17th February [Mr. M. D. Devadas]

collected till Janu or February following. But if he happens to be served with notice that the tax has been increased, say, on the 15th of October, he should pay the whole of the increased tax before the 1st of November if he wants to appeal. That, we say, Sir, is really a hardship. What Mr. Richards told us was that the pay of the staff might not be paid if the rate-payer is not to pay in advance. There will be no objection to the ordinary rate being collected. What I say is, that the moment the tax is raised we will say from ten to twenty rupees if the rate-payer wants to appeal he must not be made to pay the whole of the twenty rupees within fifteen days of the service of the notice and await the decision of the municipal body, the Corporation, whether it be the Standing Committee or the Commissioner probably for months before he could get a return of half the tax in case the Standing Committee or the Commissioner holds that the tax has been overcharged. Sir, it is a well-known fact to those who are members of the Corporation that these appeals are held up for months. What we consider is, it is not fair that the rate-payers' money should be kept with us or by us for several months before the appeals could be heard. That is the real hardship. That is what the rate-payers complain of, and those representing the rate-payers are entitled to bring it to the notice of the Council so that the Government may introduce an Act to remedy the evil. We do not at all want the ordinary tax not to be collected. What I mean is this : supposing the tax of a house is Rs. 20 ; we will say it is going to be raised to Rs. 40. Let the Rs. 20 be collected and the balance of Rs. 20 may be collected after the appeal is disposed of. We do not want the whole of the amount to be paid into the Corporation simply because an appeal is to be preferred. It is hard on the rate-payer to make him pay within fifteen days what he would otherwise be entitled to pay in the course of a few months. I quite appreciate the Government's position with regard to procrastination in this part of the country. Procrastination is not peculiar, I believe, to South India. It also obtains in other parts of the world ; but probably here it is worse. But that is no reason, Sir, for the Corporation to make the rate-payer pay the whole of the amount, legal as well as illegal, due as well as not due, simply because the assessor chooses to rate the house at a higher figure than the Corporation, Standing Committee or the Commissioner would sanction. Therefore we are asking the Government to bring in an Amending Bill so that this hardship may be remedied. I do not think the coffers of the Corporation would be depleted if the people are not asked to pay in advance. As I said before, the rate-payers may be compelled to pay the tax which they would have to pay in any case, but only with regard to the difference between the tax ordinarily levied and the tax intended to be imposed, that difference may be collected after the appeals are disposed of. I can speak, Sir, with some knowledge of what is going on now in regard to appeals. For the last half-year I believe such appeals are pending and I do not know how long they will continue to be so. With these remarks, Sir, I support the resolution."

Mr. S. SOMASUNDARAM PILLAI :—" I am very glad that Mr. Tanikachala Chetti has brought forward this resolution. I know the sufferings of many of these poor people who are asked to submit the tax within 15 days. In many of these houses there are six to ten families living together and the house-owner is living elsewhere. If the notice is served on the 10th, the house-owner would have spent the money that he got. He is compelled, however, to send the money within 15 days. He could not get the money. He is then driven to go to Sowcarpet and try to raise it somewhere. In certain cases the owners are residing outside the district and by the time he replies to the notice the days for appeal lapse. I have seen

many poor people suffering in this way. Although I a... a member of the Corporation, yet I am glad that this has been brought ... ore the Council. I request all members of the Council to pass the resolution."

Rai Bahadur T. M. NARASIMHACHARLU :—"Mr. President, I have had some experience of tax-gathering in municipalities. And I know that without such a provision the work of the municipalities would have been difficult. At the time of revision, as soon as revision is made, revision petitions would be pouring in whether there will be substance or whether there is no substance at all in the thing. The principal reason urged for the resolution is that why should the people be compelled to pay it. The answer is to test the *bona fides* of the applications. The other objection is that why should the money be lying idle till the disposal of the appeal or the revision. The answer to that is he has to pay the money at some time—only it may be a few rupees less after the revision. But why should the whole money be lying with him while a good part of it should have been with the municipality. The other reason is that it takes a lot of time to dispose of the appeals and revisions. I am very sorry for it. The only answer to that is that the municipal councillors must whip up the Standing Committee to dispose of these earlier. That is the only way. If the difficulty was like that in small municipalities in the mufassal, what should be the measure of difficulty in a big corporation like this. I do not myself suppose that there will be really any hardships and even if there be one or two individual cases of hardship, I think in the interest of the speedy collection of taxes, those petty little hardships should be ignored. For my part I think that the resolution cannot with advantage either to the tax-payers or the corporation itself be supported. With these few remarks I do oppose the resolution."

