CHAPTER IV

THE SWARAJISTS AND THE POLICY OF OBSTRUCTION IN THE COUNCIL

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The year 1923 saw a new development in Indian as well as provincial politics. When the Gaya Congress, held in December 1922, refused to allow its members to contest for the provincial Councils, Congressmen led by C.R. Das, Motilal Nehru and Hakim Ajmal Khan formed the All-India Congress Khilafat Swaraj Party on 1 January 1923 with its branches in eight provinces viz. Bengal, the Central Provinces and Berar, the United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa, Bombay, Panjab, Assam and Madras. Their aim was to transfer the nationalist struggle to the legislatures, after Gandhiji's abandoning the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1922. It is proposed to study in the following pages the role of Swarajists in the legislature during 1924-26 and 1927-29, respectively. An attempt has also been made to assess their response to local issues in the province.

When the non-Co-operation Movement failed and the authority of Gandhi and Central Congress organisation declined, the Brahmin nationalists of Vidarbha were among the first to suggest alternative forms of agitation, especially entry in the Council. The Vidarbha leaders assumed leadership of the movement for entry in the
Council for a number of reasons. In demanding that they be allowed to enter the Councils, the middle class nationalists of Vidarbha region were reviving the similar demand of their late leader E.G. Tilak, who believed that nationalists should enter the Council to fight for self-government. Tilak's followers believed that this strategy, which Tilak called 'responsive co-operation', was more practical than either boycotting the Councils or implementing a purely social programme. The Maharashtrian Brahmins and other middle classes in the region raised the demand for entry in the Council. The Brahmins probably believed that they could stall the opposition to their leadership which was developing among the non-Brahmin community by taking seats in the Councils as the traditional elite of the Vidarbha region.\footnote{\textit{Home Pol., July 1920, No. 105 Deposit, FR, First Half of July 1920, p. 21, RA}}

The advocacy for entry in the Council by the middle-class nationalists of Vidarbha region was instantly effective. The nationalist press of the region took a strong stand on the issue, as is evident from the following excerpt from the \textit{Bharat} of Amraoti: 'If they wanted to banish the drink evil, let them go into the Councils and bring about prohibition ... people are grown sick of mere vituperation and defiance of authority.'
They certainly prefer the Lokmanya's responsive co-operation to the Mahatma's non-violent non-co-operation... It is now high time that the followers of both should speak out their minds candidly. If Lokmanya's life work is not to be wasted, his followers should not sit with folded arms any longer. The followers of the Mahatma are shirking their political responsibilities.... It is hoped that the Tilakites will discard renunciation and chalk out a practical and vigorous line for the attainment of swaraj.  

Such appeals did not go unheeded in the Vidarbha region. A conference was held as early as November 1921 at Akola where the Vidarbha leaders urged that the Congress should allow them to enter the Councils. The Vidarbha nationalists followed up this demand by mounting an attack on Gandhi inside the Congress itself. At a meeting of All India Congress Committee in Delhi on 24 and 26 February 1922, Moonje led the opposition to Gandhi's resolution suspending Civil Disobedience and calling on all nationalists to work for a constructive programme. Moonje, however, failed to defeat the resolution. But despite this failure the Maharashtrians intensified their efforts to persuade the Indian National Congress to abandon

2. Indian Papers, CPR, p.512, The Bharat (Amraoti) dated 27 October 1921, NAI.
non-Co-operation and allow them to enter the Councils.

On 14 April 1922 a Sub-Committee was formed at Nagpur by Moonje to review the nationalist policy. The Sub-Committee recommended that the Congress should modify the programme of a boycott of the Councils. On 7 May 1922 the Provincial Congress Committee accepted the recommendation. The nationalists from Vidarbha region again showed their opposition to Non-Co-Operation movement by absenting themselves from a meeting of the All India Congress Committee held in Bombay on 9 June 1922. They remained indifferent to the appointment of a committee to assess the support for Civil Disobedience in India. At the same time, the Vidarbha nationalists strengthened their links with the Congressmen in other parts of the country who desired to enter the legislatures. The nationalists of Berar division fully supported these moves. On 25 May 1922 the Berar Provincial Congress Committee recommended that the Congress should allow its members to enter the Council.

G.S. Khaparde welcomed the moves of the Vidarbha nationalists because the principles he had espoused in 1920 were at last finding favour. He led the moves to

3. The Pioneer, 10 May 1922, p.3; The Hitavada, 26 April, 1922, p.6.
4. The Hitavada, 14 June 1922, p.4; Home Pol., No.18, 1922, FR, Second Half of July 1922, p.55, NAI.
5. Home Pol., No.18, 1922, FR, Second Half of July 1922, p.55; ibid, No.18, 1922, FR, First Half of November 1922, p.55, NAI.
6. AICC Papers, 1, 1922, Secretary Berar Provincial Congress Committee to Secretary AICC, 17 June 1922, NML.
revive the Congress Democratic Party formed by Tilak in 1920. He issued a manifesto condemning Gandhi and his Non-Co-operation and urged the fellow nationalists to give up the mode of agitation recently used by the Congress. In his manifesto Khaparde also requested that all nationalists who had agreed upon the importance of entering the legislatures should meet to discuss the best means of achieving the objective. This appeal had fruitful results. On 4 November 1922 Moonje, C.R. Das and N.C. Kelkar came to Amraoti to meet Khaparde. After this meeting nationalist leaders published another manifesto advocating entry in the Councils. They intended to submit it to the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Gaya in December 1922.

In the Mahakoshal region also these moves were well supported by middle class nationalists. The populists, however, were unable to prevent the middle class nationalists from preparing for entry in the Councils. The leader of this class was E. Raghavendra Rao. Even during the campaign for the Non-Co-operation movement Rao had expressed doubts about that form of agitation. This was evident from a speech delivered by Rao at the Provincial Conference held at Bilaspur.

7. Khaparde Papers, Diary, 11 April 1922, Home Pol., No. 18, 1922, FR, First Half of April 1922, p. 16, NAI.

8. See Biographical Account—Appendix-A

in May 1921, Hitavada thus reported it: 'Rao's address, in spite of a conscious attempt to fall in with the prevailing political passion of the time, shows that the speaker is quite uneasy about the immediate result of all the raging propaganda that he sees all about him'.

Similarly, in 1922, Rao encouraged Hindi speaking nationalists to participate fully in the work of local government in contravention of the principles of Non-Co-operation. During 1922 also, Rao and his colleagues had refused to co-operate with Sunderlal and other populists in the Civil Disobedience movement. As a result, the urban middle classes gave little support to Civil Disobedience. Thus Rao and his colleagues must have been heartened when the movement began to languish. Even the Karmavir declared that participation in the 'forthcoming Council elections would . . . infuse fresh life in the country'. Thus, in the background of increasing interest in the elections Rao, Shukla, B.K. Mehta, Govindadas, Chhedilal and others issued a manifesto

10. The Hitavada, 21 May 1921, p.4.
11. Ibid, 26 April 1922, p.5; Indian Papers CPE, No.22, 1922, p.204; The Karmavir (Jabalpur), 27 May 1922, NAI.
13. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A
14. Ibid.
from Chhindwara on 16 December 1922, which declared that 'the present programme should be so adjusted as to rejuvenate its vigour and make it aggressive in offering resistance to the government. . . . The forthcoming elections provide a suitable occasion to justify an adjustment of the programme. . . . We do not stand for the proposal of entering Councils, nor do we wish them to be worked for what they are worth. . . . but to capture the electoral machinery so as to close all avenues of cooperation created by the state and . . . . to offer effective resistance to a system of government which we desire to mend or end'.

Thus, whether in the Central Provinces and Berar or India as a whole, the Gandhians were unable to prevent the middle class nationalists from forming a party to contest the elections. These two groups clashed at the annual session of the Indian National Congress at Gaya in December 1922. Those who desired to contest the elections opposed the official motion endorsing Non-Co-operation movement, but they were not strong enough to defeat it. Consequently, the middle class nationalists immediately disassociated themselves from the Congress and formed the All India Congress Khilafat Swarajya Party to contest the elections to the Councils in December 1923. They elected C.R. Das as the President and Motilal Nehru as the Secretary of

the new party. The main objective of the party was to put pressure through constitutional means on the British government to grant self-government to India. If such pressure failed to achieve its objectives, the Swarajists were to destroy the reformed constitution by obstructing the work of the government in the legislatures.

Following the establishment of the Swaraj Party, the middle class nationalists of Central Provinces and Berar formed three branches of the party, one in the Mahakoshal region and two in the Vidarbha region, one each in Nagpur and Berar divisions. The leading Swarajist of Nagpur division was Moonje.

Only two months before the elections, the leaders of the Indian National Congress bowed to Swarajist's pressure. They summoned a special session to decide whether to permit Congressmen to contest elections. This session, which was held in Delhi in September 1923, approved of an entry in the Councils. Following its decision Swarajists in the Central Provinces and Berar started their election campaigns vigorously.

In fighting the elections, the Swarajists divided themselves into three provincial parties – one in the Marakoshal region and one each in Nagpur and Berar divisions of the Vidarbha region. These parties conducted campaigns appropriate to the local situation in each part of the regions. Their campaigns showed that the three parties held conflicting views. In Nagpur division the Swaraj Party launched a heavy attack on the moderate politicians and favoured a policy of obstruction in the legislature, whereas in Berar division the Swaraj Party favoured a policy of responsive co-operation in the Council. Moreover, the main feature of the campaign in both the divisions of Vidarbha was the conflict between the Brahmin and non-Brahmin Swarajists, on the one hand, and with their non-Brahmin opponents of the Satyashodhak Samaj, on the other. The Samaj was an anti-Brahmin party of the Bombay Presidency which had been working in the region since 1901.

By 1923 the leaders of the Samaj had established a number of branches in Berar and had enrolled some thousands of members. At the time of elections the organisation staged a number of Tamashas or caricatures of the members of the Brahmin and Marwari communities.


The Samaj, supported by the non-Brahmin press of Barar, also attacked the middle class nationalists and urged non-Brahmins to vote for its members rather than for Swarajists. The Swarajists countered this propaganda by holding lectures and meetings and by canvassing through the Congress Committees in the districts, towns and tahsils of Virdarbhá region. Their campaign too received strong support from the nationalists press.

The campaign conducted by the Swarajists in the Mahakoshál region differed from the campaign of their Virdarbhá colleagues in several important respects. First, the campaign in the Mahakoshál region did not start until the special session had taken place at Delhi. This was due to continued conflicts between the Gandhians and the Swarajists. After that session, however, Rao assumed the leadership of the campaign. The Swarajists of the Mahakoshál region adopted the advocacy of the policy of obstruction. To ensure the success of the party, Rao sought and obtained the support of several well known moderate politicians. One prominent moderate who joined the Swaraj Party was Seohar Raghunir Sinha.

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23. See *Biographical Account*—Appendix-A.
During the elections held in November and December 1923 the only opposition that the Swarajist candidates had to face was from the Liberals and the Loyalists, who had largely filled the first Council of 1921. Besides the Liberals and the Loyalists, a number of Independents contested the elections mainly on the strength of local influence. The elections aroused an interest far greater than at the time of the first council, the voting was heavy. 57 per cent of voters exercised their franchise in the constituencies where the elections took place.

The results of the elections altered the character of the Council. Of the 26 sitting members who sought re-election only six retained their seats. Only eight candidates were returned unopposed. At the elections the Swarajists in the Central Provinces and Berar won an absolute majority of seats in the legislature. Of the 54 elected seats Swarajists captured 41; four Independents who generally supported the Swaraj Party, five Independents supported by Liberals and four Liberals were also elected.

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26. Results of 1923 Elections in Central Provinces & Berar

41 Swarajists
4 Independents, supporting Swarajists
5 Independents, supporting Liberals
4 Liberals
54 Total elected members.

Source: Return showing the results of election in India, 1923. (London: HMSO, 1923) pp.74-76
In Nagpur Division the Swarajists captured nine Hindu seats and one Muslim seat. A pro-Swarajist also won the seat reserved for the University of Nagpur. In Berar, the Swarajists won twelve out of the fourteen seats; and in Mahakoshal region nineteen out of the twenty-three seats went to the Swarajists. A pro-Swarajist also won the seat reserved for mining interests. 27

The general contest between the Swarajists and the Liberals resulted in a resounding defeat for Liberals. The Liberals had organised, but not well enough. They had campaigned vigorously, but their record and reputation went against them. They had secured some concessions from the British through the legislatures, but the Swarajists promised to secure more or to break the legislatures. The sweeping success of the Swarajists was largely due to their good organisation combined with the incapacity of the electorate to appreciate political problems. The Liberal Party had little organisation and had done nothing during the first Council’s life to educate the electorate.

The significance of the 1923 elections for the Liberals and Swarajists was two-fold. It was clear, as Tej Bahadur Sapru argued that unless they organised themselves better and secured more workers and more funds, they could not hope to succeed in future electoral contests. 28 It was also clear, so far as the legislatures

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28. The Leader, 28 December 1923, p. 3.
of 1924-26 were concerned, that they could not hope to lead the country. They must be content to work closely with all persons and parties who would be, from time to time, most amenable to their views and thus seeking to away extreme views of their friends towards their own more middle-of-the-road position. Outside the legislatures they must, therefore, maintain and reconsolidate their party organisation while inside they must continue as spokesmen of liberalism and to moderate tensions in such a way that neither the government nor the Swarajists would drive each other to persistent unresponsiveness. Their increasing self-conscious task as mediators did not thus end with the 1923 elections, nor did it cease to shape the liberal role inside the legislatures. Particularly in the Central Legislative Assembly, the role remained as significant as before and gained new dimensions. It was now no longer a role to which the Liberals might stoop from a position of eminence but one on which depended their very existence as a force in Indian politics. Its significance for Central Provinces and Berar Swarajists was that they were in a position to implement the Party's strategy of complete, continuous and consistent obstruction within the legislature.

The second Council consisted of, 72 nominated and elected members. The number of elected members in this council was 54 instead of 53, and the number of nominated members was 15.

This was because the Nagpur University had in the
meantime been established and the electoral rules had provided that on its establishment a seat for the university was to be occupied by an elected member instead of a nominated member.29 Thus there were 54 elected members, the President, two ex-officio members of the Executive Council (one Indian and one European) and 15 nominated official and non-official (eight Indians and seven Europeans) members in the Council.30 Of the 64 Indian elected and nominated members, classed on an occupational basis, 43 were pleaders and landholders, four were big zamindars, five agriculturists, two doctors, one journalist, one teacher, three merchants, one money-lender, two bankers, one retired deputy commissioner, and one member belonged to miscellaneous occupation.31

Since more than 58 per cent of the voters had exercised their franchise in the contested general constituencies and since only eight candidates, mostly Swarajists, were returned uncontested,32 it may be conclude that the members of the second reformed Council were to a large extent representatives of the electorate.

The following table33 shows the age composition of the Indian members (nominated and elected) traced from their biographies, and in some cases their dates of birth

29. Returns showing the Results of Election in India, 1923, (London: HMSO, 1923), pp.74-76.
30. See Appendix-D.
31. Ibid.
32. Returns showing the Results of Elections in India, 1923, pp.74-76.
33. See Appendix-D.
have been obtained from the interviews with their sons,
grandsons, relatives and friends and with Congress
leaders:

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The fact that 51 out of the sixty four members or
more than 76 per cent, were definitely below the age of
fifty shows that the electors wished the House to represent
both age and youth so that bold initiatives therein might
have the benefit of mature counsels, both combining to
produce noteworthy results.

The second Council had 13 members, both elected
and nominated, who had been members of the first Council, and had some experience of public affairs. But considerable
portion of the rural and urban middle class members had
made their first entry into public affairs. Thus, the
proportion of inexperienced members was very high as it
was in the first Council.

The proportion of the educated members was high
in the second council as it was in the first Council.

