

SPEECH
OF
SIR SHAH NAWAZ BHUTTO
ON
THE SEPARATION OF SIND
AT THE
INDIAN ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE
(12TH NOV. 1930—1ST DEC. 1931)



UNIVERSITY OF SIND
SIND, PAKISTAN.

Speech of Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto on the Separation of Sind at the Indian Round Table Conference (12th November 1930—1st December 1931) before the Sub - Committee No. IX (Sind) which was constituted as follows:-

The Earl Russell (Chairman).
The Marquess of Zetland.
The Marquess of Reading.
H.H. The Aga Khan.
Mr. M. A. Jinnah.
Sir Shah Nawaz Bhutto.
Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah.
Sir Abdul Qaiyum.
Sir Muhammad Shafi.
Dr. Shafa'at Ahmad Khan.
Sardar Sampuran Singh.
Dr. B.S. Moonje.
Mr. M.R. Jayakar.
Raja Narendra Nath.
Mr. C.V. Chintamani.
Mr. B.V. Jadhav.
Sir Phiroze Sethna.
Mr. H. P. Mody.
Sir Hubert Carr.

Perhaps I may be permitted to submit to the British Indian Delegates as well as to the European Delegates that they will consider our case sympathetically. We are demanding the separation of Sind on the same principle as that on which the whole case of the British Indian Delegation is based, and on the very principles—if I may be permitted to mention it—on which you sacrificed so much during the late titanic War. The best flower of your manhood sacrificed their lives simply to help the weak in the principle

of self-determination. In this case we are comparatively very weak between the two powers—the Government of Bombay and the Government of India.

We do not believe for a moment that our Province is a deficit Province. No one could be more loyal to us than ourselves. If we knew that our Province was a deficit one and that we were going to be crippled by separation, would it be in our own interests that we should insist, or that the people could have made up their minds to insist—which they have done—upon it? Our people's cup of misery is full; they cannot wait any longer.

If we admit for the sake of argument—though we do not believe it—that Sind is a deficit Province, may we just consider that aspect for a moment? Why should Bombay Government be so anxious to retain us and be so interested in us when their own finances are in such a hopeless plight? It may be that the Meston Settlement is responsible to a very great extent for the financial plight of the Bombay Government, and some of their own ambitious adventures; but the fact is there that for the next 60 years the Bombay Government may continue to be in a hopeless state. We cannot expect any improvement whatever if we continue to remain part of the Bombay Government.

So far what has been done? We are grateful to the Indian Government to some extent. Our case is not like that of other provinces such as Baluchistan, N.W. Frontier, Ajmere. But from the Province of Sind the Indian Government's revenue would be about 2 crores of rupees; and even in regard to the Lloyd Barrage Scheme, whatever the effect of the Barrage may be, at least the Government of India is going to receive over 70 lakhs additional revenue from Sind. As we have been neglected by both Governments for 82 years, even if for the sake of argument I say our Province is a deficit Province, when the Government of India receives 2 crores from Customs, Telegraphs and Posts, Railways and Income Tax—all these are central subjects—if we could receive charity from the Bombay Government, why should not

the Government of India come to our rescue for a very short period, say for about 10 years? It will not be of much assistance to extend temporary help.

It is a matter of history, Sir, that ever since Sind came into existence up to the advent of the British Raj it has preserved its individuality; but I am not going to repeat all the arguments that have been already advanced, and I have submitted a short note constituting the facts for the consideration of the Committee. But let us see what we have suffered. In the first instance the Government of India was very sympathetic to the case of Sind. A few years after the conquest by the British Government the Government of India addressed the Bombay Government in regard to the Land Revenue system in the Province of Sind, that the Sind claim was to be quite different from that of the Rayati system in Deccan; and that the case of Sind should be considered upon its own merits because we were the owners of the land—the system in Sind was not the same as that prevailing in the Presidency proper. However, the Bombay Government took no notice of that and enforced the system of land revenue that they had in the Presidency by which we lost all our rights of ownership in regard to our properties. That was the first consequence of our being placed under the Bombay Government.

As a test case one of our educated Hindu zamindars took the matter to the Court and succeeded in getting his fallow forfeited land back; and the Government had to amend the Land Revenue Act. That handicapped us by depriving us of our ownership permanently. What has been the further consequence of the far distant land revenue system? The agriculturists are absolutely starving. This unfortunate class of His Majesty's subjects throughout India is in a very bad state, but in Sind particularly it is a problem of bread. It is not a question, as we say here, of one meal a day; because in England they get at least a cup of tea and at least they have a piece of mutton once a day; but out there they live on dry jwari bread once a day; they cannot afford even to have medical aid, they cannot afford to provide medicine for their

children, and even when they or their near relatives die they cannot afford to provide coffins for them. That is the state of the agriculturists. The zamindari landlords are being reduced to absolute beggary; their lands are passing away; they cannot afford to pay to the Government the heavy assessment; there is no value left of the property; they are not sufficiently educated to enter into the Government service, and they have no money for business. There is no other remedy but to give them their own Government to avoid the calamity that is pending.

