. I speak here to-day for thousands of Liberals as well as Labour Members, in saying that we are against the Jallianwala Bagh murder,

against the way in which the martial law was carried on in the Punjab, against Sir M. O'Dwyer, and against the whole administration of the Punjab. We send that as a word to help those men, like Mr. Lagan, who is now trying to bring the Punjab back to sanity, and Sir George Lloyd, who managed to carry Bombay through these stirring times without any martial law. Cannot we send to them a message of help, try to assist them in the work they are doing, instead of perpetually making their work of reconciliation more impossible by the insane speeches made from these benches.

Will not hon. Members understand that unless we now take broad view of the future of the British Empire, unless we now turn down for ever the idea that the British Empire is a replica of the Roman Empire, it will be an evil day for us? Hon. Members will remember how Macaulay's "Lays" end—

Shall be great fear

On all who hear

The mighty name of Rome.

That was most attractive when we were younger. It may have been so in the British Empire in the old days. It will not work now. Where we are now we must decide to throw over the Roman Empire idea of fear and force! Hear we are at the end of a great Victorious War. We are for the strongest Power in the world. The old great Powers have come to an end. We dominate the old world as the United States dominates the new. There are no other great Powers. How are we to deal with the future? The other nations are looking to us, the small nations the Magyars, the Austrians, the Poles, the Czecho-Slovaks—all look towards England as being the greatest Power in the world; the people that can help them, of whom they are afraid. How are you going to use this great Power influence? If you are going to utilise that power in the way suggested by some, you may go on for some years, but in the end you smash.

Sir C. Oman: How are you going to carry on—with Provincial Councils?

Colonel Wedgwood: I would like to refer the hon. Member in this matter to a greater historian even than the hon. Gentleman—to Mr. H. G. Wells and his "Outline of History."

Sir C. Oman: If that is where the hon. and gallant Gentleman gets his history, then I do not wonder at his views about India.

Colonel Wedgwood: Perhaps the hon. Member would prefer in this connection Gibbon's "Decline and fall." But the real point is this: Are we to try to carry on the great position we have to-day by the terrorism of subject races? (Hon. Members: "No!") The only alternative that I can see is to invite them to come into the

British Empire on equal terms so that Indians should be British citizens, and have the same rights as Englishmen or Australians. If you give those rights, you offer a certain attraction to people to belong to the British Empire. If you persist in treating Indians, not only in India, but be it observed, in our colonies, East Africa, South Africa, and elsewhere, as though they were an inferior people, not equal to you and me, so long as there is this social feeling against them, so long as they are legally inferior, you are ruining the British Empire and the future cause of country. I want to see England embracing all these people, not only Indians, but as they come along in the scale of civilisation, the black men of Africa, as well as the Jews of Palestine and the Egyptians of Egypt. I want to see them all as proud of being British citizens as the men in the Roman days were proud of being Roman citizens. There is nothing finer in the records of Lord Palmerston than the way he stood up for that Gibraltar Jew, Don Pacifico. Lord Palmerston made it a *Causus belli* because that man had lost some of his property. If that is the way you are going to make people proud of being British citizens, well and good. But so long as you go on treating Indians as though they were a subject race, as if those who had the wit, intelligence, and energy to educate themselves were all wicked agitators and people to be condemned, as they were condemned by Sir Michael O'Dwyer in his speech, so long as the only decent Indian is the Indian who is tamed and who is content to be your servant, so long as that is the feeling of Englishmen, you are injuring the prospects and the true development of the British Empire.

If we get a division to-night in which a large number of Members go into the Lobby against the Secretary of State, that will be an indication to India that, bad as is the Secretary of State whom they condemn, there are people worse than the Secretary of State, worse than General Dyer, the people who support Prussian Terrorism as the essence of British rule. If that is going to be the message to India it can have nothing but a disastrous result. The Secretary of State will prove to the full that what he has done is all that England would let him. He has not done enough. I believe that in the blessing he has given in his despatch to Sir Michael O'Dwyer and Lord Chelmsford, he has done more to undermine his reforms than anything he has ever done before. We, on these benches are not prepared to say that he is correct in blessing Sir M. O'Dwyer and Lord Chelmsford. We know that the right hon. Gentleman has undone some of his best work. We wish that he had put such words on paper.

My last message to the right hon. Gentleman is this, that unless something is done, and done quickly, to put into the hand of

Indians not only the legislative power but the administrative power to deal with these questions of law and order, questions which have been so mishandled by the military, unless you give the people power to repeal the Seditious Meetings Act and restore to them that Magna Carta and freedom which we enjoy in this country, unless this is done, all the right hon. Gentleman's great reforms, from which we all hoped so much, fall into fire of racial hate which will destroy not only India's chances of freedom but the whole future of the British race.

Mr. Rupert Gwynne: The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has suggested that this is really a controversy between Indians and Europeans, but I venture to say that it is nothing of the kind. There are in India a great majority of citizens who are loyal and patriotic, but there are also a minority who are disloyal and unpatriotic, which is the same as in this country. It is, I think, unfortunate to suggest that because some of us feel that General Dyer has not received justice that we should be stamped as taking the part of the Anglo-Indians against the Indians. There are a great many Anglo-Indians and Indians who are fully alive to the fact that although General Dyer had to perform a very unpleasant duty, he really did save an appalling situation, and I think everyone whether Indian or European, must on reflection, feel that General Dyer has not had, even after this discussion to-day, justice in any sense of the word as we know it here.

The right hon. Gentleman, the Member for Paisley (Mr. Asquith) says that General Dyer had full justice, but how can he say that when he knows that he has never been definitely accused, and that he has been judged and condemned on evidence which he gave before a commission which was not enquiring into his case in particular, coupled with statement which he was allowed to send to the Army Council? May I say here that I think it is extremely unfortunate that that communication, which most of us feel carries great weight, was not issued to the House until this morning and the vast majority of hon. Members have not had an opportunity of informing themselves properly in regard to General Dyer's case. The Secretary of State for India, in his despatch, stated that General Dyer's evidence was afterwards available for public as an authorised version, but it was admitted that it was not an authorised version as the evidence had not been submitted to him.

The right hon. Gentleman said it was unfortunate that General Dyer had to return to the front and therefore inaccessible. Let me inform the Secretary of State for India that General Dyer, after having given his evidence before the commission, returned to his duties some 200 or 300 miles away, while other members who were