34. They were G. M. Chitnavis, President of the Council,
M. V. Joshi, Executive Councillor, V. S. Kakre,
G. S. Gavai, K. R. Jayavant, K. F. Fande, R. M. Deshmukh,
T. S. Konde, J. B. Jate, R. A. Kanitkar and S. M. Chitnavis, a former minister.
At least 45 of the 64 members were law-graduates. The Law graduates still dominated the Council. The following table shows the level of education of the members:

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<th>Second council</th>
<th>Law graduates</th>
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<td>1923-26</td>
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The second Council mainly consisted of those middle class Congressmen quite a few among them owned land, who boycotted the elections to the legislature in 1920. Of the 64 elected and nominated members fifteen were from the upper class, 43 were from middle class and six were from the lower classes. Thus, like the first Council, the second Council was also dominated by middle class nationalists. Out of the 64 elected and nominated members 29 were Brahmins, five Rajputs, four Kayasthas, seven Marathas including Kunbis and Telis, seven Mohammadans, two Mahars, four Baniais, one Jain and five belonged to miscellaneous castes. The caste composition indicates the increasing involvement of the upper castes including Brahmins, Rajputs, Kayasthas and Baniais, especially the Brahmins, in the national movement. It also shows their wide influence among the electorate.

35. See Appendix—D.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
The communal and territorial groups in the second council remained the same as in the first. Members were divided into three groups viz. Brahmins, Non-Brahmins, and Mohammedans. The non-Brahmin members did not act as a group in the legislature. In addition, the members coming from Berar and Mahakoshal regions functioned in separate groups. Considerable antagonism and mutual jealousies often came to surface among the various groups. There were two main political parties in the council. The Swarajists were in a large majority. The Liberals had a small number of members. The Swarajists, in fact, were the only organised party in the council. They consisted of three groups. The Berar group was led by S.B. Tambe and B.G. Khandare. The Nagpur group was led by S.S. Noonje. The members from Mahakoshal were led by J.K. Raghavendra Rao. Of these the Mahakoshal Swaraj Party had the largest number of members, approximately 20, while the parties from the Nagpur and Berar regions had approximately 10 members each. Noonje was the recognised leader of the party as a whole but within two years, he joined the official group. S.A. Chitnavis was the leader of the Liberals.

Swarajists in the Central Provinces and Berar began their paradoxical career in 1924 by refusing to accept office. Following their success at the elections

38. See Biographical Account- Appendix-
39. Ibid.
the governor, Sir Frank Sly, invited their recognised leader, J.B. Noonje, to form a ministry. In keeping with swarajist policy, Noonje refused to accept the office. In doing so, he compelled Sly to offer the ministership to a moderate politician, S.M. Chitnavis, who was reluctant to accept the post, and to Sayed Hifazat Ali, a Muslim independent in the Council, who represented a Muslim constituency in the legislature. The offers were accepted, and the Ministers assumed charge of the transferred departments. Explaining it, Sir Frank said in his opening address: 'In making the appointment of Ministers I was faced with the position that no member of the majority party was prepared to take office. Thus, they refused to accept the responsibility of their position. Some members, classed as "Independent", were also not prepared to accept office. The sphere of selection was thus narrowed.' Notwithstanding what the Governor said about his nominees, the fact remains that his action in appointing them, at his own discretion irrespective of their backing in the legislature was an unconstitutional act. The Lokmitra rightly commented: 'His Excellency Sir Frank Sly has after all appointed Chitnavis and Sayed Hifazat Ali as his ministers. The question has arisen whether Sly has acted wisely and


41. See Biographical Accounts, Appendix-A

42. CPRC, Vol.1, 15 January 1924, p.4
constitutionally in making these appointments. It is our well considered opinion that the Governor has not acted either wisely or constitutionally in making these appointments.\(^{43}\) It would have been better on his part to openly accept the failure of the constitution to break this deadlock. It would have been more honest. As regards the two Indian gentlemen accepting office, the representatives of the people had valid grounds to make statements condemning them.

Rigged at this move, the Swarajists obstructed the work of the first and second sessions of the second Council, which met from 15 to 18 January and from 3 March to 20 March 1924, respectively, with devastating effect. They made it a point to raise some issue or the other at every opportunity. They utilized all opportunities in connection with resolutions, motions of communication, budgets, demand for grants, government bills, adjournment motions and interpel lation to obstruct its work and compelled the Governor to suspend the reformed constitution.

On 16 January 1924, the bitter opposition to the government was expressed through a resolution opposing the undemocratic appointment of Ministers.\(^{44}\) S. Kaghavendra Rao moved a motion of non-confidence in the Ministers.\(^{44}\) In the course of his speech while

\(^{43}\) Indian Papers, C.R., p. 43, The Lokmitra (Chhindwara), 19 January 1924.

\(^{44}\) C. LC, Vol. I, no. 4, 13 January, 1924, pp. 70-75.
moving the motion, Rao asserted the Swarajists' right to get the two Ministers dismissed: 'By virtue of our pledge, we may not accept the office, but . . . none I hope can maintain that it takes away our constitutional right of exercising our legitimate vote of dismissing any person who on our behalf and in our name wants to exercise the right of governing the transferred subjects....we desire to tell them (i.e. the Government) in unmistakable terms that we do not and possibly cannot give our sanction to it, so far as it rests on our responsibility'.

B.G. Khaparde, D.K. Kane, R.S. Shukla and others also pressed the point to beat the government on its own ground. Moonje went to the length of saying that there was no need for the government to make an attempt to pass the responsibility for this constitutional crisis to the Swarajists, once the party admitted it for a fact that it was a predetermined attempt on its part to bring about such a situation. He emphasised that, inspite of the policy of obstruction, the constitutional character of his party was not diminished. He referred to the times when the Englishmen extracted their constitutional rights from the unwilling hands of King John and said that it was not a constitutional method to which the English men had resorted in achieving their objective.

'But my method, he went on, 'and the Swaraj Party's method of extracting further concessions . . . is constitutional

References:
45. CPLC, Op.Cit. pp.73-74
46. Ibid. pp.70-114.
is non-violent, is more human and is based upon the laws of love and the principle of Ahimsa. ... Now, gentlemen, you see who are constitutionalists and who are unconstitutionalists in this House, you (the British Government) or we, the members of the Swaraj Party'. The result of all this was that the Council accepted the motion requesting the Ministers to resign by 45 members voting in favour and 24 against. The break-up of the votes showed that 41 Swarajists and four Pro-Swarajist members voted in favour of the no-confidence motion. Nominated Indian members two depressed class members and six Muslim members voted with the government.

Really speaking, it was a method of expressing no confidence not only in the Ministers but also against the whole scheme of reforms. One can easily imagine Motilal Nehru's feeling on these developments when he, in a letter to Mukand Lal, referred to the efficiency of the Swaraj Party in Central Provinces and Berar in paralysing the government.

In fact, the Legislative Council of Central Provinces and Berar made history on that occasion in that it was the first to pass a no-confidence motion

47. CPLC, pp.116-18.
49. Ibid, p.132.
against a government under the Reform Act. It was the first triumph of the nationalists inside the Council hall. The Swarajists, who on Congress platform had for many months pressed the case for entry to the Council, had now justified themselves by effectively bringing about a deadlock.

N.B. Khare's resolution that articles manufactured in any part of the British Empire outside India should not be used in any of the Departments of the Central Provinces or by its contractors unless they were not obtainable in any other part of the world, went a step forward in aiming to destroy the entire economic structure of exploitation built by the British Government. The British Parliament ruthlessly killed Indian industry by levying prohibitive duties on Indian manufactures and some of the articles manufactured in India were even by legislation prohibited to be used in England. It is not, said, Khare, 'in human nature for any race of men ... to lick the hand that strikes .... India was bled while during the great war for the defence of the empire. Naturally it became anaemic and wanted the tonic of self-determination, but instead, she was given the black pills for all her sacrifices, and when she refused to swallow the bitter medicine, she was given a Dyer and

51. See Biographical Accounts, Appendix-A
52. CPLC, Vol.11, 10 March 1924, p.296
Dyarchy. And Dyer was not given a pension for his crime, but long after the event, money was quietly collected and a purse was presented to him privately by the commercial community of his race. After all this, how can anyone feel like buying goods from the Empire? G. V. Deshmukh pointed also to the existence of colour-bar in British Colonies leading to the imposition of all sorts of social and political restrictions on the Indians. There were restrictions on trade, on acquisition of land, on franchise and on immigration. Under these circumstances, it was only just that India should assume a determined attitude of not buying articles from the British Colonies. The resolution was put to vote and 40 members voted for it and only 22 against.

Notions of Communication further constituted an important method of showing opposition to the Government. On the same day, after carrying the motion of no-confidence in the Ministers, B. S. Moonje, leader of the Swaraj Party in the Council, submitted to the President of the House a message of communication to the Governor. The message described that a peculiar situation had developed as a result of the passing of the motion of non-confidence. In the first place, it was unconstitutional to appoint ministers who failed to command the support of the majority in

54. Ibid, p. 303.
55. Ibid, 331.
the House and such an act was quite contrary to the spirit of the Government of India Act, 1919, under which the reformed legislature had been constituted. Secondly, it was already known to the government that the majority party in the council was pledged to consistent opposition, till the system of government was mended to suit the wishes of the people in fullest conformity with the principle of self-determination. Under these circumstances, it could easily be deduced that the working of the government on constitutional lines had become an impossibility and a situation of grave constitutional crisis had arisen. The President disallowed the motion of communication on the ground that the motion was to be discussed by the Council before forwarding it to the Governor. Moonje was, however, right in pointing out that it should have been brought by the government concerned to the notice of the Government of India and the Secretary of State in Council, requesting them to take immediate steps to establish full responsible government in the country.

On 10 March 1924, Moonje put forward another communication to be sent to the Governor. It referred to the statement made by the Secretary of State on 26 February 1924, covering various aspects of All-India politics. It concluded with a demand for the amendment of the Government of India Act in order to secure

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56. CPRC, Vol.1, 18 January 1924, p.133
self-determination for India. The President of the Council disallowed the communication. In doing so he ruled that the motion was not a communication from the Council to the Governor, but was a message to the Secretary of State to be forwarded by the Governor. He further ruled that if such a precedent were established, there would be nothing to prevent any matter from being sent to any political authority at the cost of the legitimate business of this Council. 57

Immediately after the vote of no-confidence the ministers tendered their resignation. But Sir persuaded them to withdraw their resignation and remain in the office. 58 This infuriated the Swarajists to adopt the policy of complete obstruction at the ensuing budget session.

Budget in the legislative Council provided an occasion to the Swarajists to ventilate the nation's basic grievances. The budget of 1924-25 was a surplus one. But the nationalists showed the hollowness it concealed under its lustrous exterior. C.K. Kane explained how the balance of 2.5 lakhs of rupees was shown for the next year. It was not the result of any step taken by the government to effect the desired reduction in the expenditure of the province but of a resort to new

57. CPLC, Vol.II, 10 March 1924, p.331-35
taxation like the increases in Court-fees and Stamp duties. He, therefore, saw no reason why the government should congratulate itself on this supposed achievement on its part, nor did he find any cause for the people to be jubilant over.\textsuperscript{59} G.V. Deshmukh\textsuperscript{60} wanted that it should be a poor man's budget. 'It must give', he said 'Cheap ration, cheap raiment and cheap medical relief... it must be so framed as to achieve the greatest good of the greatest number'.\textsuperscript{61} G.S. Gupta\textsuperscript{62} summed up the position when he said 'My chief reason for the rejection of the whole budget is that the province had suffered morally and materially under the present administration.\textsuperscript{63} It was also lamented that the land settlement policy of the government was financially ruining the country.\textsuperscript{64} The work of social welfare was also neglected. In spite of being pressed for the adoption of the policy of prohibition, the government had not been making any attempt to strike at the evil of drinking and alcoholism. The policy of increasing duty on liquor alone could never result in a substantial decrease in its consumption. The goal of total prohibition remained as distant as ever.\textsuperscript{65} Mookerje emphasised that it was improper that the vices of the

\textsuperscript{59} CPLC, Vol.II, 7 March 1924, p.159.
\textsuperscript{60} See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
\textsuperscript{61} CPLC, Vol.II, 7 March 1924, p.170.
\textsuperscript{62} See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
\textsuperscript{63} CPLC, Vol.II, 7 March 1924, p.178.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid, p.181. Gopal Ramchandra Wakhale's speech.
the people should be made a source of increasing revenue. He would have been glad had the Excise department proposed an increase in excise revenue by pursuing a policy of 'constructive excise industries' (sic). He never tried to explain his ideas about the levy of excise.

During the discussion on the budget the education policy of the government also did not escape the criticism of the Swarajists. The huge waste of money in the education department was the result of large scale favour shown to the Europeans. 'One item alone', said Chandra Gopal Mishra, 'will suffice to expose the policy of this department . . . a provision of Rs. 4,800 has been made for a European lady Lecturer in Kindergarten. Could an Indian . . . not qualify himself for the post after a few months training either in India or in England'.

Y.K. Kale pointed out that there was a great lack of initiative on the part of the government in the matter of industrial and technical education. Even the primary education was sadly neglected in the province. He indicated that the extravagance exercised by the government was colossal. S.S. Tambe expressed that the government was recklessly wasting money over the construction of public buildings. Betraying a feeling of

68. Ibid, p.188.
68. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
regional parochialism, he said that the actual amount of money spent on buildings was nearly three crores and all that money came out of the revenues of Berar. 70

Thus, the criticism of budget involved criticism of the all aspects of the work and programme of the government and the conclusion drawn was that Moonje had been emphasising: 'that the Governor should have the sagacity to recommend full provincial autonomy and responsible government for the country at an early date.' 71

Because of the overwhelming Swarajist strength, the Council rejected the government demands for grants and scored some outstanding successes in the process. Nearly all demands for grants were negativised. 72 K.P. Panda made an exception in the case of the Minister's salaries which he proposed to be reduced to Rs. 2 per month. 73 and C.B. Tambe explained why demand under that head was not wholly rejected. 74 Had no salary been proposed, the ministers would have under the provisions of the Constitution of 1919, received salary admissible to a member of the Executive Council of the Governor. 75 Moonje said, 'Nothing should have given us greater

70. CPLIC, OP. CIT., p. 200
71. Ibid., p. 204
72. Ibid., pp. 241-52
73. Ibid., p. 246
74. Ibid., p. 248
75. Section 52, clause (i) of the Government of India Act, 1919 said: 'There may be paid to any Minister so appointed in any province, the salary as payable to a member of the Executive Council in that province, unless a smaller salary is provided by vote of the Legislative Council of the province.'
pleasure than proposing that the whole salary should be cut down'.

What captured the imagination of the people was the fact that all rejections for grants were made without a division in the council. It would be, under the circumstances, but proper that the ministers should tender their resignation, for the Council's refusal to sanction the demands for grants was a clear indication of the fact that they did not enjoy the confidence of the Council. They ultimately did resign. But it was not in pursuance of this recognised parliamentary practice. Their reason for doing so was more mundane; they resigned because with a ridiculously low salary, which could not be enhanced by the Governor, they felt that they could not carry out their duties as ministers.

Following this onslaught the ministers tendered their resignation and the sly prorogued the Council. He restored as many of the rejected grants as possible, certified the existence of an emergency, and assumed responsibility for the ministers' portfolios.

In 1925, though the Swarajists handled the budget discriminatingly they again rejected the enhancement

77. Ibid, p.254.
in the ministers' salaries. In 1926 they did the same thing for the third time before obeying the Central Executive's call to leave the House. 80 This last rejection of the ministers' salaries signalled a more complete breakdown of the reformed constitution, as an official report disclosed: 'The sanction of the Secretary of State was obtained to the suspension under Devolution Rule 6 of the transfer of all provincial subjects with effect from 20 April 1926 to 31 January 1927. During that period all the subjects of the Minister for Agriculture were allotted to the Revenue and Finance Member, and all the subjects of the Minister for Education to the Home Member'. 81

Opposition to government bills, being one of the important means of obstruction, was fully resorted to by the Swarajists in the first and second Council. On the second day of the first session, they carried motions for the postponement of the discussion on four government bills, viz. The Central Provinces Primary Madak Smoking (Amendment) Bill, 1924, The Central Provinces Weights and Measures of Capacity Bill, 1924, The Central Provinces Primary Education (Amendment) Bill, 1924 and The Central Provinces Cattle Trespass (Amendment) Bill, 1924. The opposition was based not on the

merits of measures but on the ground that a grave constitutional crisis had been caused by the appointment of two ministers, who did not command the confidence of the Council. On the same day they also carried a dilatory motion with regard to one more Government Bill, The Central Provinces Settlement Bill, 1923. 82

They threw out four government bills in the second session. The Central Provinces Primary Education (Amendment) Bill, 1924, moved by S.H. Chitnavis for the consideration, was defeated by 23 voting in its favour and 37 against it. It was vehemently criticised by the Swarajists and was therefore lost. 83 Another motion moved by the same minister, that the Central Provinces Madak Smoking Bill, 1924, be referred to a Select Committee was put to vote and lost. 84 The Swarajists further scored a victory when Ayed Hifazat Ali proposed that the Central Provinces Weights and Measures of Capacity Bill, 1924, be referred to a Select Committee. The motion was put to vote and lost. 85 The Central Provinces Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 1924, moved by B.R. Standan was also subjected to the same treatment when 38 votes against and 23 in favour of the proposal. 86 So strong was the position of the Swarajists that even the motion to oppose the introduction of the Cattle Trespass (Amendment) Bill was carried by the Council with an overwhelming majority.