You, Sir, said that if we are immediately separated progress will be handicapped. Consider the position for a moment. During the last nearly a century that we have been under the Bombay Government, what progress have we made? Our irrigation is the old type of irrigation which returns to the Bombay Government about 12 or 13 or 14 per cent. Except for one canal—the Jamrao—they have made absolutely no improvement. In spite of the fact that the Government of India issued an instruction to the Bombay Government in 1913 on the recommendation of the Committee they appointed, no notice was taken of those recommendations. The last important document you have available is the Hartog Committee's Report. That is the last valuable and reliable document you have got. If you will refer to that document you will see how even up to today the Bombay Government has treated our education. It was stated yesterday that we have not a single Government college in the Province of Sind, while they have so many colleges in the Presidency proper.

Even a backward Province like Baluchistan can claim pukka roads, but we cannot claim a single pukka trunk road. We have only Local Board dispensaries at a distance of 15 or 20 miles. Except at District Headquarters there is no Government dispensary. We receive very meagre help, not even 10 per cent from the Government of Bombay. Although the dispensaries under the Local Authorities are kept open they have on occasions no medicine to supply. Medical help, agriculture, irrigation, roads, education—everything is in a mess. It is a mystery to us

on what the Bombay Government spend the money while we are proved to be a deficit Province. In these circumstances, if we were separated we should not be worse off than we are at present.

My feeling about the Bombay Government is that what they are afraid of is their prestige, and is Sind to be allowed to be penalised for the prestige of Bombay? If we are excluded from Bombay we may be reduced to a third - rate area but Bombay will remain a Presidency even if it is reduced to Greater Bombay city, for historic terms are most stubborn. But I submit that we should not be made to suffer on that account. At present we have in Karachi the main air mail station in Sind. Mesopotamia is developing; there is a possibility of the Baghdad railway which will capture the whole business of Mesopotamia by land and sea. Then, again, we are two days nearer to England than Bombay. If we had our own Government surely we would insist on the development of our port—the P. & O. mail steamer would first come to Karachi and then to Bombay, and so on. Bombay is afraid that by means of these natural advantages Karachi may become the door of India. In a short time we shall have a fast train service with Cawnpur and Delhi, and we could capture the whole of the business of the two Provinces of C.P. and U.P. The Punjab and N.W. Frontier are already served by Karachi Port, so that Sind will capture the whole of the business of Central India—including United Provinces and the Delhi Province.

The two biggest political organisations in India, as we submit—the Congress, the Muslim League—have supported our claim; the non-official and moderate Europeans, Hindus and Parsees support the separation of Sind. Non-official Europeans, headed by Sir Montague Webb, have supported the separation of Sind, as have also European officials who have retired from the service. Of course when they are in service they have difficulties to face, although they are sympathetic to us. They feel for the Province of Sind, but owing to official etiquette, they cannot commit themselves in this connection. In the last 17 years we have had three Commissioners, who have now retired, and I am sure that if they

were called here to be examined they would give you the real history of Sind and tell you what they feel about it.

What is more, in the present circumstances there are no reforms for us. Unfortunately it is not possible for the Bombay Government to give us attention as their time is too much occupied in other directions; it is impossible for them to manage or to have direct control of, or to take an interest in Sind from a distance of 1,000 miles by land. The result is that the Commissioner in Sind is invested with most of the powers of Government. I admit that we have been very fortunate on occasion to have had very good Commissioners. We have got a very good Commissioner now, and we have had good ones in the past; but when we get a lazy, proud and wooden-headed Commissioner, we cry "O God, come to our aid."

We do not object to your appointing an expert Committee. I am sure we shall get quite a large amount out of the Bombay Government if there is a fair and independent arbitrator appointed to look into the full and the real facts from 1842. If we are not able to support ourselves how could we ask for separation? We shall be questioned by our people. The people have no money and they are already starving and cannot pay more taxes; but we know that we are not a deficit Province. That is the thing which puts us out very much.

We might have been part of the Punjab if the Punjab had then been British territory. We say that the principle has been already accepted by the Statutory Commission and the Government of India, who recommend a Committee to go into the finances and administrative difficulties. We have proved that there are no administrative difficulties and we ask you kindly to decide that Sind should be separated, subject to the adjustment of the finances. Otherwise, if we do not get justice and fairness at your hands, as the highest tribunal, we do not know where we shall be.

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