Rao Bahadur K. S. VENKATARAMA AYYAR :—"I propose that the question be now put."

The Hon'ble the PRESIDENT :—"It is proposed that the question be now put."

The Hon'ble Mr. P. RAMARAYANINGAR :—"Sir."

The Hon'ble the PRESIDENT :—"I wish the Honourable Member had told me earlier if he wished to speak."

Mr. S. SRINIVASA AYYANGAR :—"The President has a discretion in this matter. The rule reads. . . ."

The Hon'ble the PRESIDENT :—"I am aware of the standing orders. When I once resolve to put the closure to the House it is not open to me to go back upon the commitment. It means I leave it to the House, it is open to the House to pass it or not. I am sorry Hon'ble Mr. Ramarayaningar has not spoken upon the subject. However in pursuance of my duty I will put the closure ; but I think honourable members will be well advised not to vote for it."

The motion for closure was put to the vote and lost.

The Hon'ble Mr. P. RAMARAYANINGAR :—"I do not intervene to inflict a speech upon this House at this stage of the discussion. I only wish to say a few words as to the course Government should adopt in a case like this I have listened with some care to the eloquent speech of the honourable mover. He has put forward a strong plea for amending Madras Municipality Act of 1919 and his plea has been strongly backed up by the members of the Madras Corporation who are present in this Council. It is true that so far as the applications for revision in the matter of payment of assessment are concerned, the Calcutta and Bombay Acts are more accommodating than the Madras Act. Both these Acts, the Bombay and the

Calcutta Acts, allow applications at the first stage to be made without pre-payment of the assessed tax. But the Madras Act of 1919 insists upon pre-payment. Even the Act of 1904 is less drastic than the present Madras Act. If the Act of 1919 is more drastic than the Act of 1904, what is the reason? The reason is apparent. Experience must have taught both the Corporation and the Government that a drastic change in the direction was necessary and hence it was that the Act of 1919 is made more drastic than that of 1904. The Calcutta and the Bombay Acts are more ancient than the Madras Act. If to-day amendment of those Acts is taken in hand no one can say what their attitude will be, perhaps they may revise the old order of things. They may very probably copy the Madras law in this respect. That being the case we cannot be sure that the drasticity is really a case of hardship. As a matter of fact this plea of the drasticity of the Madras Act was put forward as early as 1907. On that occasion the Madras Government rejected the Madras Corporation's recommendation for amendment of the Madras Act. So also they rejected its recommendation recently. If the Madras Government rejected the recommendation, it was not that they had anything against the interests of the municipality but that on the other hand they really were interested in the efficiency of the municipal administration of the city. But, however, all the Corporation members present here press for the change. And the Montagu-Chelmsford Report lays down that as much liberty as possible should be allowed to the local bodies. Government do not wish to stand between the Corporation and its liberty. If the Corporation members are really earnest that the law should be changed, I do not think it is fair on the part of the Madras Government to throw obstacle in their way. If, on the other hand, the members are merely playing to the gallery, I would much rather allow them to gain experience by giving what they want. If they have to repent the step, they alone are responsible. In these circumstances, Sir, Government sees no objection to accept the resolution, if the Mover limits the scope of his recommendation to the applications in the first stage; that is, to the stage of applying for revision to the Commissioner of the Corporation. With your permission, Sir, I would ask the Mover if he is prepared to limit the scope of the resolution to the first stage."