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83. Ibid., Vol.II, 4 March 1924, pp.7-8
84. Ibid., p.9.
85. Ibid., pp.9-10.
86. Ibid., p.11.
Adjournment motions further constituted an important source of annoyance, far more than any other device to the British Government. They provided occasions for deriding it to the greatest extent and placed it in very uncomfortable positions. Ravi Shankar Shukla, for instance, tabled a motion for the adjournment of the Council to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, that the government had failed to answer satisfactorily the interpellation of Choudhary Daulat Singh in regard to the alleged dispersal of the Kisan and Malguzar Sabha at Barman in Narsinghpur District by the orders of Abdus Sattar, Extra-Assistant Commissioner of Narsinghpur. The President of the Council on behalf of the government explained that there was a likelihood of disorder taking place as a result of two rival meetings being held and, therefore, Abdus Sattar advised both sides not to hold the meetings. The opposition argued that the obstructionists should have been checked from doing mischief. As a result of the measure the kisans who were within their rights to meet for a peaceful purpose were also deprived of the opportunity to do so. It was asserted that the action of Sattar amounted to giving impetus to mischief-mongers to upset the noble work calculated to promote welfare.

87. CPJC, Vol.II, 5 March 1924, p. 237
88. Ibid., p. 238.
The motion of adjournment, therefore, was communicated to the Governor. 89 B.S. Monje brought forward another motion on 14 March 1925 for the adjournment of the discussion over the Reforms Enquiry Committee Report; it also had the same object in view and was similarly adopted. He regarded such a discussion to be very necessary as the aforesaid Report affected most vitally the interests of the whole of India. 90 He was firm in his opinion that the time and money that were spent on the committee were entirely a waste. 91 He refuted the contention that the Report did not concern the swarajists. He further said, 'If this subject does not concern us, is there anything in the vital existence of our country and our nation, which really concerns us? Supposing that a danger is thrust at the central part of the heart, is it right for the hands and feet to say, Oh it does not concerns us, it is the heart that is injured'. 92 The result of this motion was far-reaching. Besides showing utter hollowness of the government position, it also indicated the Swarajists hold on the House. The Council adjourned till 12 noon on Monday, 16 March, 1925. 93

Questions constituted an important device to trouble or to expose the government. Few instances

89. CPLC, p. 241.
90. Ibid., Vol. I, 14 March 1925, pp. 353-54
91. Ibid., p. 358.
92. Ibid., p. 375.
will fully bear this out. J.P. took exception to the insertion of a note of threat in the invitation cards issued by the government in connection with a District Darbar to be held at Akola on 4 March 1924. He asked if the government considered it a proper and a polite way of extending invitation. The government had to accept its guilt and express its disapproval of the note. S.A. Tembe asked if the government had, in pursuance of the no-confidence motion passed by the Council on 16 January 1924, asked the Ministers to resign their offices. The answer given by A.E. Nelson was categorically in the negative. Rao sought further elucidation of this point by asking if the Minister for Local Self-Government had offered to resign following the passage of the no-confidence motion. A.E. Nelson replied that he had not resigned till then. Both these answers read conjointly point to a serious breach of constitutional etiquette, by a government that professed to impart constitutional training to the Indians. Moonje wanted to know, if the government of the Central Provinces brought the present situation.

94. CIC, Vol. II, 5 March 1924, p.13. The offending note said, "Any gentleman who does not propose to attend the Darbar must write to the Deputy Commissioner and let him know that he does not propose to attend and is to give his reason. Gentlemen who do not attend and who have not given a satisfactory reason, for not attending will not be invited next year."

96. Ibid, p.14
to the notice of the Governor-General-in-Council. The questioner was further eager to emphasise that in case the Governor had done so, the government should place on the table of the House the correspondence that passed between it and the Governor General-in-Council. While it was admitted that the whole situation was brought to the notice of the Governor General-in-Council, it was also affirmed that the government was not prepared to lay on the Council table the correspondence referred to by the questioner. This demonstrated the government attitude at the time of keeping things substantially concealed from the council. Answers of this type clearly indicated not only the utter indifference of the government to public opinion but also the obstinate methods that it usually employed for combating national sentiments.

One of the most important issues that provoked the Swarajists in the Council was government's activities to malign the Swarajists before the public for their obstructionist policy. Owing to the obstructionist policy which the Swarajists adopted in the first and second sessions of the second Council, a curious campaign was started by the government through pamphlets, lectures, insidious suggestions and pressure, in order to malign the Swarajists. A circular


letter to all officers in the districts was issued by
the Chief Secretary to the Government on 1 April 1924
giving them instructions regarding the measures to be
taken in order to bring home to the electorate, as far
as possible, the effect of the obstructionist policy
followed by the Swarajists inside the legislature. 101
certain vernacular leaflets were also distributed for
the purpose. The leaflets that were distributed were
gems of official inanities. One of them was 'Does
the Swaraj Party deserve the country's confidence'.
It was so gross and absurd that even the Moderate
politicians whom this kind of campaign was expected to
benefit, were ashamed of it. 102 This anti-Swarajists
campaign was not only sponsored but was carried out
with all consuming zeal by some district officers such
as J.G. Bourne, Deputy Commissioner of Narasinghpur. On
16 March 1925, in the third session, Kavi Shankar
Shukla exposed his doings in a strong resolution of
condemnation recommending to the Governor that as
Bourne's administration of the Narasinghpur district
was unsatisfactory he should no longer remain in charge
of the executive administration of a district. 103 In
support of his contention, Shukla narrated the question-
able and mischievous activities of Bourne who had
started an open campaign against the Swarajists. He
drew the attention of the Council to a newspaper

published by Bourne called 'The Narasimha' which printed most poisonous articles against the Congress and the Swaraj Party. He further said that the darbars, like that held 'at Gadarwara, in which Bourne moved from place to place like a Grand Mughal were undefinable because huge subscriptions were collected and wasted, and incentives were given for terrorising and looting the people and constant persecution of leading non-co-operators'.

All these activities made Bourne's administration of Narsinghpur district the worst in British India. The resolution was debated enthusiastically. Similar candid exposures of official antics were made by G.S. Gupta, Choudhary Saulat Singh from Narsinghpur and K.Raghvendra Rao. The resolution was well supported by almost of all the Swarajists and Independent members, and was opposed only by the government officials and two loyalist members, namely, C.C.Dube from Hoshangabad and Shams-ul-ulama Maulvi Saiyid Muhammad Amin from Jabalpur.

At the instance of the Home Member the resolution was put to vote and was carried by 37 votes as against 14 votes.

on the same day another resolution was moved by Chhedilal recommending to the government the appointment of a

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104. C.LC, op.cit., pp.518-22
106. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
108. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
110. Ibid, pp.563-64.
Committee to enquire into the allegations of maladministration in Bilaspur district in view of public opinion expressed in the press and general dissatisfaction prevailing in the district and to report within thirty days. In support of his motion, he narrated the facts in a moderate tone. He said that the administration of Bilaspur district during the preceding few years failed to afford relief from grievances to the people of the district, the police was generally oppressive and failed to maintain law and order; public servants collected unauthorised levies from time to time for unknown purposes; the poor people were deprived of their property without being given proper compensation; the magistracy had failed to give justice and protection to the people and even in the elections to local bodies undue and improper influence was brought to bear upon the electorate. The motion was discussed in detail in the Council. Almost all the official nominees took part in the discussion and tried to defend the Deputy Commissioner of Bilaspur and the provincial government. Only on an assurance of the Home Member to hold an enquiry into the grievances and to redress them, the mover withdrew the motion. Although the motion was withdrawn the mover was successful in exposing the hig-handedness of the bureaucracy.

112. Ibid., pp.577-78
113. Ibid., pp.585-615
114. Ibid., p.616.
Another important issue which dominated the discussions in the Council in 1925 and 1926 and which ultimately destroyed the Swarajist unity inside and outside the legislature was the rivalry between the members representing the two regions of the province for forming a ministry. In the first and second sessions of the legislature in 1924 Swarajists maintained their unity in obstructing the work of the Council. But, in 1925 and 1926 the Swarajist unit collapsed as the nationalists of the two regions of the province vied with each other for the formation of a ministry. The most important role in this affair was played by the Swarajists of Berar. There were many reasons for this. They represented the interests of landholders, professional people and urban middle class in the legislature. The problems of Berar were their own problems, and they felt that they could deal with those problems in a much better way by accepting office than by remaining in opposition. Besides, they also realised that acceptance of office would enable them to influence the decisions of the government on the question of land settlement. In 1924 the government decided to revise the land settlement in Berar by enhancing the land revenues and reducing the duration of settlement. In the following years it began to implement these proposals and framed rules before bringing the necessary legislation.\footnote{\textit{G&LC, Vol.II}, 6 March 1925, p.313; \textit{Ibid}, 7 March 1925, p.117.}
Many Swarajist members were landholders in Berar and they strenuously opposed these moves. They thought that in seeking office they could influence the government on matters affecting their vital interests.¹¹⁶ The activities of non-Brahmin politicians in the region provided a further spur to Swarajists. As most of the Swarajists were Brahmins, they realised that participation in the government would help them to preserve their traditional political leadership.¹¹⁷ The non-Brahmin movement took root in Berar from 1901 onwards and in its early years, it developed as a protest against the Brahmin social dominance. With the introduction of the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms the movement acquired political dimensions as was evident from the annual conferences at which the non-Brahmins publicized their political objective.¹¹⁸ In 1924 the non-Brahmin Conference in Nagpur condemned the Brahmin Swarajists for obstructing the work of the Council, and urged non-Brahmins to remedy the situation by returning non-Brahmin candidates at the 1926 elections. The claim to Berar raised by the Nizam of Hyderabad also provided further grounds for their desire to form a ministry. In 1924 the Nizam requested the government of India to terminate its lease over Berar and restore it to Hyderabad.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Indian Papers, CPEB, No.50, 1924, pp.577-78; The Praja-
paksha (Akola), 7 December 1924; Ibid., No.51, 1924, p.591, NAI.

¹¹⁷ Khaparde Papers, 22 April 1924; The Hitavada, 13 February 1924, p.4; Ibid., 21 May 1924, p.3; Ibid., 30 July, 1924, p.4; Ibid., 13 August 1924, p.2.

¹¹⁸ Khaparde Papers, Diary, 22 April 1924.

¹¹⁹ Home Vol., April 1924, No. 25 Deposit, FR, First Half of April 1924, p.1, NAI.
The swarajists opposed this move because they felt that Hindu interests were neglected in that state. They appointed a committee to follow the Nizam's correspondence with the Government. They further, sought to join the provincial government as an interested party in any subsequent negotiations. 120

Like the Berar Swarajists, the Swarajists from Nagpur and Mahakoshal regions were also under pressure to defend local interests. But the pressure upon them was less insistent than that upon their Berar colleagues. This was so because both contained members who favoured obstruction, while the Berar party consisted wholly of responsive co-operators. The need to protect provincial finances was an important factor impelling them to take office. They were sensitive to the Berar Members' criticism of the Berar territory's financial nexus with the Nagpur and Mahakoshal regions and to their threats to reduce their revenues that were essential for the development of these regions. They claimed in their defence that Berar had benefitted from its connection with the province and that its representatives therefore should not have claimed special treatment in this regard. 121 This dispute formed a background to the widespread cries of the electorate, especially from the Mahakoshal region for public works

120. Indian Papers, CPR, No.8, p.109; The Udaya (Amraoti), 19 February, 1924, Home Sol. April 1924, No. 25 Deposit, PR, First Half of April 1924, p.1, NAI.

which had long been neglected. Montague Butler discovered this fact when he visited the region in 1926. He reported to the members of the Legislative Council: 'In the last 20 years fortune had put money into the cotton (i.e. Marathi) districts . . . but the wheat tracts of the north had to bear the full brunt of the financial stringency . . . . In each of these districts I found much to be done, and little to do it with. . . . Everywhere was the same tale of money needed; money for schools, money for roads, money for everything. Once again money or the want of it, was put forward as the root of all evil'. 122 Annoyance at the exclusion of their region from the government after the introduction of the reforms formed an additional reason why Mahakoshal Swarajists sought office. They were aware that Syl had bypassed the Mahakoshal region in 1921 when he appointed ministers and an executive councillor from the Vidarbha region. 123 Resentment on these issues mounted steadily between 1921 and 1926, finding expression in public meetings, in debates in the legislature, and in the columns of the Hindi language press.

Nagpur Swarajists had an additional reason for accepting office. Like the Swarajists from Berar, they

123. The Ministers appointed in 1921 were S.M. Chitnis of Nagpur and Rao Bahadur N.K. Kelkar, a Maharashtrian Brahmin from Balaghat. The Home Member was M.V. Joshi of Berar; and the Finance Member, Sir B.P. Standen, was a former Commissioner of Berar. The President of the Legislature was Sir G.M. Chitnis of Nagpur.
owed allegiance to Tilak's policy of responsive co-operation with the government. It was to this policy that the Swarajists from Nagpur turned when they believed that obstruction had failed and might even invite retaliation by the government and the electors. As Moonje noted in 1924, 'The Governor appears to have decided to convene no more meetings of the Council until . . . March (i.e. 1925), . . . He does not propose to appoint any ministers now. We are thus practically shut out of the council government. The people have begun to ask us questions as to what we propose doing. . . . Unless we find out a way . . . we shall render ourselves liable to public criticism. . . . If the people find that other provincial councils are functioning and it is only the C.P. Council which is not . . . people will begin to be disaffected towards us and will attribute it to our lack of resourcefulness in our statesmanship and tactical manoeuvring'.

Against this background it was the Berar Swarajists who first led the moves to form a ministry. Despite constant efforts, however, the three groups of Swaraj Party failed to form a ministry between 1925 and 1926. This was so because while there were three Swaraj party groups there were only two ministerships and no Swarajist group would forgo its claim to the office. At the end their moves to form a ministry ended in frustration and failure. It was also

124. Moonje Papers, letter Fad 24, B.D. Moonje to ?, 2 Aug. 1924, NLI.
apparent that Butler preferred to form a ministry supported by the Swarajists from Mahakoshal and Nagpur rather than one formed by Swarajists from Berar.

Sly, whose term as Governor did not expire till 25 January 1925, opened the way for Swarajists of Berar to form a ministry by declaring on 11 January 1925 that he intended giving the Council another opportunity to work the constitution. But soon after Sly's statement about giving a further opportunity for working the constitution the Executive Committee of the Swaraj Party, presided over by Motilal Nehru, met at Nagpur on the 11 and 12 January 1925. The committee reiterated the policy of obstruction unless suitable changes were made in the constitution to make the administration popular and responsible. Despite an attempt by Motilal Nehru to thwart the formation of a ministry, the Berar Swarajists were determined to assume office.

