

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Parliamentary debate on budget-2nd sitting of 8th June 1948

1948 Journal Officiel-page 3289.

"...I would, on the occasion of the Budget Debate, like Mr. Paul REYNAUD who had invited us the other day, to lift the debate and try to present rapidly before the Assembly, the major problems of general policy of the French Union and to define the position of the Government of the Republic with regard to the French Establishments in India; the Indo-China and the black Africa. 'Firstly the French Establishments in India. You know of their geographic situation and the problems brought up by the happenings in that part of the world. On the other hand you cannot ignore that the population of these Establishments aspires for greater autonomy. The government has, since a year, tried to satisfy these aspirations in all possible measure, in following the principle that let our Establishments become five Franco-Hindu, towns masters of their administration, attached to France, but in a position to have a close cooperation with the neighbouring territories. The stages of this reform were marked principally by instituting a Council of Government elected in Pondicherry in August 1947, by one of my predecessors, and in the following November, by those of the free cities. On the diplomatic front, a Joint Declaration of 28th August 1947 had announced that the French and the Indian Governments would try to resolve amicably the problem, taking into account the interests of the populations as well as the bonds that unite them to India and to France. The first phase of these negotiations has just ended. After having made contact with the national Government of India, the French

Government is making the following declaration before the National Assembly:

DECLARATION OF THE GOVERNMENT ON THE SUBJECT OF FRENCH INDIA:

"United with France by a secular history, the populations of the French Establishments in India have been the first in the Indian Peninsula to be benefited by democratic institutions. Already since a century, they have been electing their local representatives themselves, and full citizenship having been available to them, and had also been nominating their representatives to the Assemblies of the Metropole. Thus they have had a long and rich experience of democratic regime. The reforms which have been introduced there or which have been progressively put into operation have aimed at entrusting the administration of these Establishments to their own elected representatives. One must take into account the fact that these different communities constitute distinct groupings, whose very special conditions must be taken note of. Integrated in the French Community since long, these Establishments, in fact, participate at the same time, under many connections, in the general activities of the regions of India in which these are respectively situated. Thus held with France and with India, these populations find themselves to be attracted towards one or the other and sometimes follow the variable tendency of their affinities and of their traditions. On the face of such an entirely original situation in the entire French Union, and convinced, that these establishments must, in any case constitute the links capable of coming closer to France and to the Indian Union, the French Government declares solemnly that it wants to leave the populations of these Establishments in India, the right of deciding their fate and the future statute. Their views will be ascertained by a free and sincere consultation, whose modalities will be finalized in consultation with the elected municipal councilors of each of these Establishments, and on a date which will be fixed as per their indications. The results of this consultation will hold good for each of these Establishments separately and not globally together for all of them. The French government hopes that from now onwards, peace and order will be maintained in these Establishments and that religious and racial equality and liberty of human beings would be fully

assured. This gives confidence to the populations in the sense that France has communicated the principles promulgated for the entire universe in the Declaration of Human Rights. It is understood that when this consultation takes place, and before, during and after it, there would not be any show of passion or of hate on the part of any shade of opinion against the others, and that no one should be troubled or pressurized in any form, either internally or externally, contrary to the spirit of a true democracy. It wants to bring to the friendly people and the Government of India, a fair and humane solution to this complex problem, in a general spirit of entente and of understanding."

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

2nd Sitting of 27th August 1954, Journal Official pages 4343 to 4357

FRENCH ESTABLISHMENTS IN INDIA DISCUSSION ON INTEPELLATIONS (EXTRACTS)

President: Today's program is to discuss Interpellations:

1. Of Mr. DRONNE on the events which are taking place in the French Establishments in India and on the measures that the government plans to take for tackling the situation;
2. Of Mr. SILVANDRE on the recent happenings in the French Establishments in India and the action which the government wants to take for arriving at a rapid solution to the problem in conformity with the democratic principles and safeguarding of our cultural and economic interests;
3. Of Mr. RAINGERARD for the policy that the government wants to follow for putting an end to the repeated aggressions against the French Establishments in India. The Committee for Organization of Debates had met on Friday the 13th August 1954, as per the provisions of Article 39 of the rules, and earmarked the following time for this debate, a total of two hours and fifteen minutes, not taking into account the ultimate suspensions (of sittings): Government - 20 minutes; Socialist Group - 16 minutes; Communist Group - 15 minutes; Popular Republican Movement Group-14 minutes; Socialist Republican Group-12 minutes; Radical Republican and Radical Socialist Group-12 minutes; Independent Republican Group 8-minutes; Independent Group for Republican and Socialist Action-6 minutes; Independent Peasant Group-5 minutes; Group of Democratic and Socialist Union of Resistance and Left independents 5 minutes; Peasant Group-4 minutes; Group of Overseas Independents-2 minutes; Others-1

minute. Duration of voting-15 minutes; Important Parliamentary Debates on India in French Parliament 29 This time includes all interventions in debate and compromises of the interruptions as well as the duration of the checking up at the initiative of a group.