Mr. O. TANIKACHALA CHETTIYAR:—"Mr. President, I quite appreciate the fact that the Hon'ble the Minister is prepared to accept my resolution. In fact, my resolution is so carefully worded as to limit it to the revision of assessment only and not to appeals. Therefore, I have no difficulty in giving the assurance, but at the same time I may be permitted to answer an observation made by the Hon'ble the Secretary for Government who drew my attention to rule 23 of Schedule 4 that in the District Municipalities Act under which you should pay the tax when preferring an appeal. In fact, I was always pointing out that it is only when we reach the second stage of 'appeal' we will have to prepay. But what I have been contending for is that during the first stage, what is called the revision stage, no prepayment is required. So I am quite aware of the distinction, and in fact I mentioned it. It is only when we are going to the second stage of an appeal that we must be called upon to prepay in the city, as it is in Bombay and in Calcutta. Therefore I am not unaware of the provision.

"When I ask for exemption from prepayment, it is only in respect of the first or the revision stage. I am glad the Hon'ble the Minister has conceded it. Therefore I am glad to withdraw the resolution."

The resolution was by leave withdrawn.

[Mr. S. Somasundaram Pillai] [17th February 1921

Model liquor shops.

Mr. S. SOMASUNDARAM PILLAI :—" Sir, my resolution runs thus :—

' 22. *That this Council recommends to the Government that the proposal to build model liquor shops be rejected.*'

" After hearing the answer given to my question on this point, namely, that the Government have no proposal before them to build model liquor shops, but only to acquire sites, I beg leave to withdraw the resolution."

The resolution was by leave withdrawn.

Protectors of Non-Brahman subordinates in public services.

Resolution No. 23 regarding Protectors of Non-Brahman subordinates in public services was not moved and was deemed to have been withdrawn. The resolution on the agenda which was to have been moved by Mr. E. Periyanayagam ran thus :—

" 23. *That this Council recommends to the Government that in every district the Government be pleased to appoint a protector of Non-Brahman subordinates in public services to safeguard their rights and interests and from time to time bring to the notice of the local authorities their grievances, if any.*"

District boards to elect their own presidents.

Mr. P. SIVA RAO :—" Sir, the resolution I have the honour to move runs thus :—

' 24. *That this Council recommends to the Government that under section 12 of the Madras Local Boards Act, a notification may be issued authorizing the district boards to elect their own presidents.*'

" Now, Sir, I will draw the attention of the honourable members of this House to section 12 of the Madras Local Boards Act XIV of 1920. Clause I says : ' The Local Government shall either appoint one of the members of a district board to be its president, or by notification authorize the members of a district board to elect their president from among their own number provided that the Local Government may by notification withdraw such authority.' This is the provision in the case of the district board president. So under this provision it is open to the Government either to nominate the president of the district from among the district board members, or it is open to the Government to issue a notification authorizing the members of a district board collectively to elect their own president. Now, this resolution aims at this. It does not seek to make any amendment in the Act itself, but on the other hand, it scrupulously follows the provisions of the same but asks that the Minister in charge of the Local Self-Government may in the exercise of his discretion issue a notification contemplated under section 12 of clause 1. The Honourable Members will be pleased to refer to clauses 2 and 3 under which a president of the taluk board is elected. In the case of the taluk board president, the Act says : ' Unless the Local Government have by notification directed otherwise, every taluk board shall elect one of its members to be its president.' So in the case of the taluk board presidents, it is the rule that they shall be ordinarily elected. But there is a different kind of provision altogether in the case of union boards. The Act goes farther than in the case of the presidents of the taluk boards and says that the union board shall elect one of its members to be its president and Government will have no option at all in this case to direct otherwise. So it comes to this. There are three kinds of provisions relating to the presidents of the unions, presidents of the taluk boards and presidents of the district boards. In the case of the district board it is open