When the Council met for the budget session of 1925 (3 March to 20 March 1925) Swarajists from Berar again demonstrated their willingness to cooperate with the government. In this session they secured seats on a number of government committees. In the election of the President they put forward S.B. Tambe, the leader of the Berar group, as their candidate and secured his election against a Liberal by 41 votes against 20. Then the

125. *Indian Annual Register*. No.1, 1925, p.18
Swarajists of Bejar also showed a notable change in the matters of budget, demands for grant and government bills. They participated fully in the budget debates, moving cut motions in place of wholesale rejection of grants as they did in the second session. As the debates proceeded, they sometimes withdrew their motions and even crossed the floor to vote with the government against their Swarajist colleagues, showing clearly their sympathies with the government. For example, Y.M.Kale’s motion for a cut of Rs.24,794 in the outlay on improvements under the head Land Revenue (Reserved) and B.G.Khaparde’s proposal for a cut of Rs.76,321 in the funds allocated for Survey and Settlements under the head Land Revenue (Reserved) could not succeed in the Council. The first was openly defeated and the second was withdrawn.129 Besides, the three motions for a reduction of the total amount of Rs.1,69,349 were carried and the balance of Rs.24,25,65 was voted by the Council.130 These three motions for reduction of funds comprised Rs.75,190 for charges in connection with the revision of settlement of Balapur and Talgaon Taluqs of Vidarbha region, Rs.74,755 under the head District Superintendents of Land Records,131 and Rs.19,404 under Patwari Establishment.132 K.P.Vaidya’s133 amendment to demands respecting General Administration (Transferred)

130. Ibid, pp.255-96
131. Ibid, p.282
132. Ibid, p.286
133. Ibid, p.292
134. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
were carried. It proposed reduction of Rs.98,998. 135
Then the motion for a reduction of Rs.4,02,300 under
22-G-General Administration (Reserved) Jaglias and
Mahars was put to vote and at the instance of D.K.Kane,
Votes were taken by division, the result being 24 voted
for and 23 against. 136 B.G.Khaparde's motion for the
reduction of the sum of Rs.96,989 provided for Judicial
Establishment Courts of Honorary Magistrates was also
adopted. 137 The President's Salary Bill was also passed.
This was the only piece of legislation passed by the
Council. 138 They were also prepared to vote for the
salaries of the ministers on 12 March 1925. 139 However,
they failed to form a ministry. Butler would not
guarantee, even if the Berar Swarajists did vote the
salaries, that he would choose his ministers from Vidarbha,
because he preferred to form a ministry supported by the
Swarajists from the Mahakoshal region, rather than the
one supported by the Swarajists from Berar. Accordingly,
they dropped their plan to form a ministry and with
Butler's refusal to guarantee that his ministers would come
from Vidarbha, they joined their colleagues from the
Mahakoshal in reducing the ministers' salaries to two
rupees for the second time. 140

136. Ibid. p.353
137. Ibid. pp.380-86.
138. Ibid.
139. Ibid., pp.255-95
Some months later friction between the Swarajists from Berar and their colleagues again prevented the formation of a ministry. When the Berar Swarajists showed no willingness to accept office, as an astute politician Butler transferred his attention to dividing the Swarajist ranks by persuading and drawing the Berar Swarajists into the government. During the rainy season he toured Berar to estimate the possibility of launching a programme of public works under a recent grant of some 9 lakh rupees from the Government of India. Butler offered the Swarajists of Berar an opportunity to form a ministry. On 3 August 1925 he came in person to the Council to inform that he intended to invite the leaders of the dominant party in the Council to confer with him during the next few days on the question of forming a ministry. He further informed the members of the legislature that he would place the ministers' salaries before the Council. 141 Meetings took place on 6 and 7 August 1925. In the course of discussion Moonje and Rao showed their unwillingness to accept office. But at the same time Rao also agreed to vote the ministers' salaries and support the Berar Swarajists if they accepted office. B.G.Khaparde represented the Berar section. He was not unwilling to accept office but he did not think that a stable ministry would be formed and so declined the offer. 142 Thus, this meetings failed to produce a ministry.

The outstanding event of this session was a friendly scramble by all interests for a share in the nine lakh rupees which the Government of India had granted to the Central Provinces and Berar for a programme of public works. A resolution regarding appropriations of the grant was moved by Finance Member in the Council on 3 August 1925. In moving the resolution the Finance Member announced that the government proposed to spend two-thirds of the grant on schools, hospitals, agricultural research and waterboring in Berar. While regretting the lack of money for Mahakoshal and Nagpur regions he noted also that Berar would receive her quota of revenues under the Sim Formula. In the discussion it was seen that there was little trace of party feeling. Government members found themselves in the same lobby with varying groups of the Swarajists and sometimes in opposite lobby of the Liberals and nominees. The debates showed the divergence of opinion between the Mahakoshal and Vidarbha representatives over the operation of the financial settlement. G.S. Gupta proposed a cut of Rs.50,000 from the provision of Rs.1,50,000 made for the Science College Hostel at Nagpur. He proposed that Rs.50,000 be utilised for the high school at Durg, where there was no high school. Cut motion showed divergence of opinion

144. Ibid.
between the Mahakoshal and Vidarbha representatives. The cut motion was adopted by the Council by 34 votes for and 25 against in spite of the opposition of some Berar representatives. The break up of votes showed that almost all the Berar representatives voted against the motion.

The position after the close of the August session remained unaltered. But the shrewd politician, Butler, was not so easily baulked in his efforts to divide the Swarajists. On 8 October 1925, Butler resolved the situation by appointing S.B. Tambe, a former leader of the Berar Swaraj Party as Home Member. This at once had a nation-wide reaction. It also indicated that a section of Swaraj Party had been drifting towards a revision of its policy and programme inside the Councils. In Bombay Presidency M.R. Jayakar and N.C. Kelkar supported Tambe’s acceptance of the office. On 25 October 1925 the Executive Committee of the Berar Swaraj Party passed a resolution declaring that the time had come for the Swaraj Party... to adopt a policy of Responsive Co-operation.

It was becoming clear that the opinion

148. Home Pol., October 1925, No.112 Deposit, FR, First Half of October 1925, NAI.
149. Ibid.,
in Bombay Presidency and Berar had clearly diverged from the Swarajists stand. The position was considered so serious that an urgent meeting of all India Swarajists Executive Committee was called at Nagpur. 151 The meeting took place on 1 November and on the following day Motilal Nehru had a frank and final discussion with Moonje and other leaders of Vidarbha Responsivists group. 152 It resulted in a complete breach and Motilal Nehru bitterly remarked that Bombay Presidency Unit was a diseased limb of the Swaraj Party and he was quite prepared to amputate it. 153 He followed this up by a tour of Wardha, Chanda and Berar. Speaking at Amraoti he said that the phrase 'responsive cooperation' had no meaning in the prevailing situation. If it had any reference to the response to be made by the government, no such response had yet been made and the acceptance of office could by no stretch of imagination be included in responsive Co-operation under the existing circumstances. 154

The decision of the All-India Executive of the Swaraj Party to stand firm on the policy of non-acceptance of office and obstruction within the Councils did not stop further defections. M.R. Jayakar and N.C. Kelkar resigned from the Party, and this was followed by the resignation of Moonje. 155 When the annual session of the Congress took place at Kanpur in December 1925, Vidarbha Swarajists

151. Home vol., November 1925, No. 112 deposit, F.R., First Half of November 1925, p. 17, NAI.
152. Ibid.
154. Ibid., p. 293
155. Ibid.
did not attend it. The Congress endorsed obstruction and civil disobedience and directed the Swarajists to leave the legislatures in March 1925.\textsuperscript{156} Aware that they could not alter the policy of the Congress, the Vidarbha Swarajists resigned \textit{en bloc} from the party in January 1926 and shortly afterwards from the legislature also.\textsuperscript{157}

In March 1926 Butler sought for the third time to exploit the division in Swarajist ranks to form a ministry. On 4 March 1926 after touring for four months in the Mahakoshal region, Butler came to the Council to thank members for their increasing co-operation and to announce that the government had reversed its stand on the grant of nine lakh rupees. He stated that as the government could finance Berar's programme of public works from ordinary revenues, he proposed to use the grant to build roads, schools and hospitals in the Mahakoshal region. At the same time he informed members that the government would reintroduce the demand for the ministers' salaries.\textsuperscript{158} Despite the widespread desire to form a ministry, Swarajists from Mahakoshal once more prevented the members from Berar from taking office. Rao, who had been elected leader of the Swaraj Party in the legislature on 4 March 1926 after Moonje's resignation decided to obey the Swarajists Executive call to leave the Council in March 1926 when the Council met for the budget session.

He did so partly because he did not have sufficient support.

\textsuperscript{156} \textit{Op. cit.}, pp.295-96
\textsuperscript{157} \textit{Home Pol.}, November 1925, No.112 Deposit, PR, Second Half of November 1925, p.45, NAT.
\textsuperscript{158} CFLC, Vol.I, 4 March 1926, p.262.
to sustain a ministry and partly because there was little point in taking office shortly before the election in December 1926.\textsuperscript{159} But before leaving the Council the Swaraj Party rejected the grants for ministers' salaries\textsuperscript{160} for the third time and all the demands for Land Revenue and Excise presented by the Finance Member. The demand for stamps was also rejected entirely with the help of the casting vote of the President of the Council.\textsuperscript{161} The Land Revenue demand was rejected by way of constitutional protest with the aid of the Berar Swarajists and the other by snap votes.\textsuperscript{162} After rejecting these demands and without taking further part in the Council's business, all the members of the Swaraj Party left the Council \textit{en bloc}.\textsuperscript{163} This wrecked the Berar Swarajists' further chances of forming a ministry.

Aware that he had failed to form a ministry for the third time, Butler prorogued the legislature on 17 March 1926 and two days later certified the rejected budget demands. On 20 April 1926 on Butler's recommendation the Secretary of State suspended the dyarchy in the Central Provinces.\textsuperscript{164}

Thereafter the parties began to marshal their forces to fight the elections. The formation of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{159} The \textit{Pioneer}, 10 March 1926, p.7.
  \item \textsuperscript{160} CPLC, Vol.I, 9 March 1926, p.269.
  \item \textsuperscript{161} Ibid., p.269
  \item \textsuperscript{162} Ibid., pp.269-87
  \item \textsuperscript{163} Ibid, p.288.
\end{itemize}
Responsive Co-operation Party in February 1926 in Vidarbha resulted in the breaking away of the Moonje-Aney group from the Abhyankar-Wamanrao Joshi group.\footnote{165} Similarly, in Mahakoshal region, by July 1926 Rao formed an Independent Congress Party to contest the elections to the legislature and set up his own party candidates in opposition to the Swarajists.\footnote{166} Another important group which fought the elections in Vidarbha region was the Non-Brahmin Party which contested seven out of 24 Hindu Vidarbha seats.\footnote{167}

The other issues like the regional interests, the establishment of municipalities in tahsils and other towns, the legislations to make local bodies more progressive, and to make better provision for the regulation of slaughter of animals by preventing cruelty to animals and for the maintenance of public health, which found expression in the debates of the Council, crystallized during the budget and the August sessions of 1925.

The regional interests of the Vidarbha Swarajists were projected in the Council through resolutions also. On 19 March 1925, a resolution was moved by R.A. Kanitkar,\footnote{168} a member from Berar, asking the government to stop taking any further action on the resolution of the local government regarding revision of settlement in Malkapur and Khamgaon taluqas before the

\footnote{166} \textit{Ibid.}, p.345.  
\footnote{167} \textit{Ibid.}.  
\footnote{168} See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
enactment of the proposed legislation in the form of the new Berar Land Revenue Code. The purpose of the motion was to stay further action in respect of the land settlement and assessment of land revenue until they would be in a position to influence the government on these matters affecting their interests. The motion was debated in detail and only Vidarbha Swarajists and government members participated in the discussion. The motion was fully supported by the Berar representatives and was opposed by the government members only. The resolution, as amended by M.P. Kolhe, recommending to the government to stop taking any action regarding the revision of settlement in any of the taluqas in Berar was carried by 38 votes as against 14 votes. One depressed class member and four loyalists voted with the government. One striking feature of the result of the voting on this issue was that G.A. Gavai, a depressed class member, voted against the Government.

On the same day a resolution was moved by U.N. Thakur recommending to the government to establish municipalities in each tahsil town and other towns having a population of 5,000 or more. In support of

172. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
174. Ibid, p. 643
his motion he emphasised that the establishment of municipalities in tahsil and other towns would prove to be of a great service to the public and a training ground for democracy. 176 On behalf of the government Mr. Mathias pointed out certain difficulties in implementing the said legislation and expressed that if the resolution was to be accepted it would involve a complete revision of the existing Municipal Act of 1923. 177 The motion was discussed in detail. After amending the resolution, calling upon the government to establish municipal boards in towns with population of 8,000 or more (instead of 5,000 or more) and in tahsil towns, it was carried without a division. 178

During the August session of 1925, three private bills were introduced in the Council. Two legislations, namely, the Central Provinces Municipalities (Amendment) Bill, 1925 and the Central Provinces Local Self-Government (Amendment) Bill 1925, were introduced by E. Raghavendra Rao. 179 These legislations proposed to make honorary magistrates ineligible to sit on municipal committees, and to raise the minimum term of imprisonment which would disqualify anyone from membership of local bodies from 6 months to five years. The purpose of these legislations was to make local bodies more progressive. Honorary magistrates, being members

177. Ibid, pp.662-63
178. Ibid, p.664
of the magistracy, could be influenced by the government and as such were unsuitable to exercise their franchise in the best interests of the people. In support of his contention the mover quoted the example of Madras Government where the proposed rule applies with regard to the Madras local boards and district councils. Both the bills were debated at length in the Council and were opposed by the government members. T.S. Korde, an independent member also opposed the motions and advised the mover to withdraw them. At last the bills were referred to the Select Committee. The Select Committee recommended that the municipal rights of honorary magistrates should remain untouched, but the provision for disqualification on account of a criminal conviction should disappear entirely. These bills lapsed on the dissolution of the Council.

The third bill, the Central Provinces Slaughter of Animals (Amendment) Bill of 1925, which was introduced by K.M. Dhamadhikari on 7 August 1925 proposed to amend the Slaughter of Animals Act of 1915. The principles underlying the bill were to make better provision for the regulation of slaughter of animals by preventing cruelty

181. Ibid., pp.430-36
182. Ibid., p.432
183. Ibid., pp.443-48
184. Ibid., pp.443-44
to animals and for the maintenance of public health. The bill was introduced by Hindu member and was opposed by the Muslim members. The bill was debated in the Council and was withdrawn on the advice of Moonje, the leader of the Swaraj Party, who desired to avoid possible communal friction.

Thus, on the eve of the elections to the third Council the strong and solid Swaraj Party was broken into two groups, one supporting the strategy of obstruction and the other that advocated responsive co-operation in the legislature. The fact was that the Swarajists were still groping in the dark for a strategy most suited to the needs of the period. Their search for the best course of action was made the more complicated by personal ambitions of the leaders and regional loyalties. This provided splendid opportunities of creating confusion and divisions among the dominant group by astute administrator like Butler. Even small largesses like only a share of just nine lakh rupees to any region was sufficient to create significant diversions from the nationalist goals. Such regional feelings were ill omens for the times to come.

185. Ibid., p. 444
186. Ibid., p. 446. Speeches of Khan Bahadur Saiyid Abdur Rahman.
187. Ibid., p. 447.
It was in an atmosphere of bitterness, disillusionment and disunity that the elections for the third reformed Council drew near. This was really a fight between the Swarajists and the several groups of the Responsive Co-operators. In 1923, Swaraj Party had fought the elections in its own name. But this time it contested the elections in the name of the Congress and got the co-operation even from the so-called 'No-changers' of the earlier period.

All the parties were active in canvassing and meetings were held all over the province. One marked feature of these campaigns was their mutual recriminations. Personal considerations and communal feelings were also running high, both in the general and as well as in the reserved constituencies. In one meeting organised by the Hindus, the Mohammedans were not allowed to participate.

188. Responsive Co-operators refers to all nationalists who supported the formation of ministries. The Responsivists, one of the groups under this category were members of the Responsive Co-operation Parties of the Nagpur and Berar.

188-A. 'No-changers' refers to the supporters of the agitational techniques devised by Gandhiji.