Now I will give the floor to Mr. DRONNE, author of the first Interpellation.

Mr. Raymond DRONNE: Ladies and Gentlemen, we are about to lose our Establishments in India. Yanam was occupied by force by the Indian Union in the June last: in July we abandoned Mahe. The two Establishments which remain with us Pondicherry and Chandernagar, are threatened and live in anxiety. A few days back, an important daily evening newspaper of Paris published a series of articles under this title, "Alas!...evocateur..., The pitiable End of French Establishments in India."...Mahatma Gandhi preached calm and tolerance to his compatriots. He knew well of France having been the champion of liberty overseas and of equality of all men, whatever be the colour of their skins. Did he not declare in a lecture delivered in Pondicherry in 1953. "I am surprised and happy to state that the liberties for which we are fighting in India since the last so many years, have been accorded to you since long here in French India."

Alas, the message of tolerance, of human understanding and of friendship given by Mahatma Gandhi has not been heard by those, who, presently in the Government of India, proclaim themselves to be his disciples and his inheritors. The French government took the initiative of a conciliatory gesture of saluting the occasion of independence of India. On 15th August 1947, it remitted to the India Union what we called "the loges" or the miniscule enclaves where the French could do trade freely outside the purview of the British rules... Our Establishments in India do not have the commercial value for France now as they had in the 18th Century. Their rivals Madras and Bombay have become modern ports and large industrial and commercial cities and have displaced our old Counters, which have remained nearly the same for two centuries and are nothing but

remembrances without good economic value. Therefore we can conveniently make a gift of these hundred and odd square kilometers of territory which we still possess, had there not been above the geographic and economic considerations, a consideration of a higher value, a human consideration, the existence of 300,000 Franco-Indians, who are French since the last three centuries and who want to remain so. This is the crux of the problem. Morally France does not have the right to abandon the Frenchmen who want to remain French...

Mr: Fily-Dabo SISSOKO: You have said that Muslims of the French Establishments of India would run the risk of being maltreated by the Indians because of religious intolerance, but I would like to remark that the religions of India-Hinduism and Buddhism are so remarkable by their tolerance that there are 450 million followers throughout the world and Pakistan will not permit or accept the followers of other religions attack coreligionist Muslims. This is not possible.

Mr. Maurice SCHUMANN: And the massacres of 1947?

Mr. Fily-Dabo SISSOKO: You know that in Pondichery itself there exists an example of this tolerance, to which I have made a reference that is the Ashram of Shri Aurobindo Ghosh. You have there, in Pondichery itself a shining example. I would very much like to know if there exist similar organisations in the Catholic World?

Mr. Henti BERGASSE: You are saying India is right ?

Mr. Fily-Dabo SISSOKO: No I am not saying that India is right but one must tell the truth.

Mr. Raymond DRONNE: ...we have been told that we need India, but India also needs us. Let us not forget that she risks being put in the dock in the United Nations. We can convey it to the Government of New Delhi that we have, on our French territories, especially in La Reunion and in Madagascar, a large number of Indian settlers whom we treat well...In case bad faith persists on part of India, we should not hesitate to bring up the matter before the U.N.O...(Clapping from the benches on extreme right, right and some benches on the left)...

Mr. Maurice SCHUMANN: Very Well.

Mr. Raymond DRONNE: ...I would demand the French Government to resist and follow the example of the Portuguese Government which has forced India to respect her rights.

Mr. Jean SILVANDRE: I would reiterate the long standing view of the Socialist Party that the French Establishments in India should be reattached with India...

Mr. Michel RAINGERARD: ...The Committee for the Defence of Muslim Interests, presided over by Mr. Mohamed Ibrahim Maricar has expressed the sentiments, reaffirming, by a telegram dated the 17th August which my colleagues DRONNE and SILVANDRE have also received-that the Muslim population, unanimously and deeply attached to France, backs up the proposal of plebiscite mentioned in 1948, sending of a Parliamentary Commission and the defence of these territories under the auspices of NATO or SEATO...

Mr. Michel RAINGERARD: ...The Asians understand the texts and the situations in a way which is different from ours ...