17th February 1921] [Mr. P. Siva Rao]

to the Government either to nominate or to authorize election. In the case of the taluk board the president shall be ordinarily elected unless directed otherwise. But in the case of the unions the president shall always be elected. Now, I think we have reached a time when we can very well ask that in the case of the district board presidents also election shall be the rule, and nomination shall be an exception. Now, Sir, it has been my hobby throughout. I have been constantly agitating and moving in this matter. Just before this Local Boards Bill was introduced in the Legislative Council, I had occasion to move the resolution in that the district board president shall be ordinarily elected non-official. When this question came up for discussion I was told that the Local Boards Bill would shortly come up for discussion and then I can very well bring it up at the time. Then I thought that it was wise on my part to wait. I entertained some hope of convincing my colleagues in the Legislative Council but unfortunately for me I was not able to do so. The matter came up again before the Legislative Council when the Bill came up for discussion, and I was again defeated. I would once more make this appeal to you, Sir, in the hope that this newly expanded Council may take a more liberal view of this matter and the Minister for Local Self-Government who is an elected representative of the people and who has been chosen out of them may have a broader outlook and a more liberal view of the situation, and I make this last effort to move in this matter.

"I may draw the attention of the honourable members of this Council that this form of wording of section 12 has been borrowed from the former Act of 1884, and though the Act of 1884 has been in existence ever since the time of Lord Ripon, and all these powers have been reserved under the Act, no attempt has been made to utilize them. They have remained a dead letter so long. Now, I ask as a first step in the first sitting of new reformed Council that those powers should be fully utilized and notification should issue authorizing all the members of the district board to elect their own presidents unless the Honourable the Minister for Local Self-Government in the discharge of his onerous responsibilities directs otherwise in any particular case. Now, Sir, before I proceed further, these are the grounds on which I ask that these district board presidents should be or generally elected. But I do not raise the issue whether the nominations so far made, whether they are acceptable, whether they are suitable or not. That does not arise for consideration. In some cases, the Government have made very estimable appointments, in some cases the appointments have not given good satisfaction. In some other cases loud protests have been received against them. Whatever they may be that is not the issue before us. I only care to introduce or to have this principle, namely this principle that has been laid down in the Montford report, in paragraph 194 of the report that in the case of rural boards, which comprise both the taluk boards and the district boards, the Local Government will be urged to appoint non-officials and preferably elected chairmen wherever possible. The other principle that it formally laid down in the same report is that there should be as far as possible complete popular control in these local boards. I am very glad to hear that the Hon'ble Minister for Local Self-Government just in his last speech heartily endorsed that principle that hereafter at least there must be more popular control in these local bodies. Now I would ask whether the power of nomination which the Government are seeking to have in their own hands, whether that would not militate against the first formula, the foremost formula, that has been laid down that report. May I humbly ask, how can there possibly be popular control when the district board president is not a man of the choice of the members of the district board? How can the people exercise their control over the actions of the president of their district board when the rate-payers' representatives do not elect their own president; how

is the chain of responsibility complete ? It is only when the district board president is appointed by the members of the district board, and when he is liable to be removed by the members of the district board, that the chain of responsibility is complete. I may say he is now an irresponsible officer—I do not mean anything in a sinister sense when I call him an irresponsible officer. I call him irresponsible in the sense that he is not responsible to the rate-payers. The district board presidents nominated by the Government may be an excellent set of gentlemen, but I must say, as I have said elsewhere, that a good president is not a substitute for a popular president. They may be good presidents but not popular presidents, the president if he is chosen by the district board whether he acts well or ill, he commands the confidence of the district board in whatever he may do. I need not say to the Honourable Members of this House that the president of an institution like this should command and should continue to command the confidence of the members of the district board ; otherwise it is needless for me to say that the administration would be an impossibility, would be a nullity. Now, I would ask what is the harm in allowing these district board presidents to be elected by the members of the district boards themselves ? Is there any risk of a disaster or a catastrophe if the presidents are allowed to be elected. But it is for the Minister for Local Self-Government to try to introduce this reform and to see what catstrophies will happen.