189. Home Pol., October 1926, No.112 Deposit, FR, Second Half of the October 1926, p.9, NAI.

190. Home Pol., October 1926, No.112 Deposit, FR, First Half of the October 1926, p.26, NAI.
The elections for the third reformed Council were held in November 1926. The electorate of the Central Provinces and Berar voted solidly for responsive co-operation. So far as the percentage of voting for the main parties was concerned, the Swaraj Party polled 28,268 votes or 30.7 per cent of the provincial total of 92,003 votes cast. The Responsive Co-operation Party of the Vidarbha region followed with 21,628 or 23.6 per cent, and the Independent Congress Party with 10,196 or 11.08 per cent of the votes. The Independents, Non-Brahmin Party and other Hindu candidates polled 25,998 votes or 28.25 per cent of the total. The Muslims polled 5,913 votes or 6.36 per cent of the total. The Swarajists won sixteen seats, Responsivists thirteen seats, Independent Congress Party seven seats, Non-Brahmin Party three seats, Independents seven seats, Muslims seven seats, and one seat went to the Liberal Party.

In the Vidarbha region the Swaraj Party polled badly and secured only five of the 24 Hindu seats. The Responsivists, in contrast, did well in seven of the ten Hindu seats in the Nagpur Division and less successfully in the Berar Division by winning six of the fourteen.


192. The Hitavada, 11 November 1926, p. 7; 16 Nov. 1926, pp. 6 and 7; 21 Nov. 1926, pp. 5, 6 and 7; 28 Nov. 1926, p. 5; Home Pol., November 1926, No. 112 Deposit, FR, Second Half of the November 1926, p. 69, NAI.

193. Ibid.
Hindu seats. The Swarajists polled much better in the Mahakoshal region than they did in the Vidarbha region. In the Mahakoshal region the Swarajists won eleven of the twenty Hindu seats and had the promise of support from one Independent. 194

There were some remarkable Swarajist reverses in the elections, like Ravi Shankar Shukla’s defeat in Raipur South, Beni Madhav Awasthi’s defeat in Hoshangabad, and G.R. Joshi’s defeat in Nimar Districts. 195

Thus, on the one hand elections resulted in severe defeat for the Swarajists and on the other hand the Responsive Co-Operatives secured a strong position to form a ministry.

The third Council, as it emerged after the elections and nominations, consisted of 74 members—55 elected, President of the Council, two-ex-officio members (two members of Executive Council—one European and one Indian) and 17 nominated officials and non-officials (eight Europeans and 10 Indians). 196 Mrs. Ansuyabai Kale, was nominated by the Governor on 8 March 1928, to give effect to the legislation passed by the Council recommending the extension of the franchise to women. 197 In this Council the number of elected members

195. Ibid. Shiv Das Daga won the Raipur South Seat from Ravi Shankar Shukla, G.J. Jaiswal won the Hoshangabad seat from B.K. Awasthi and Seth Thakur Das Governdandas won the Nimar District seat from G.R. Joshi.
196. See Appendix-E.
was raised from 54 to 55 because according to the legislation passed in the second Council, Mandla District had been given an elected member instead of a nominated member. Umesh Lutta Rathak was elected from the Mandla District Seat as an Independent candidate. The 65 elected and nominated Indian members classed on an occupation basis comprised thirty seven pleaders and landholders, one doctor, two teachers (one man and one woman), one journalist, two big zamindars, five malguars, one money lender, two merchants, three bankers, three agriculturists, one priest (Mahant of the temple), two government servants and five members belonging to miscellaneous occupations. Thus, as was the case with the second Council, the third Council was also dominated by pleaders and landholders, seeking office in order to influence the government on matters affecting their interests.

The ages of the Indian elected and nominated members shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elections of 1926</th>
<th>Under 30</th>
<th>30-49</th>
<th>50-69</th>
<th>70-89</th>
<th>Age not known</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


199. See Appendix-E.

200. See Appendix-E.
From the above table it is clear that 50 out of 65 members or more than 76 per cent were below the age of fifty. The elections returned young members imbued with nationalistic ideas who wanted reforms in various fields such as social, economic and administrative. Their young age would incline them to take a bold stand on various issues that might be advantageous to the people of the province.

The third council was composed of 31$^{201}$ or more than 50 per cent of Indian elected and nominated members who had earlier experience of the Council's business. Thus, the proportion of experienced members was high, and, in fact, their experience was beneficial in the conduct of the business of the Council.

The level of education of the legislature is shown in the following table; $^{202}$

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Third Council</th>
<th>Law Graduates</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>Matriculates</th>
<th>Under matric</th>
<th>Education not known</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table it is clear that the majority of Indian elected and nominated were graduates or law graduates. Thus, it can be concluded that this Council, like the second Council, was composed of the majority of middle class people.

201. See Appendix - E.
202. See Appendix - E.
The third Council consisted of twenty two Brahmins, five Rajputs, four Kayasthas, four Banias, one Jain, one Yadav, ten Marathas, one Tell, one Kalar, three Mahars, one Chamars, seven Mohammedans and fifteen belonging to the miscellaneous castes. Out of 65 members, sixteen were from upper class, forty nine from middle classes and four were from lower class. Thus, as in second Council, this Council was also dominated by the middle class Brahmin nationalists.

The communal and territorial groups had been changed in the third Council. Members were divided into four groups, viz., the Brahmin, the non-Brahmin, the Mohammedans and the depressed classes. The non-Brahmin members acted as separate groups in this Council. There were five political parties, viz., the Swaraj Party, the Responsive Co-operation Party, the Independent Congress Party, the Non-Brahmin Party and the Independent Party combined with the Liberals. The Swarajists were the largest group and were led by N.B. Khare. The Responsive Co-operation Party consisted of two groups. The Berar group was led by B.G. Kharaparde and the Nagpur group was led by Y.M. Kale. E. Raghavendra Rao was the leader of the Independent Congress Party and S.M. Chitnavis was the leader of the Independent Party. The personal ambitions and mutual jealousies were evident among these various groups.

203. See Appendix- E.
204. See Appendix- E.
Following the elections, negotiations began amongst the various groups for the formation of a ministry. Moonje, who had been elected a member of the Central Legislative Assembly in 1926, took the lead. He wanted to retain his influence in the province by controlling provincial politics. Moonje's first step was to unite all the Responsive Co-operators into a single party to provide a base of support for the formation of a ministry. Within a month he was successful. On 19 December 1926, members of the Responsive Co-operation Parties of the Vidarbha and the Independent Congress Party of the Mahakoshal region formed the united Nationalist Party. The new party, however, had a strength of only 20 members, and could be easily overwhelmed by a combination of the Swaraj Party and other groups in the Council. Accordingly, Moonje began negotiations for a union of the Nationalist Party with the Nationalist Party, Independent Party, Liberal Party and Non-Brahmin Party. These efforts were also fruitful, and on 9 January 1927 there emerged the Nationalist Party comprising 33 members.

To ensure the party stability, Moonje nominated its leaders to important positions in the legislature and the ministry. He secured the presidency of the Council for the leader of the Liberal Party.

205. The Hitavada, 23 December 1926, p.6
S.M. Chitnavis, by withdrawing the nomination of Y.M. Kale, a Responsivist from Nagpur, who was originally promised the post. 207 E. Raghavendra Rao, of the Independent Congress Party, was elected leader of the Nationalist Party. Moonje allocated the other ministership to Ramrao Deshmukh of the Responsive Co-operation Party of the Berar Division. 208 Later Moonje obtained the Secretaryship of the Nationalist Party for his Responsive Co-operation Party in the Nagpur Division. 209 With these moves, the stage for the formation of the ministry was completed.

Besides, soon after the elections, when the split in the Congress had, to some extent, affected its position in the provincial legislatures, the Congress met in December 1926 in Gauhati for its annual session. 210 The result was a stiffening of the attitude towards office acceptance. Accordingly, it directed that the Congressmen shall "refuse to accept any ministership or other offices in the gift of the government until government responded satisfactorily to the National Demand. 211 It also directed the Congressmen to throw out budgets and all proposals for legislative enactments

208. Ibid., 13 January, 1927, p.7.
209. K.P. Vaidya, the Member from Nagpur District East was appointed Secretary for the Nationalist Party.
211. Ibid., p.305.
calculated to enhance the power of the bureaucracy. 212

This session of the Congress, in fact, set the tone for
the policy of the Congress members in the legislatures
for the next three years. With this mandate the
Swarajists in the Central Provinces and Berar legislature
prepared for the first session of the third Council.

Although the Swarajists' position was weakened
in the Council of the Central Provinces and Berar after
the elections of 1926, they consistently opposed the
government policies and practices. They succeeded in
getting several resolutions and cut motions adopted.
They also showed annoyance to the government acts by way
of no confidence motions, motions of adjournment and
interpellations. This became an important issue again
in this Council.

The first session of the third Council was
held from 7 January to 12 January 1927. On 11 January
1927, J. M. Marten, Finance Member, moved that a sum of
Rs. 9000/- be allocated for ministers' salaries. 213
W. E. Cole, the Swarajist member from West Berar Municipal
constituency, moved a cut motion recommending that the
salaries of ministers be reduced to Rs. 2 and the
travelling allowances of the ministers be also reduced
to Rs. 2. 214 The cut motion was debated at length in

212. Ibid.
214. Ibid.
the Council and was supported by the Swarajist members but it could not be successful for want of support from other parties. As a result, Karten's motion was adopted by 55 votes to 15. 215

After the Council voted the ministers' salaries, Butler invited Rao and entrusted to him the formation of a ministry. 216 Rao nominated R.M. Deshmukh as his colleague and the Governor paved the way for their assumption of office by restoring the reformed constitution. This was done on 31 January 1927. The next day, Rao and Deshmukh assumed office, the former as Chief Minister and Minister for Education and the later as Minister for Local Self-Government. 217 Thus, with these developments the Swarajist interlude in the Central Provinces and Berar came to an end, and a new phase in the political life of the province began.

The second session of the third Council was remarkable in another respect also. In this session the two stalwarts, Rao and Deshmukh, who had demonstrated their abilities from the opposition benches in the second Council, were now on the government benches. They had really crossed the floor and the fact was openly lamented by N.B. Khare on 7 March 1927 in the Council: 'The British people are past-members in the

215. Ibid., p.50.
art of diplomacy, we cannot match them; we admit our inefficiency in this respect. They began by hypnotising, then they made suggestions, and when they found that the suggestions they made failed to fructify, then they offered baits; and the administration of Sir Montagu Butler very cleverly tempted two of our stalwart fighters and made them eat the humble pie by offering them custard and plum-cakes! 218 The circumstances leading to such a state of affairs suffice to establish that parties in the Central Provinces and Berar Legislative Council made a great swing from a policy of complete non-co-operation of 1924 to complete surrender to the wishes of the government in 1927 under the garb of responsive cooperation.

The budget of 1927-28 presented by the Finance Member was a deficit one like the preceding budgets. 219 The nationalists, while criticising the government policy, drew the attention of the Council to the specific grievances and problems of the province. Speaking during the general discussion on the budget B.K. Patil pointed out that there was a great lack of initiative on the part of the government in the matters of important public works like roads in the rural areas and medical relief. 220 V.N. Kale asserted that it was not the result of any steps taken by the government to

219. Ibid., 3 March 1927, p. 27.
220. Ibid., 5 March 1927, pp. 130-31
effect the desired reduction in the ordinary expenditure recommended by the Retrenchment Committee. M. Sharfuddin summed up the position of poor agriculturists when he said: 'Neither is there food to eat, nor a house to live in and over and above that the degree of the money-lender is a constant menace. There is the fear of attachment and sale, and life is as miserable as death'. He further said: 'The condition of Mohammedans is even worse. The advantage of the law of damdupat which attempts to save them from the onslaugths of money-lenders is denied to them, with the result that they have fallen on evil days and they not being a very good financial condition have hard time indeed.' He further wanted that scheme of female education should also be adopted and more money should have been allotted to it. D.P. Mehta, a Swarajist member, called it 'a budget of a spendthrift bureaucracy'. L.C. Ogle, a depressed class member, expressed that the work of uplift of depressed classes in the field of education was neglected. He requested the government to reserve the funds enlisted in the budget to encourage the education of depressed classes by giving half of maintenance grant to the hostels including boarding charges, by giving grant-in-aid to the private schools, by increasing the number of the reserved scholarships

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221. Ibid., pp.132-33
222. Damdupat: stopage of interest when it reaches the capital amount.
224. Ibid., p.137.
225. Ibid., 7 March 1927, p.205.
and by granting exemption to the depressed class students in aided schools. 226

In spite of the weak Swarajist position, cuts in demands were almost invariably proposed by them with the object of demonstrating that the people's representatives were opposed to the policies and practices of an unsympathetic alien government. Thus, cut-motions of Rs.55,327 were moved by Naik, D.D. Rajurkar, under the heads 5-B-Land Revenue, Revision of Survey and Settlement in Jalgaon, Balapur, Akola, Chikhli and Akot taluqs 227; cuts of Rs.67,692 moved by Y.M.Kale, under the head 5-B-Land Revenue-Revision of Survey and Settlement in Melghat 228, cuts of Rs.1,08,024 moved by Thakurdas under Land Revenue-Survey and Settlement-Revision of Survey Operation in Jabalpur 229, cuts of Rs.77,336 moved by Chhedilal, under the head 5-B-Revision of Survey Operation in Mandla District and cuts of Rs.1,27,788, again moved by Chhedilal, under head 5-B-Revision of Survey Operations in Bilaspur were carried in spite of the official opposition. 230 All these cut motions were moved as a mark of protest against the government's policy of Land settlement and against the want of a

226. Ibid., pp.213-14
227. Ibid., 8 March, 1927, p.465
228. Ibid., p.497
229. Ibid.
230. Ibid., p.511
Settlement Bill. The motion moved by Rajendra Sinha that Rs.7,80,000 be omitted from the demand under 6-B, providing for the purchase of Opium, Ganja and other drugs was negatived\(^{231}\) and in spite of M.K. Golwarkar's condemnation\(^{232}\) of the government's excise policy, the demand No.2 Excise (Transferred) for Rs.15,53,350 was adopted.\(^{233}\)

The cut moved by G.S. Gupta of Rs.100 under head 8-(i) Forest-General Direction was carried in spite of the official opposition by 39 votes against 18. Only one depressed class member, S.U. Ketangle, voted with the government.\(^{234}\) This motion of reduction of a small amount was brought against the anti-people policy of Forest Department.

A token cut moved by G.K. Pradhan of Rs.1 under demand No.7 General Administration (Reserved) was passed by 39 votes against 18.\(^{235}\) This motion for reduction of a small amount was moved with the object of expressing the displeasure at the conduct of officers of the particular government Department. Another token cut of Rs.1 moved by M.P. Kolhe under head-General Administration Civil Secretariat Travelling Allowance was also carried by 21 votes against 19.\(^{236}\) It was

\(^{231}\) Ibid., 10 March 1927, pp.537-58
\(^{232}\) Ibid., p.537
\(^{233}\) Ibid., p.558
\(^{234}\) Ibid., pp.559-71
\(^{235}\) Ibid., 11 March 1927, p.607
\(^{236}\) Ibid., 12 March 1927, p.641
also brought as a protest against the policy of the government in transferring the Executive Councillors' travelling allowance from votable items to the non-votable ones.

In the third Council the position of the Government was, however, strengthened due to the Responsivists' defection to the government side and the latter was fairly successful in carrying its bills. For instance, E. Raghavendra Rao, introduced the Central Provinces Excise (Amendment) Bill, 1926 and the motion to take into consideration by the Council was adopted. Some amendments to motions were carried generally when they proposed circulation for the purpose of eliciting public opinion. D.K. Mehta's amendment to S.B. Tambe's Central Provinces Courts (Amendment) Bill, 1926 (I of 1926) and N.K. Kelkar's amendment to J.T. Marten's Central Provinces Tenancy (Amendment) Bill, 1926, were carried on account of the fact that they proposed circulation of these bills for the purpose of eliciting public opinion.