Mr. Robert MANCEALLI: ...If these populations (of the Establishments) want their reattachment with the Indian Union, it is because they have suffered the sad experience of the colonial regime. In an article in "Le Monde" of 18th August, under the title of, "The Pitiabale End of the French Establishments in India", Mr. Georges GALLEAN has implicitly condemned the regime which the colonialists had installed there...Two phrases of this article clearly depict the situation left by the French colonialism after two centuries of exploitation: "The misery is great, the ignorance is total:" and a little later, "Nothing has progressed here since Dupleix" ...The history of negotiations of the previous years shows the responsibility of the successive governments who have pledged the honour of our country in a policy of force and of duplicity. On 8th June 1948, the governments of France and India declared, by an exchange of letters, to be in agreement for letting the populations of these Establishments decide about their future by a free referendum. In the organization and control of this referendum, the municipal councilors would play an essential role no doubt because of this reason, four months later, the Government of France decided in October 1948 to have fresh municipal elections in the Establishments. The job of organizing these was entrusted to one Mr. Goubert. What these elections were like is easy to imagine. Having become the electoral agent of the government, Goubert prepared for the elections in his own fashion. He took over the command of the Socialist Party-the only party that is tolerated. His men axe everywhere. They distribute, alternately, threats and alcohol. On the day of the election the same persons stop the advisors of the other lists to go to the polling booths... ...In so far as we, the communists are concerned, we sort out the problem of these Establishments by negotiations...

Mr. Robert BURON, Minister of Overseas France:

...Legally and politically France has the right to be in India and to stay there. But in 1948 she also affirmed that the future of these Establishments could be and should be sorted out by an expression of the popular will and by

means of negotiations with India. France, matured in democratic traditions, understood that she will not gain anything by resisting by force or passive resistance a movement having behind it the will of millions of Indians, if these populations of these Establishments placed under her sovereignty did not, categorically and without ambiguity, give their views in favour of maintaining a *statutes-quo*.

Mr. Maurice SCHUMANN: ...I would like to confirm, because it is not a revelation, that if the negotiations could be entered into, it is because the President of the Council, Mr. Joseph LANIEL had, in a letter addressed to the Indian Prime Minister Mr. Nehru, let him know that in case of any recourse to force, France reserved the right to take it up at the International level. It is because of this argument that negotiations became possible...

Minister for Overseas France; ...The problem is what definition to give to the expression "consent of the interested parties". This expression is not synonymous with referendum...

President: I have two "Orders of the Day" placed with a demand of urgency. The first, presented by Messers AUBRY, BAYLET and VALABREGNE is worded as follows:

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Takes note of the declarations of the government, Requests the government to follow the negotiations presently going on with the Indian Union on the subject of the future of the French Establishments in India. Requests it to ensure that the negotiations are conducted respecting the constitutional principles with the dual anxiety of assuring the safeguarding of the Frenchmen, and the protection of the general economic and cultural interests of our country. And ignoring all additions, Passes the "Order of the Day".

The Second "Order of the Day" placed by Messers DRONNE and RAINGERARD is as follows: Important Parliamentary Debates on India in French Parliament"

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY Gives a fraternal salute to the populations of the French Establishments in India, who have shown their attachment to France under the most difficult conditions, and gives them the assurance that their motherland will not abandon them:

Opposes itself to any transfer of a part of the French territory without referendum as required under paragraph 2 of Article 27 of the Constitution;

Invites the government:

1. To search a negotiated solution with the Union of India, maintaining the French Establishments in India in the French Republic, and taking into account the geographic, economic and human realities;

2. In case of failure of negotiations or renewal of pressures or aggression on the part of the Indian Union, to take the matter to the U.N.O., Ignoring all additions, Passes the "Order of the Day".

"I would invite Mr. AUBRY, the co-author of the first "Order of the Day" to take the floor...

Mr. Fily-Dabo SISSOKO: ...I know that there have been no riots in the French Establishments in India and for that I compliment warmly our compatriots who stay there. But how would you wish that in our five small French Establishments, which do not contain more than 200,000 inhabitants, one provokes riots in the face of a multitude of 350 million inhabitants determined to safeguard the sovereignty of their country? Indians are not amateurs of suicide. They will never create riots. On the other hand if no riot has taken place it is because the Indians are impervious to certain suggestions from the exterior, which, unfortunately effected France. This is

the deep cause of the riots. I return to the subject as it relates to India. I am speaking because you had tried to differentiate Islam from the other religions of India. The example has been badly chosen. In India there is a marvelous language called Sanskrit; there is a marvelous religion which proclaims that no religion is superior to the Truth, and that the rule of all the religions is the sovereign Truth; this religion is Buddhism, it is Taosim, it is Hinduism. And you know that in India in the past Emperor Ashoka had wanted to fuse the diverse religions by creating between the respective followers the bonds of solid fraternity and of perfect tolerance, and that, the Leibnitz and Boussuet had tried to do in the 17th century by the fusion of Catholic and Protestant Churches ...I would like to demand from my colleagues, and in a sentiment of mutual understanding, that each time we discuss the problems of the French Union, and each time that a question relating to the Overseas Territories is taken up, to remain objective...The voting takes place.

President: Here are the results of the voting:

Number of votes...586.

Absolute Majority...294.

For Adoption...371

Against Adoptions...215.

National Assembly has adopted.

Mr. Michel RAINGERARD: With the Communist votes!

Mr. Jean SILVANDRE: You have to often come into contact with them.

Mr. Michel RAINGERARD: Not on the national issues!

President: I now put the 1st Order to vote. (The order is put to a voice vote and is adopted.)