"This subject is one of my favourite topics and I have been watching this question of district board presidents ever since their inception and ever since the time when they appointed the first non-official president. I have watched with great care and I know how the discussion arose and what misgivings were expressed in certain quarters when certain non-official presidents were appointed. But it happened that the person who had expressed these misgivings was appointed one of the non-official presidents of a district board, and he discharged it to the satisfaction of the Government and now I am glad to say that he is the Prime Minister of the present Government. Now these misgivings are expressed whenever any reforms are taken up. I may say that there is absolutely no danger of the members of the district board making a wrong choice. As it is the Government appoints certain presidents of district boards. What does it mean ? It only means that in most of these cases the Collector sends up the nomination to the Government and the Government approves of the nomination. But it is not possible for the Government to know who is who. The district board members form the elite of the district. They are the representatives chosen by the people of the district and the district board includes the divisional officers and taluk board presidents as ex-officio members. Is there any chance of these people of choosing a wrong person ? Is there any guarantee that the Government will not make a wrong *selection* ? I may say that election is the rule in the case of Legislative Council, in the case of the president of the city municipality, in the case of the chairmen of municipalities, in the case of taluk board presidents, in the case of presidents of union boards and in the case of ministers ; so far election seems to be the rule in all cases. I only appeal to the Hon'ble Minister in charge, that he should in consonance with the spirit of the times and synchronously with the reforms that have been now inaugurated and synchronously with the first meeting of the Reformed Council, to announce to our presidency this simple reform authorizing the members of district boards to elect their own presidents and thus earn the gratitude of the people of this presidency."

Mr. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar :—" Mr. President, the honourable mover of this resolution has, in my opinion, made out a very strong case in its support. As he pointed out, election seems to be the order of the day and so far as section 12 of

17th February 1921] [Mr. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar]

the Act is concerned the Government reserves to itself the right of authorizing district boards to elect their own presidents. I do not propose at this stage to enter into the history of this legislation, but this much I think it necessary to say for the information of this House, viz., that it took years for the Local Government to think of nominating non-officials as presidents of district boards. The first move was made in the year 1911 when for the first time three places in the Presidency were chosen, and I am glad to be able to inform the House that of these three gentlemen who were first nominated as non-official presidents, two of them are present in this House now. The success of that experiment enabled the Local Government to extend the area of its operation, and I am glad to state that because it was a success the privilege has been considerably extended. Later on, if I remember right after some debate that took place in this House in 1916, after some hesitating answer given by the Local Government on that occasion the Government tried the experiment in September 1917 with some misgivings in four district boards. I am glad to tell you that out of the four district boards that were chosen Kistna and South Arcot were two. The two presidents who were then chosen are now in our midst. The success of that experiment enabled the Local Governments to extend that experiment largely with the result that today as many as 16 or 17 boards have this privilege of having nominated presidents. Hereafter it is too late in the day to contend that non-official presidents of district boards are failures. Members of this House may remember that these district boards are located at headquarter stations which, rightly or wrongly, for my part I should say rightly claim for itself the intelligentia of the district—I mean no disparagement to the taluk centres—so far as district headquarters are concerned it contains or it is supposed to contain the intellectual aristocracy of the district. There is absolutely no reason to deny this privilege after this long period of four decades, and thers is no reason why it should not be extended to the district boards themselves. Nor am I in a position to conceive any insuperable difficulty in the way of Local Government selecting suitable, competent and capable persons to fill these onerous offices. The plea of 'not yet' which we have been often accustomed to hear and which was freely trotted out, the days of that plea, I dare say, have gone for ever. If the Government opposes this resolulion it must be due more to a spirit of unwillingness on their part to extend this privilege than to any inherent disqualification or disability on the part of the people or the intelligentia residing in the mufassal. This ministry will, I hope and trust, commemorate its career by conferring on district boards the privilege which they seek and which they are fully competent to exercise. Under ordinary circumstances the power of choosing the president must be inherent in a body chosen for the purpose. There is no meaning in somebody else being thrust on that body. There is absolutely no danger in entrusting the privilege of electing a president to that body which will inevitably contain a very large element of representatives. If there is a likelihood of a large number of persons going wrong I do not think there is less chance of a single individual, however honest, going wrong. So far as this resolution is concerned we want to be perfectly plain. We are disgusted with stagnation, and we are only anxious to move a step forward; and the acceptance of this resolution by the Council will, I have not the slightest doubt, mark a distinct step forward in the field or domain of Local Self-Government. It may perhaps be contended that for some inexplicable reason or other the whole machinery of a district board may sometimes give way and break down. My answer to that, in all humility, is this that we have conferred upon taluk boards, we have conferred upon municipalities, we have conferred upon the panchayats the right of electing their own presidents. So far as these are concerned election is the rule.