The budget for 1928-29, presented by A.E. Nelson, was also widely criticised. During the discussion on the budget the retrenchment policy,

237. CFC, Vol. II, 3 March 1927, p. 42
238. Ibid., p. 47
239. Ibid., p. 38
240. Ibid., p. 43
the Sim Formula, the Survey and Settlement operations, 
the non-abolition of the post of the Divisional
Commissioner and the government steps regarding famine 
conditions aggravated by the worst agricultural 
predicament in Mahakoshal region came in for sharp 
criticism.\footnote{241}

In 1926 the original demand under Land Revenue 
was Rs. 29,22,600. The Council brought about a total 
reduction of Rs.5,88,253 as protest against the 
settlement operations and the balance of Rs.23,56,347 
was voted by the House.\footnote{242} Similarly the original 
demand of Rs.13,35,000 under Excise (Transferred) 
Department was reduced by a total sum of Rs.5,000 as 
a protest against the Excise policy of the government 
and the balance of Rs.13,30,000 was sanctioned by the 
Council.\footnote{243}

The budget of 1929-30 was a surplus one, but 
the nationalists showed the hollowness it concealed 
under its lustrous exterior. During the discussion on 
the budget the policy of increase in pay and creation 
of additional posts of government officers, provision 
for their bungalows, tents, room rents and travelling 
allowances, the policy and method of collection of land

\footnote{241}{Ibid., Vol.II, 2 and 3 March 1928, pp.61-168. 
Speeches of D.Y. Rajurkar, U.S. Patil, N.S. Patil 
and K.P. Pandey.}

\footnote{242}{Ibid., 8 March 1928, p.235.}

\footnote{243}{Ibid., 9 March, 1928, p.292}
revenue and settlement operations, the Sim formula, the education policy, the retrenchment policy, the excise policy and the public welfare policy were issues subjected to criticism.\textsuperscript{244}

The only noteworthy feature in the budget session was the voting of the minister's salaries. The original demand under the head-22 General Administration-Transferred was of Rs.95,000. It provided for minister's salaries and their travelling allowances. N.K. Kelkar proposed for a reduction of Rs.76,500.\textsuperscript{245} The cut motion was debated at length and was supported by P.B. Gole and N.B. Khare, who expressed their dissent against the formation of any ministry under dyarchy.\textsuperscript{246} In the end it was put to vote. The result was that 40 voted in favour of the demand while only 17-14 Swarajists, one Independent and two Nationalists voted against it.\textsuperscript{247}

Adjournment motions were also presented in the Council which resulted in heated discussion. R.W. Pulay, a labour leader, launched the attack on the government on 25 January 1929 by way of an adjournment motion. He moved that the Council should adjourn to discuss the situation created by the introduction of the new Cotton Market Rules by the Nagpur Municipality,


\textsuperscript{245} Ibid., 5 March 1929, p.726.
\textsuperscript{246} Ibid., pp.730-35
\textsuperscript{247} Ibid., p.736.
causing injury and loss to the ryot of Nagpur district and the public and the failure to the provincial government to interfere in the matter. He drew the attention of the government to the grievances of the ryot whom these bys-laws affected. He demanded that the government should redress the injury caused by these bylaws. The motion was supported by K. P. Pandey, V. V. Kalikar, C. G. Mishra and N. S. Patil on the same lines. While defending the government's case H. C. Gowan accepted the motion which was finally passed by the Council. 250

There was another adjournment motion presented by N. S. Patil. He moved that the House be adjourned to discuss and consider the action of the government officials regarding unauthorised recoveries of land revenue in Akola and Buldhana districts. The President objected to the motion on the ground that the subject had already been debated by the Council on the cut proposed by F. E. Cole on the land revenue demand and the cut motion was passed. He ruled, the motion out of order. 251

Another adjournment motion moved by Y. K. Kale to discuss the recovery of enhanced land revenue in Berar on a scale of one-fourth of the old assessment instead of one-fourth of the enhancement only, was subjected to the same treatment. 252

249. Ibid., pp. 389-94
250. Ibid., p. 395
251. Ibid., 5 March 1929, p. 699
252. Ibid., 6 March 1929, p. 774
In the budget session of 1930-31 an opportunity to bring an indictment against the government did not arise, because following the decision of the Lahore Congress all the swarajist members resigned from their seats between January and February 1930, in preparation for the civil disobedience. 253

Another effective method of expressing Council's discontent towards government policies and practices was to put inconvenient questions and elicit information which led to the exposure of the government. On 4 March 1927, U.D.Pathak wanted to know whether government had examined the housing conditions of the factory labourers in the province. The answer to this question was in the affirmative. 254 R.W.Fulay further asked if the accommodation provided for industrial workers was sufficient for all the workers? The answer to this supplementary question was in the negative 255 which showed the government's policy of keeping the real things in the dark. Some questions were asked to obtain information for use in the debates on resolutions or in the discussion on the budget and demands for grants. On 4 March 1927 Chhedilal wanted to know the opinion of the Heads of the departments and the Commissioners on the question of abolition of Commissionership which was referred to them by the local government. J.T.Marten,

254. G&LC, Vol.11, 4 March 1927, p.89
255. Ibid., p.69
on behalf of the government, showed his inability to
make any statement on the subject. 256

Some questions were specifically asked to
expose the government. For example, the reduction in
the posts of Divisional Commissioners in the province
contemplated by the government 257, government's policy
relating to the total prohibition of country liquor, 258
and the question regarding separation of Judiciary from
Executive 259 were often the topics of interpellation.
The replies given by the concerned ministers often
parried the issues.

Some of the questions were designed to
expose the religious policy of the government. On
8 March 1927, Chhediwal sought clarification about
the government's policy in the matter of compulsory
attendance in Bible classes by non-Christian boys in
the Mission School, Wardha. The attendance in Bible
classes by all the students was compulsory in the
school, and it was prescribed as a part of the
curriculum. 260 He further requested the government
for an inquiry into the matter. 261 The answer to
those questions were misleading and could not satisfy
the Council. 262 But when the questioner passed the

256. Ibid., pp. 92-93
257. Ibid., p. 96. Question asked by D.K. Mehta
258. Ibid., 5 March 1927, pp. 101-105. Questions asked by
G.P. Jaiswal, K.P. Pandey, G.R. Pradhan, N.B. Khare,
respectively.
260. Ibid., 8 March 1927, p. 275.
261. Ibid.
262. Ibid., pp. 275-76.
Education Minister for holding an inquiry, he agreed to do so. 263 On 10 March 1927, C.G. Mishra inquired about the teaching of the Bible to all students during the school hours in the Christian Middle and Primary Schools at Harda. The reply to this question was in the affirmative. 264 The questioner further asked if the government was aware of the recent policy of the Christian Mission Society which runs several aided schools in Harda tahsil to intensify the teaching of Christianity in those schools. If that was so, he pressed the government for holding an enquiry in the matter. 265 The answers given by the government were in the negative and it expressed its inability to make an independent enquiry into that matter. It also exposed the government's policy of indirectly showing undue favour to the Christian Missionaries.

A number of questions were designed to obtain information regarding actions taken by the government on the resolutions passed by the Councils. On 14 March 1927, Chhedralal wanted to know about the steps taken by the government on the resolution of Council I passed on 5 August 1915 regarding the appointments of Honorary Magistrate. 266 The questioner was further eager to know the new policy formulated with regard to the

263. Ibid., p. 277
264. Ibid., 10 March 1927, p. 320
265. Ibid., pp. 320-21.
266. CPLC, Vol. II, 14 March, 1927, p. 413
appointment of Honorary Magistrate. In reply to these questions, S.S. Lala, Home Member, while parrying the issue directed to the questioner to refer to the revised General Book Circular Part-VI, a copy of which was available in the Council's library. Answer of this nature clearly showed that the government was not prepared to implement the wishes of the legislature.

A number of questions asked by the Depressed class members were related to their sectional interests. On 5 March 1927, G.J. Gavai, a depressed class nominated member, wanted to know, if recruitment of the depressed classes as constables was restricted to some districts only and that too a limited number merely on the grounds of caste. He further emphasised that the government should appoint a committee to enquire into the grievances of depressed classes relating to their recruitment in the police department. The answer to the first part of the question was put off under the excuse of obtaining information in due course, a habitual mode of government to escape inconvenient situations. The answer to the second part was in the negative.

Following the formation of a ministry, the Nagpur Congress Committee decided to sustain the people's spirit of resistance by organising Arms Act

267. Ibid.
268. Ibid., p.414
Satyagraha to defy the Arms Act. It was intended to be a protest against the continued incarnation of the Bengal Ordinance detenus. The campaign was launched in May and June, 1927 in Nagpur. The leader of the campaign was M.R. Awari. He opined that government orders banning carrying of weapon was aimed at humiliating the people. He organised processions in Nagpur in which the satyagrahis carried sticks, swords and other weapons. The satyagraha attracted the attention of the whole country. It remained non-violent all along. To check the movement the government arrested Awari and his supporters. On 4 June 1927 Awari was sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment on the charge of sedition. Soon after his conviction the movement was suspended on 1 July 1927.

The Arms Act Satyagraha became a major political issue and agitated the nationalist members in the Council, which met in August 1927 and January 1928.

Loaded questions were asked leading to condemnation of the government's action with regard to the Arms Act Satyagraha. On 12 August 1927, N.B. Khare wanted to know whether, on 20 June 1927, Guradasa, a blind volunteer of the Arms Act movement, was assaulted on the Mahal road in Nagpur, by a plainclothes policeman.

271. See Biographical Account, Appendix-A.
273. Ibid.
If it was so, whether the said policeman had been awarded any punishment? H.G.C. Gowan replied that no such complaint of assault by a policeman, had been made to the government so far. N.R. Khare further wanted to know whether the ministers were consulted regarding government policy against the Arms Act Satyagraha and the prosecution of M.R. Awari and other Satyagrahis. He further, enquired whether the ministers assented to the referred acts? H.G.C. Gowan, on behalf of the government showed his inability to disclose anything about the problem.

Several questions enquiring about the treatment of Awari in jail were put in the budget session of 1928. The government had to admit that he was not treated well. This was very embarrassing for the government.

While the third reformed Council was continuing its deliberations, the political scene in India took a dramatic turn with the announcement of the appointment of the Indian Statutory Commission on 8 November 1927. It consisted of seven members of the Parliament led by Lord Simon. The Commission was asked to enquire into the working of the system of the Government of India Act, 1919 with a view to determining a further course of action. The Government of India required each provincial government

275. Ibid., 607
to submit its views on the subject to the Commission.
The exclusion of Indians from a body, which was to recommend further constitutional advancement of the Indian people, was so unreasonable and unjust that India sharply reacted to the announcement.

Motilal Nehru, who was in London at the time of the announcement, called it as an eyewash. Sapru, the Liberal leader, regarded the exclusion of Indians as a direct affront to the Indian Liberals and expressed his feelings at the tenth session of the National Liberal Federation, held in Bombay in December 1927. He observed 'even a worm must sometimes turn'. The Liberal Federation decided not to do anything with the Commission at any stage or in any form. A similar attitude was also expressed by the leaders of Hindu Mahasabha.

The Congress defined its attitude towards the Commission in the Madras session held in December 1927. The Congress declared that the Commission had been appointed in utter disregard of India's right of self-determination. It resolved that the only self-respecting course for India to adopt was to boycott the Commission at every stage and in every form.

280. Ibid.
The Muslim opinion with regard to the Commission was divided. The reactionary wing of the League led by Sir Mohammed Shafi decided to welcome the Commission while Jinnah and his followers lined up with the Congress. Thus the Commission was treated by nearly all sections of Indian opinion, as an insult to the Indian people and a humiliation, and almost all the prominent leaders of India were in favour of boycotting the Commission.

As a result, a wave of protest swept through India. From 3 February 1928, the day of the arrival of the Commission in Bombay, they were shouted down with the words 'Go back Simon' in big demonstrations and protest meetings throughout the country.

In the Central Provinces and Berar there was complete polarisation on the question of boycotting the Commission. Meetings were organised all over the province. M.J. Aney, member of the Legislative Assembly, addressing a meeting at Yeotmal on 15 December 1927 on the subject of the Statutory Commission, suggested a rival Commission. Moorje, President of the Nagpur Congress Committee, asked all political parties and communities to sink their differences and to co-operate with each other in holding mass meetings to support the hartal on 3 February 1928, on its arrival in India. Similar views were expressed at the Central

283. Prasad, Rajendra., India Divided, p.129.
Provinces Marathi Provincial Political Conference held on 9 March 1928 at Nagpur. It was convened to consider the political situation in the province. K.P.Nariman presided over the Conference. N.B.Khare, as Chairman of the Reception Committee expressed satisfaction on the splendid success of demonstrations organised on the boycott issue and asked the audience to make the boycott on the Commission's arrival at Nagpur on 14 March 1929 a complete success. K.P.Nariman in his presidential address, while reviewing the political situation in the country, appealed to the people to boycott the Commission when it came to Nagpur on 14 March 1929. The conference also adopted unanimously Abhyankar's resolution appealing for boycott of the Commission. Similar appeals were also made by the leaders of the Mahakoshal Congress Committee.

The Central Provinces and Berar All Parties Conference met on 9 December 1928 at Nagpur. It was presided over by M.S.Aney. S.M.Chitnavis represented the Liberals, Seths Jamnalal Bajaj and Govinddas represented the Swarajists, B.G.Khaparde and G.K.Pradhan represented the Responsivists, and Kali Charan Mandagaoli and R.W.Fulay were the representatives of the depressed classes and labour respectively.

286. Indian Annual Register. 1929, p.393.
287. Ibid., p.393-94.
288. Ibid., p.395
No Mohammedan representative was present at the conference. The conference passed the resolution boycotting Simon Commission and condemned police assaults on Lajpat Rai.290 A boycott committee was also appointed at the All Parties Conference.291 On the other hand meetings were organised by Mehars in various places with a view to dissuade their brethren from joining in any demonstration against the Commission.292

While the Boycott movement was in full swing in the province, the Central Provinces and Berar Legislative Council brought an indictment against the government in appointing the Statutory Commission. On 20 January 1928, Brijlal Biyani, one of the leaders of the Swaraj Party, moved a resolution in the Council recommending to the Governor to inform the Viceroy and the British Government that the scheme of the Statutory Commission was wholly unacceptable to the Council, and that the Council would therefore have nothing to do with the Commission at any stage or in any way.293 Elaborating on his views, the mover said that he had no faith in the Commission and proposed to boycott it, since it was an insult to the self-respect of the Indian people. He made a fervent appeal to all sections of the Council to support the motion.294

290. Home Pol., December 1928, No.1/28, Fr, First half of the December, 1928, p.12, NAI.
292. Home Pol., February 1929, No.17/February, Fr, First Half of the February 1929, p.13, NAI.
294. Ibid., pp.195-97
Among those who supported Biyani’s motion were Independent members D.Y. Rajurkar and U.C. Pathak, the Responsivists T.J. Kedar and B.G. Khaparde, and Swarajists N.B. Khare, G.C. Gupta and Mahanat Laxminarayan Das, and N.C. Vatil belonging to the Non-Brahmin Party.  

B.G. Khaparde while supporting the resolution on behalf of the Nationalist Party added that ‘the Ministers are members of this party and therefore are for it.’

G.A. Gavai, nominated member representing the Depressed Classes, opposed Biyani’s motion. While opposing the resolution, he raised the grievances of the Depressed classes and regretted that the government could not do more for those classes than it did because the higher castes stood in the way of the advancement of the depressed classes. He welcomed the Commission not because the Commission was going to give any political rights to India but because he thought it would listen to the grievances of the depressed classes, both political and social. He further expressed that he would dissuade the Mahar labourers from joining in any demonstration against the Commission when it would arrive at Nagpur on 14 March 1929. Other depressed class nominated members, S.M. Katangale from Nagpur, and Ratiram from Bilaspur, also opposed the motion on the same lines and supported the Commission.

295. Ibid., pp. 197-234.
296. Ibid., pp. 228-229.
representing the European and Anglo-Indian Community, opposed the motion and wished to support the Commission. 299

This had a curious sequel later in the year. In November 1926, the Education Committee which formed part of the Statutory Commission, known as Hartog Committee, had asked the Director of Public Instructions of the Central Provinces and Berar to depute witnesses to appear before the Committee. The Director, F. A. Macnee, on his own responsibility, and without any consultation with the Governor or the Minister of Education, instructed a number of subordinate officials to be prepared for appearing before the Committee. The Education Minister, Rao, came to know about it at this stage. He firmly objected to the Director of Public Instruction's action because as Head of the Education Department, a department dealing with a transferred subject, he was bound by the verdict of the Council not to have anything to do with the activities of the Statutory Commission. The Governor, Montague Butler, accepted the constitutional objection raised by his Minister, and the officials some of whom had already proceeded to Delhi were ordered not to appear before the Committee. Thus, Hartog and his men had to do without the counsel of Macnee and his officers. 300

During the budget session of 1929 searching questions were asked to expose the wrong acts of government officers.

299. Ibid., pp. 222-23.
On 24 January 1929, C.P. Jaiswal enquired whether any officer of the government had proceeded to give evidence before the Education Committee, which was known as Hartog Committee. If yes, the questioner pressed the government to disclose the name of the officer and sought information if travelling allowance was paid to the said officer. He further enquired if any of the officers was called back and not permitted to give evidence before the said Committee. If this was so, why? The answer to all these questions was in the affirmative. It was also admitted that under instructions from the Director of Public Instructions and in anticipation of the formal orders of the government, Syed Zafar Husain, Inspector of Schools, Hoshangabad, proceeded to Delhi on 11 November 1929 to give evidence on 15 November 1929. Subsequently, he was instructed that he should not give evidence before the Committee. As he had proceeded to Delhi under a misunderstanding, he was allowed to draw travelling allowance.

Then again a series of questions were put on the same issue with a view to exposing and condemning the actions of the government and its officers for co-operating with the Commission against the wishes of the resolution passed by the Council in January 1928. C.P. Jaiswal asked whether the said officer was called back at the instance of the Minister of Education who had come to know of this at a late stage.

It was disclosed that the said officer was called back by the Governor. D.K. Mehta asked for the grounds on which he was called back. H.C. Covan regretfully declined to furnish any more information. The questioner, to further expose the government, wanted to know if the said officer was called back consequent upon the passing of the resolution deciding not to co-operate with the Commission?

The answer to this question was in the affirmative which implied a serious breach of constitutional etiquette and obtuseness on the part of the Director of Public Instructions, who could not understand the implications of the Council's decision to boycott the Commission.

The Responsive played an active role on issues like the extension of the franchise to women, the question of appointing honorary magistrates, the grant of amnesty to the Hindu prisoners connected with the Arvi riot case, the appointment of a committee to enquire into the condition of labour in organised industries, the application of the rule of damdapat, the raising of the legal age of marriage of girls and boys and the appointment of a committee to investigate the question of employment. They also supported a number of bills, including the Workmen Welfare Bill, the Central Provinces Cotton Market Bill and the Central Provinces Maternity Benefit Bill.

302. Ibid., p. 266.
303. Ibid., p. 266
In the budget session of 1927, the most important legislation recommencing the extension of the franchise to women was passed. This was almost a revolutionary change in the field of social reform. The resolution moved by G.B. Charde on 22 March 1927, read as follows:

'This Council recommends to the Government that the sex disqualification for registration as voters in the electoral rolls of the constituencies sending representatives to the Central Provinces Legislative Council and also for election or nomination to the said council be removed in respect of women generally in the Central Provinces and Berar.'

While moving the resolution the Responsivist member G.B. Charde observed that the real underlying object of the resolution was to open the gates of the Council Chamber to women. He pointed out that Indian women needed political education. During the course of discussion on the motion almost all the Indian elected and nominated members supported it in order to bring women into active political and legislative field. It was eventually carried by a voice vote.

Another issue keenly debated in the Council was the question of appointing honorary magistrates. A resolution to that effect brought forward by F.G. Cole,

304. Ibid., pp. 1055-56
305. Ibid., p. 1066.
was carried in spite of the strong official opposition. The objective of this resolution was to make the process of appointment of the honorary magistrates democratic and practical by giving the powers of appointment to an advisory committee consisting of people's representatives instead of executive officers.

Some other significant resolutions were also passed by the Council in the budget session of 1928. The first was moved by G.D. Charde on 21 January 1928, advocating the grant of amnesty to the Hindu prisoners connected with the Arvi riot case. The resolution aroused communal feelings during the debate. While speaking on the motion the mover declared that in the case of communal riots, it was not an individual or two that were to be blamed but the whole community that committed the wrong. He pointed out that it was in the interest of both the communities that the two sides understand each other. Mutual good-will and harmony was not possible without this. He further pointed out that the persons of both the communities involved in the riots had to suffer. Hindus had to go to jail while Mohammedans accused for the crime were saved. He appealed to the Mohammedan members to consider the matter in a sympathetic way and support the motion. The motion was supported

306. Ibid., 23 March 1927, p. 1131
307. Ibid., Col. LC, Vol. 1, 21 January 1928, p. 272
308. Ibid., pp. 273-83.
by R.W. Fullay and T.J. Kedar on the same lines, but strongly opposed by all the Mohammedan members. At last the motion was carried by 26 votes to 18 in spite of the government's and Mohammedan members' opposition. 309

In moving another resolution on 23 January 1928, Fullay, a labour leader, recommended to the government the appointment of a committee to enquire into the condition of working classes in organised industries. The motion was adopted by the Council in spite of the government opposition. 310

During 1929 the nationalists in the legislature attempted to get such laws passed which might help to eradicate harmful features from social and economic life of the province. One such law was the application of the rule of damdupat. The motion to that effect was moved by Mirza Rahman Beg on 23 January 1929 recommending, to the government to pass legislation by which the rule of damdupat applicable to the Hindus in Berar could also be made applicable to the Muslims of Berar and to the Hindus and Muslims of the Central Provinces. 311 M. Sharfuddin moved an amendment to the Rahman Beg's motion. The amendment read: 'This Council recommends to the government to move the government of India in the matter of legislation by which the rule of damdupat applicable

309. Ibid., p. 291
310. Ibid., 23 January 1928, pp. 378-81
311. Ibid., 23 January 1929, p. 234
to the Hindus in Berar will also be made applicable to
the Muslims of Berar and to the Hindus and Muslims of
Central Provinces'. Speaking on his amendment, he
pointed out that damdapat was a matter for Central
legislation and the Council and the local government
could only recommend that the law of damdapat should be
framed by the Government of India. In support of his
amendment he explained the major principle involved in
it was that the interest should not in any case exceed
the capital amount originally advanced. He further
submitted that 80 per cent of the population of India
consisted of agriculturists who were exploited by the
money-lenders when they borrowed money from them. It
was his aim that such exploitation should come to an end.
In conclusion he recited a rhyme expressing money-lender's
apprehensions about the law of damdapat. During the
debate the motion was supported by B.C. Kharapade, S.M.
Rahman and others and was opposed by the government members
and one independent member. The motion was put to
vote at the instance of S.J. Tambe and carried by 38 votes
against 19.

312. Ibid., p. 234.
313. दामदाप से जिक्र न कर, ।
पाँच से दस से आगे जाने न दो।
जाने वाली, उनके पास क्यों, ।
क्यों कि नाम उन्होंने नहीं दिया। ।
315. Ibid., p. 248
Another far-reaching social legislation attempted in this session aimed at the raising of legal age of marriage for girls and boys. The motion was moved by Ansuyabai Kale, a nominated member to represent women, on 25 January 1929. It read: 'This Council recommends to the government to convey to the Government of India its considered opinion that the legal age of marriage for girls should be raised to 14 and for boys to 18 years; and as a step towards this it supports Rai Bahadur Harbilas Sarda's Child Marriage Bill as amended by the Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly'. 316 The objective of the motion was to discourage the solemnization of marriage of the boys under 18 and the girls under 14 years. The motion was welcomed in the Council and received support from almost all the progressive members. 317 It was carried without division. 318 This represented a landmark in the evolution of social legislation in the province.

The third resolution was moved by V.V. Kalikar on 26 August 1929, it related to the appointment of a committee to investigate the question of unemployment amongst the educated classes in the province. The government did not oppose the motion and it was carried without division. 319

316. Ibid., 25 January 1929, p. 381
317. Ibid., pp. 363-85
318. Ibid., p. 385.
Three important bills were introduced in 1929. One such bill was the Workmen's Welfare Bill moved by R.W. Fuley on 21 January 1929. The mover proposed that it should be circulated for the purpose of eliciting public opinion. The objective of the bill was to make provision for basic necessities such as water-closets, dining sheds, creches and rest-rooms for the factory workers. The bill was carried without division of votes.\footnote{320} After eliciting public opinion the bill was introduced in the Council on 24 August 1929 for consideration. The bill was discussed in detail and at the request of B.G. Khaparde the consideration of the bill was postponed till the next session in which the bill passed into law.\footnote{321}

The second important bill, the Central Provinces Cotton Market Bill, moved by Kolhe on the same day, was also accepted for the purpose of eliciting public opinion. The bill proposed for inclusion of the representatives of agriculturists and the merchants on the Cotton Market Committee. It also proposed the nomination of representatives of the government, District Councils, Local Boards and Municipalities. The bill further provided that dharamadaya\footnote{322} and other illegal reductions made by the cotton brokers should be declared illegal. The objective of the bill was to ensure proper representation of the government and different local bodies in the Cotton Market.

\footnote{321} Ibid., Vol. II, 24 August 1929, pp. 219-23.
\footnote{322} Dharamadaya was a deduction supposedly for charity.
Committee so that grievances of the cotton growers could be redressed. After eliciting public opinion on the bill the mover proposed on 24 August 1929 that the bill be referred to a select committee. It was carried.

The third important bill accepted by the Council for the purpose of eliciting public opinion was the Central Provinces Maternity Benefit Bill moved by R.W. Fulay on 22 January 1929. It was introduced with the object of safeguarding the health of the working mothers by assuring them adequate rest and freedom from pecuniary anxieties before and after the child birth. That was the first legislation introduced in the interest of the women workers in the province. After obtaining public opinion the bill was introduced in the Council on 26 August 1929 for consideration. It was discussed in the Council and at the request of mover it was referred to a Select Committee. On 20 January 1930 R.W. Fulay presented the report of the Select Committee and proposed that the bill be considered by the Council. It was debated at length in the Council. Seth Mathuradas Kohota desired that the consideration of the bill be postponed. He argued that out of the opinions that were received several were against the bill. Secondly, the employers

327. Ibid., pp. 288-98.
would have recourse to dispensing with the services of
the female labourers prior to the actual time when
maternity benefit ought to be given to them. Thirdly,
he argued that the Central Provinces cannot be compared
with Bombay Presidency where such a law had been enacted;
Bombay was more advanced than the Central Provinces
and Berar. Fourthly, he asked for the postponement of
the consideration of the bill till the report of the
Royal Commission came out. On behalf of the government
Arthur Nelson supported Kohota's observations and
demanded postponement of the consideration of the bill.

M. Sharfuddin supported the bill. He regarded
the bill a beneficial measure. In supporting it he
observed that certain opinions against it should not make
it incumbent on the Council to postpone consideration
of the bill. He further said that Royal Commission on
labour might take two years in publishing its report and
possibly two years or more would be needed to examine it.
He said there was no reason to wait till the report came-
out. While supporting M. Sharfuddin's contentions
S.U. Katangale requested the Council to pass this bill into
law. At the end the bill, as amended by F.L. Grille,
which are as follows: 'In clause 13, sub-clause (2)(e)
delete the word "in" occurring at the commencement', was
put to vote and carried.

329. Ibid., pp. 101-104.
330. Ibid., 105-106
331. Ibid., 105
332. Ibid., 105
333. Ibid., p. 111.
Despite such achievements, regional interests and personal ambitions were so high among the nationalists from the Vidarbha and the Mahakoshal regions that the ties which held them together in the Nationalist Party were feeble and various groups clashed with each other inside and outside the legislature between 1927 and 1930. The nationalists' coalition was not destined to survive for long.

One aspect of this struggle was reflected in the allocation of revenue as determined by the Sim Committee in 1922. The Vidarbha representatives strongly resented the government's failure to reach the Sim ratio and to suspend the land settlement in the Vidarbha region.\textsuperscript{334} Consequently, they wanted to put pressure on the minister to deal with those issues to the satisfaction of the Vidarbha. Any effort in this respect, however, would curtail the flow of revenue from Vidarbha to Mahakoshal. But this could hardly be approved of by the members of the Mahakoshal region who came into the Council to protect their regional interests. The Hitavada rightly described: 'deeply conscious of many genuine grievances with regard to our treatment in the province. ...They begin with the concentration of all higher and technical studies at Nagpur to the detriment the educational growth of our part of the province. 

addition) all government activities are concentrated at Nagpur with the advantage that money and patronage are distributed in a much greater proportion in spheres round about and the northern districts are neglected and starved and thus have stunted growth'. These sentiments between the Nationalist of the two regions created tension between the ministers of both the regions and resulted in the collapse of the first ministry.

Under pressure from the Vidarbha leaders R.M. Deshmukh attempted to seek to advance the interests of Berar by securing its allotment of revenues under the Sim Formula. Rao resisted these efforts. The struggle to protect regional interests was evident in the failure of Rao and Deshmukh to observe the principle of joint responsibility in dealing with their portfolios. Both the ministers were dissatisfied with the portfolios they received under the reformed constitution. Rao received Education and other portfolios and Deshmukh received Local Self-Government and other portfolios. These two portfolios gave the minister in charge the power of making appointments and allocate grants, which he could use to favour one region at the expense of another. To prevent this Deshmukh suggested to Rao that they should jointly administer all portfolios - 'I shall look to work in Berar and Nagpur divisions; and you would look to the rest of the Central Provinces'. But they found that joint

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335. The Hitavada, 26 July 1928, p.3


responsibility was unworkable in practice. In April the *Hitavada* commented: 'the so called joint responsibility has become more or less a mere fiction. . . . There is apparently more frequent joint consultation between the reserved and transferred halves of the government than there is between the two ministers themselves'. 338 The fact was that joint responsibility could not work while both the regions were engaged in a selfish tug of war. As Minister for Public Works, Deshmukh ensured that the Vidarbha received 38 per cent of the divisible revenues of the province as determined by the Sim Committee in 1922. 339 This reduced the amount of money available for public works in the Mahakoshal region and created a resentment there. 340 As a result, Rao told Deshmukh that 'I am sorry, I cannot share the responsibility of your policy and administration in . . . Public Works Department'; the Mahakoshal members of the legislature demanded that Rao should take over the portfolios. 341

Another point of difference between the two ministers was their attitude towards the Indian Statutory Commission. Rao felt that the ministers should not associate themselves with the Commission. 342 According to

338. *The Hitavada*, 8 April 1928, p. 6
339. CPLC, Vol. II, 7 March 1927, p. 228
342. E. Raghavendra Rao Papers, E. Raghavendra Rao to B.S. Moonje, 5 August 1928, NML.
the Hitavada, the views of Deshmukh and B.G. Khaparde on Rao's proposal were equivocal. 343 Rao also believed that Deshmukh favoured making an approach to the Statutory Commission regarding Sim formula of the distribution of revenue over different regions of the province. 344

Differences between the Mahakoshal and the Vidarbha members of the united Nationalist Party further intensified when the responsivists from the Vidarbha region frequently attacked the budget grants under the care of the ministers concentrating their attention on those of Rao. 345

These bickerings intensified so much that by mid-August 1928 U.D. Pathak, an elected member from Mandla district, moved a vote of no-confidence in Deshmukh. 346 Deshmukh, however, forestalled the motion and resigned before the Council met for the discussion on it. The motion lapsed without discussion. 347 The following day Rao also tendered his resignation to the Governor intimating his readiness to assist him in facilitating the reconstruction of the ministry. 348 In this way,

343. The Hitavada, 20 May 1928, p.3.
346. CERC, Vol.III, 17 August 1928, pp.176-77
347. Ibid., 18 August 1928, p.222
348. E. Raghavendra Rao Papers, E. Raghavendra Rao to Sir Montague Butler, 19 August 1928 and 20 August 1928, NML.
the no-confidence motion against Rao brought forward on 21 August 1928 also lapsed automatically.\textsuperscript{349}

At the same time, Rao formed the Democratic Party which included his supporters in the Council, including Muslims, Non-Brahmins and Depressed classes members\textsuperscript{350} and awaited Butler's next move. On 25 August 1928 Butler invited Rao and B.G.Khaparde to discuss the formation of a ministry. Khaparde was unwilling to cooperate in forming a ministry with Rao, possibly because he feared a recurrence of the conflicts of the previous ministry. The Governor therefore invited Rao to form a ministry and to propose a colleague. Rao accepted Governor's offer and chose Tukaram Jairam Kedar, the Responsivist Non-Brahmin member from Nagpur as his colleague. Rao took the portfolios of Education, Local Self-Government and Public Works leaving Kedar the less important portfolios of Agriculture and Excise. On 25 August 1928 the second ministry assumed office.\textsuperscript{351}

\textsuperscript{349} CFLC, Vol.III, 21 August 1928, p. 271. Notices were received to bring forward a motion before the Council expressing no-confidence in Rao, Minister for Education, from B.G.Khaparde, V.V.Kalikar, R.S.Patil, R.A.Deshmukh, P.J. Kundalik, M.R.Kolhe, Y.M.Kale and G.D.Charde. All these members belonged to the Vidarbha region. There were also other notices for no-confidence motions disappointing the policy of Rao as a Minister for Education. There was another motion from N.R.Nagle disapproving the policy of Rao as a Minister for Excise.