"Therefore the time has come when we should no longer allow ourselves to be frightened by these doubts and difficulties. It is high time that we embark on a career which will place these self-governing institutions on the highroad of progress and prosperity. With these remarks, Sir, I request the House to carry this resolution."

The Hon'ble the PRESIDENT:—"Does the Hon'ble Member in charge of Local Self-Government wish to speak now?"

The Hon'ble Mr. P. RAMARAYANINGAR:—"I wish to address the House at a later stage."

Mr. A. RANGANATHA MUDALIYAR:—"Mr. President, I have a very few words to say in commending this resolution for the acceptance of this House. There has been, as all honourable members are aware, a considerable extension of franchise under the Reform Act. I dare say all Honourable Members, at least the elected members among them will readily admit that the franchise has been very wisely used. Therefore I think that the Honourable Members will take it for granted that members of the district board will exercise their franchise equally well and select the very best people to preside over the district boards, and I may say that their choice will not be in any away worse than the choice that is sometimes made by the Government itself."

M. T. A. RAMALINGA CHETTIYAR:—"Mr. President, as a nominated president of a district board, I wish to say a few words on this matter. I agree with the honourable mover of this resolution that the best thing to be done in a country is to allow the rate-payers to elect their own presidents. So far as the elections are concerned, with regard to the election of taluk board presidents and the new district board presidents, I do not think it can be said that the electors have exercised their franchise in any way badly. No doubt the Government may in circumstances be able to rise above the need in some places, but I think, it ought to be left for the members of the district board or taluk board to elect their own presidents to administer their own affairs. As has been stated, a good president is not a substitute for a president who is popularly elected. The tax-payers should be allowed to elect their own presidents and excepting in very exceptional cases where for certain purposes the election will not be good, I think effect should be given to all the boards to elect their own presidents. That is my view and I am sure many of the presidents who have been nominated will share that view with me."

Mr. C. V. S. NARASIMHA RAJU:—"Mr. President, I am one of those that fought for the election of presidents when the bill was in the legislative council. My reasons are stronger now for the election of the president. Simply the question is this. Without going to the side issues, hitherto the nominations were made by bureaucrats. They have always held the scales even and they are expected to do that.

"But now, the whole question is changed. Local Self-Government is hereafter a transferred subject. It lies mostly in the nomination of Ministers and it is not desirable that this should be any longer wielded as a party weapon by the Ministers. That is my honest opinion and I do not think the representatives of the people who now happen to be the winning party and who hold the reins of Government will refuse to satisfy the legitimate demands of the people. If they do not satisfy the people, the Ministers would lose their prestige in the country."

17th February 1921] [Mr. Venkataramana Ayyangar]

Mr. C. V. VENKATARAMANA AYYANGAR :—"I want to offer just a few words in this connexion. Our friend that preceded us has told us more or less in his own individual capacity, but so far as I am concerned, I want to say that the district boards also in some cases have expressed the opinion that they should be given an elected president. So far as Coimbatore is concerned, we have got the first nominated non-official president in Mr. T. A. Ramalingam Chettiyar. Before he was nominated, I believe more than 1½ years ago, the question came when the District Collector was President and then it was unanimously passed as an amendment of the administration report that Coimbatore should have not only a non-official president but an elected non-official president. I simply say this to show that there need be no fear on the part of any one that the district boards or at least some of the district boards will have any hesitation in exercising the right of election. I believe such things must have happened in the case of other district boards also ; but so far as Coimbatore is concerned more than 1½ years ago, it was clearly stated that they wanted an elected and not a nominated president. I believe also that all the other district boards are anxious to have elected non-official presidents and there should be no reason for any hesitation on the part of the Ministers to satisfy the aspirations of the people."