\textsuperscript{350} Indian Annual Register, No.2, 18 August 1928, p.254.

\textsuperscript{351} Ibid, pp.263-64; The Hitavada, 13 September 1928, p.2.
The significance of the formation of a second ministry by Rao and his assuming the charge of important portfolios in the provincial politics was far reaching. On the one hand it enhanced the importance of the mahakoshal region in the life of the province and on the other the political fortunes of the Vidarbha region declined. The latter plunged into insecurity. Consequently, between 1928 and 1929, the Vidarbha leaders tried to restore their former position of prominence in the province. These moves consisted in the removal of the second ministry of Rao and formation of third ministry by Deshmukh.

During this period they bitterly attacked the constitutional provisions which prevented legislation affecting the Vidarbha from coming before the Council. The immediate occasion for this outburst was the government's acceptance of the Berar Land Revenue Code and its provision for the enhancement of land revenue in the Vidarbha. At the same time, the members from the Vidarbha continued their condemnation of the government for failing to implement the Sirm ratio and for countenancing the drain of revenue from the Vidarbha to the mahakoshal region.


353. The citavada. 10 March 1929, p.1; Ibid. 4 April 1929, p.1; see Cinc, Vol. II, 10 March 1929, Appendix E, p.941. In 1927-28, Vidarbha received 37.8 per cent of her share of the divisible revenues. In 1928-29, under the Deshmukh's influence Vidarbha received 38 per cent. After the resignation of Deshmukh the Vidarbha share of divisible revenues declined. In 1929-30 it was 35.2 per cent.
As a first step to remove their region's insecurity and to protect regional interests, the representatives of all the political parties in the Vidarbha region met at Akola on 28 October 1928 to hold an all-party Conference. The key motion passed by the conference urged the government to form a separate Legislative Council for the Vidarbha region. BG Khaparde went further in the direction by moving a resolution in the Council on 24 January 1929 calling for the separation of the Mahakoshal and the Vidarbha regions and creating of a separate Marathi speaking province. In addition to this, Khaparde made preparations for a test of strength between the new Democratic Party and the opposition. In doing so he won the support of three groups. These were the Responsivists of Nagpur, who were furious with Kedar for accepting a ministership without the 'knowledge and consent' of the party, the Swaraj Party, which was ready to upset the government and Muslim defectors from the Democratic Party to the Nationalist Party. He did so by promising 'to give one of them a ministry if they joined them in turning out openly Kedar and clandestinely Rao from office. Three or four Muslims are reported to have joined or are about to join the Nationalist Party on getting assurance that one of them will be nominated for ministership'.

354. The Hitavada, 6 November 1928, p.11
357. The Hitavada, 24 January, 1929, p.2
The combination of Responsivists, Swarajists and Muslims was sufficient for the removal of a ministry. On 17 January 1929, G. S. Gupta, the leading Swarajist member from Bury, moved certain amendments to the State Aid to Industries Bill, 1928 (XV of 1928). The amendments included the enlargement of the scope of the word 'industry' to include enterprises based on agriculture; the inclusion of livestock in the definition of the word machinery and the addition of spinning to the list of cottage industries. The Council accepted the amendments and, as a result, Kedar, the Minister for Industries resigned. 358 At the instance of Kedar votes were taken on three occasions. On one occasion Responsivists and Swarajists voted in favour of amendment but government officials, depressed classes members and three Muslim members out of seven, namely, Mirza Rahman Beg, Syed Yasin and M. M. A. Rizvi voted with the government. On the second and third occasions two Muslim members, Muhammad Sharfuddin and Majiduddin Ahmad voted in favour of amendments and two voted with the government. 359 Following the resignation of Kedar, Rao also resigned on 18 January 1929, sharing joint responsibility with him. 360 Thus, second ministry also collapsed. Butler accepted the resignations and

359. Ibid., pp. 41-49.
the same day he notified the council that he was
temporarily taking charge of the transferred subjects
and that he would attempt to form another ministry.\footnote{361}

Then the Vidarbha nationalists tried to form
a ministry. It was formed with great difficulty owing
to their personal jealousies.\footnote{362} In doing so they tried
to secure their former prominent position in the province.
B.G. Khaparde took the lead in that direction. His first
move was to get support from the former Muslim Democrats
by promising them a ministership. But his move was
opposed by Moonje who was of the opinion that they should
not combine with the Muslims for the formation of a
ministry. He regarded it as a sin to associate with
them for the purpose.\footnote{363} Many Non-Brahmin nationalists
also opposed Khaparde's inclusion in the ministry.
Other non-Brahmin nationalists supported Khaparde's
choice but opposed Dastmukh's nomination.\footnote{364} Matters
were further made difficult in March 1929 when four
Mahakoshal Democrats assured Khaparde that they would
support the Nationalist Party on the condition that
Khaparde gave them a ministership.\footnote{365} Thus, in March
1929, Khaparde had three groups - the responsiveists, the
Muslims and the Mahakoshal defectors - from which to
form a ministry. And in the same month he submitted the
names of Syed Hifazat Ali and K.P. Jande who were

\footnote{361} Ibid., 18 January 1929, p.65
\footnote{362} Home Pol, January 1929, No. 17/January 1929, FR,
First Half of the January 1929, p.31, NAI.
\footnote{363} Ibid.
\footnote{364} The Hitavada, 10 March 1929, p.1; Ibid., 24 March
1929, p.2.
\footnote{365} The Hitavada, 10 March 1929, p.1.
defectors from the Democratic Party to Butler as his nominees. But Butler rejected the proposal on the ground that his party had left the most important man, R.M. Deshmukh. 366 Then Khaparde again submitted a list of nominees including the names of P.C. Bose from Jabalpur and R.M. Deshmukh to the Governor and placed the onus of selecting the ministers on him. 367 From the list, the two men Butler chose were R.M. Deshmukh and the former Democrat P.C. Bose. On 1 August 1929 the third ministry took office with Deshmukh as Chief Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Bose as Minister of Education. 368 Thus, by securing the Chief Ministership for Deshmukh, the Vidarbha nationalists were successful in restoring their position of prominence in the province. They were again successful in maintaining the ministry in power, when the Swaraj Party moved the vote of no confidence in R.M. Deshmukh on 23 August 1929.

On 23 August 1929, N.B. Khare moved his motion of no confidence in R.M. Deshmukh which resolved that this Council has no confidence in the Hon'ble Minister, R.M. Deshmukh. 369 In support of his motion Khare said that Deshmukh's acceptance of office was unconstitutional, because no minister under the present reforms and the

366. The Hitavada, 14 March 1929, p. 2; Ibid., 31 March 1929, p. 2.
368. The Hitavada, 4 August 1929, p. 3
present Government of India Act, 1919, could do any good to the country. The mover challenged the Minister to show that the power he held was independent of the government's wishes. The Minister had no control over the purse and could take no action to better the condition of his countrymen. The Ministers did not, it was asserted, command the confidence of the majority of the elected members of the House. He was asked to resign immediately instead of being a mere tool in the hands of the bureaucracy. Khare also criticised the Responsive Co-operation Party for the change in their policy towards the Minister.370

Majiduddin Ahmed, a disappointed candidate for the ministry, supported the motion and asserted that Muslims joined the Nationalist Party on a definite assurance that one office would be given to a Muslim. His speech, which had communal overtones, was interrupted frequently and the President had to order the speaker to confine himself to the motion before the Council. Ahmed concluded with an appeal to the House to vote for the motion. In his opinion the ministry had failed to protect the interests of the minorities.371

Umesh Dutta Fathak, an Independent member, supported the Swarajist view and questioned Deshmukh's move in forming the new ministry. He complimented the Swarajists on having followed the Congress mandate.372

370. Ibid., pp. 120-124.
372. Ibid., pp. 134-38.
G.S. Gupta, leader of the Swaraj Party, said that the present ministers did not enjoy the confidence of the elected members. Hence they did not enjoy the confidence of several of the constituencies. They were in no way responsible to the people under the present dyarchy. 373

K.P. Vaidya, a Responsiveist leader, protested against certain remarks made during the discussion and assured the House that he would follow the mandate of his party. 374

B.G. Khaparde said that the Swarajists also helped the government by moving resolutions and asking questions and by working on committees as the Nationalist Party had done, thus indirectly helping in working out dyarchy. 375

T.J. Kedar, on behalf of the Democratic Party, made a statement saying that the Governor was not well advised in choosing one of the Ministers against whom a motion of no-confidence was tabled in the preceding year. Thirty seven members favoured the motion. It was asserted that the motion had been virtually passed against Deshmukh, Kedar personally and on behalf of Rao, assured the House that they would not accept office during the remaining term of the Council. 376

373. Ibid., pp. 138-40.
374. Ibid., pp. 140-41.
375. Ibid., pp. 141-45.
376. Ibid., p. 145.
R.M. Deshmukh made a statement that Ministers could take the initiative in several matters. He said that the charge that the interests of the minorities were not being safeguarded was groundless. He fought for Mohammedan nominations on several occasions. He had accepted office this time on the assumption that the present Ministry would be stable. He assured the House that he would abide by the decision of the Council.

G.P. Dick, nominated member to represent European and Anglo-Indian Community opposed the motion. He observed that there was no good in wrecking the Ministry. He did not understand the object of the motion.

R.W. Fuley said that the time would soon come when all obstructive tactics would disappear. He added that the constitution must be worked.

The mover, replying to the debate, criticised the Nationalist Party which he said, comprised various groups with no fixed principles.

At the instance of Khare the motion was put to vote. A division was demanded, with the result that 29 voted for the motion and 49 against. The motion was thus lost. Government officials and nominated members

377. Ibid., pp. 146-51
378. Ibid., p. 133
379. Ibid., 24 August 1929, p. 185.
380. Ibid., pp. 190-91
voted against the motion. The Swaraj Party and the Democratic Party solidly voted for the motion. The result of the voting was received with cheers. 381

On the same day N.B. Khare moved an adjournment motion on the ground that S.B. Tambe, the Home Member, and other government officers were bringing undue pressure to bear on the members in connection with the voting on the no-confidence motion against R.M. Deshmukh, Minister for Education. The motion was disallowed by the President on the ground that it was vague. 382

While all these conflicts were going on inside the legislature, the political parties were framing a proposed constitution for India under the chairmanship of Motilal Nehru. The report of the Nehru Committee was published in August 1928. The Congress sounded the first note of agitation against the government at its annual session held in Calcutta in December 1928. 383 The Congressmen warned the government that if the British government refused to accept the constitution, they would launch a campaign of Non-Violent Non-Co-operation against it. In spite of this warning the British Government showed no signs of accepting the proposed constitution and in the annual session of the Congress held in December 1929 at Lahore Jawaharlal Nehru declared in his presidential address

381. Ibid., pp.192-93
382. Ibid., p.182.
383. Indian Annual Register, 1928, p.269
that 'I feel that the step the Congress took some years ago to permit Congressmen to enter the Council was an inevitable step, and I am not prepared to say that some good has not resulted from it . . . But we have exhausted that good, and there is no middle course left today between the boycott and full co-operation. . . . Our workers are limited in number and can have no mass movement unless they concentrate on it and turn their back to the palatial Council chambers of our legislatures'.

In this session a momentous decision was taken through a solution moved by Gandhiji. The resolution stated that, because the British Government had refused to grant self-government and Dominion Status to India, Congressmen would aim at 'Purna Swaraj'. Thus, complete independence now became the national demand and the Congress was determined to reach the goal by a mass movement.

To achieve this goal the resolution directed the Congressmen to leave the Councils and to implement the constructive programme. It authorised the All India Congress Committee to launch a programme of civil disobedience.

The Congress Working Committee met on 2nd January 1930 to take steps accordingly. First of all, it took up the matter of the boycott of the Central and provincial legislatures, called upon its members to resign.

384. Ibid., No. 2, 1929, p. 295
385. Ibid., No. 3, 1929, p. 300.
386. Ibid., p. 300.
and boycott the elections due to be held in November 1930. It was also decided to urge the voters to non-violently compel those members of the legislatures to resign who did not respond to the call. It was further decided to celebrate 26 January as the Independence Day. The Congress Working Committee adopted a Declaration of Independence drafted by Gandhiji. It proclaimed:

'we hold it to be a crime against man and God to submit any longer to a rule that has caused this four-fold disaster to our country'.

Such a declaration was to be read out by Congress leaders to the people throughout India and they were required to pledge their full support to it.

In the Central Provinces and Berar, following the decision of the Lahore Congress, 13 Swarajist members of the provincial legislature resigned their seats in January 1930 in preparation for the civil disobedience. Seth Govinddas and M.S. Aney had resigned their seats from the Council of State and Legislative Assembly respectively in the same month. The Swarajist opposition block, thus disappeared from the legislature.

Between May and August 1930, many Responsivi

ists also resigned their membership from the Council to follow the example of Congress in launching a campaign of


civil disobedience. In doing so, the aim of the
Responsivists was to win public support, for their
party in the coming elections to the Council due to
be held in November 1930. The government also held the
same view and it was proved correct. Subsequently,
the Council was dissolved and fresh elections were held
during November 1930.

The fact was that the activities of the
small group of Swarajists in the legislature remained
a standing check on the activities of any ministry
formed by the Responsivists during 1927-30. They
conducted themselves as a disciplined group obeying
their national leaders.

Co-operators

The Responsivists, on the other hand, clashed
with each other in furtherance of their personal ambitions
and sectional interests and for preserving the dominance
of their region in forming a ministry. This resulted
in confusion and divisions which diminished their
effectiveness as a force working for the attainment of
self-government through the legislature. Such tendencies
could not be beneficial to the cause they were professing
to serve and to the country which was slowly pulling
itself out of the shock of the failure of the Non-Co-
operation Movement.

390. Political and Military Department, 302/CDM, 1930,
A Note on Civil Disobedience in the Central Provinces and Berar, p.6, MPS.
The activities of the depressed class and non-Brahmin members were confined only to securing the interests of their respective communities. They did not appear to be much interested in, or aware of, that national issues. To reduce their social and economic disabilities, they formed an alliance with the government and supported it almost on all the occasions in the legislature. But when their community's interests so dictated, they did not fail to oppose it and voted against the government to guard their sectional interests.

Co-operation with the government also characterised the Muslim community in the province. In the legislature they looked to the government for political support and in turn they adopted the loyalist attitude towards the government. Their sense of alienation deepened when the Swarajists forced the resignation of Seyed Hfazat Ali from the ministry in 1924. Like the depressed class members, they also supported the government on all occasions to safeguard their own community interests. And like the former, they did not hesitate to vote against the government. The conflict of their sectional interests with their declared policy of loyalty to the government was evident in the discussions on the budget proposals. They often complained that the government was not doing enough to promote education among their community and to remove its economic disabilities. They also charged
government with doing nothing to provide proper representation to their community in the government services on the basis of its proportion. They stressed the need to formulate some schemes to remove their grievances.