Rao Bahadur C. VENKATA RANGA REDDI :—"Mr. President, I beg to support this resolution for the reason that if Local Self-Government is to be made popular, it must be through election. So I request the Ministers to throw open all district board presidentships for election from this day or at least from the day on which the new Act comes into force."

Mr. A. RAMASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—"Mr. President, I have a very few words to offer on this resolution. Not having been a member of a district board, not knowing much of the secrecy of election of either a district board or a taluk board but as one who has followed through the press the activities of some taluk boards and district boards, I may say that I have come to the conclusion that it is not in the interests of the district board nor of its members to throw open indiscriminately every district board presidentship for election.

"Sir, at the very outset, I must enter a caveat against some of the arguments that have been adduced this afternoon to my very great surprise by the honourable member from Vizagapatam Mr. C. V. S. Narasimha Raju. Sir, we are all at one now-a-days in praising the bureaucrats. It was only the other day that the honourable member from North Arcot had a good word to say of them ; to-day my honourable friend has quite a good word to say about the bureaucrats. I cordially endorse that view. I only trust that Honourable Members would continue to have these kindly feelings towards the bureaucrats and would remember these encomiums at other times and on other occasions. But, is it fair, Sir, that you should decry another department, another part of the Government in your anxiety to praise the bureaucracy. Is it fair, Sir, for you to suggest that the Ministers of the other departments of the Local Government, will be less fair, will be less able to hold the scales even than the bureaucrats in the past ? Is it fair that you should decry any part of the popular Government in your anxiety to praise the bureaucracy ? Is it fair for you to suggest that the Minister in charge of the Local Self-Government will be less fair or will be less able to hold the scales even ? Is it fair to say that the Minister would not have the same considerations as the bureaucrats in the previous days had ? I protest against the unfair insinuation that is sought to be made against the popular Ministers of the House ? Next I wish to oppose this resolution on another ground. It was only the other day that the Government in considering the Local Boards Act came to the conclusion

that it was not proper to throw open all the district board presidentships for election. Is it in consonance with the keeping of the traditions of the Government in all other countries that one Government which has just come in should throw overboard all the previous decisions? If only our Members will remember some periods of the parliamentary life of Mr. Gladstone and some periods of the lives of European statesmen I think they would agreee with me in thinking that it is not desirable to go at once to office with pre-conceived notions and to throw overboard what the previous Governments have done. That would merely imply that no Government would be stable. The popular Ministry has certainly a very onerous and difficult task to perform. A Ministry which has just been ushered in under the reformed scheme which is itself open to several sorts of objection, such a Ministry would be well advised in considering its own position well beforehand and then come to a deliberate conclusion and see whether the recommendations of some of the Members can be taken or not. It is not with any idea that official loaves or loaves of any other sort will be in the gift of the Ministers or Minister of the Local Self-Government that I speak thus. I abhor it as I said before, especially as a member of the community who has suffered from such patronage in the hands of the bureaucrats in the past. At the same time in the interests of the district boards and the members themselves of the newly constituted district boards which are just being brought into existence and in view of the different shades of opinion in the district boards themselves, I daresay it is most inadvisable to throw open all the district boards to election. The Government will, no doubt, exercise the greatest care and discretion in the matter. I am aware that the Ministers will treat the question of election most sympathetically. But I must say that the Minister should have the power in case of extreme necessity, in case where he considers it is not to the advantage of district board administration to vote some elections and to use his discretion. Under the new Act a district board has got a number of privileges attached to it. So the Minister must have the power in his hands to save the district boards. I must therefore say that I oppose this resolution if it wants the Minister to throw open indiscriminately all the district board presidentships to election."

Diwan Bahadur Kesava Pillai moved for the adjournment of the House as it was 5–30 p.m.

The Hon'ble the President adjourned the Council as that was the sense of the House.

L. D. SWAMIKANNU,
Secretary to the Legislative Council.