RAJYA SABHA

Friday, 22nd *March* 1957

The House met at eleven of the clock, MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

RESOLUTION REGARDING PRE SERVATION OF NAGARJUNKONDA TOWN

"This House is of opinion that In view of its association with early Buddhist history and the development of various schools of Buddhistic thought, Government should take all necessary steps to protect and preserve the town of Nagarjunkonda."

SHRI V. K. DHAGE (Bombay): Sir, I beg to move:

Before I begin my speech, I wish to make it clear that my object in moving the Resolution is not to abandon the project of Nagarjunsagar. My intention is that, while maintaining that project, the town, which is of historical importance, should be saved and, I understand, that there are possibilities of saving the town provided we make up our mind and feel that the expenditure to be incurred for the purpose is of no importance in this matter.

I should like to say that this town is of great importance not only from the point of view of Buddhistic history but also ~~boon~~ from the point of view of Hindu history. But before I do that, I would like to tell the Members of this House as to, who Nagarjuna was.

DR. P. C. MITRA (Bihar): Are the Government accepting it? It is a simple Resolution. If you don't want to accept it, reject it or stop the debate by accepting it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Wait till his speech ends.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: Nagarjuna was one of the great intellects of India not only from the point of view of Buddhistic philosophy but also as a contributor to the philosophic thought ■ whole world. In this connection, Sir, I m:ght quote a passage from the "Discovery of India" with regard to Nagarjuna and read out what Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has to say. That will probably clear my position so far as Nagarjuna is concerned.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA (Bihar): Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru is not an authority on philosophy.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: I am not quoting Pandit Nehru as a philosopher but I am quoting him as the author of the book, "Discovery of India" and I hope my friend has respect for him in that regard.

"Among a galaxy of men of remarkable intellect, Nagarjuna stands $_{n}$ as one of the greatest minds that India has produced. He lived during Kanishka's reign, about the beginning of the Christian era, and he was chiefly responsible for formulating the Mahayana doctrines. The power and daring of his thought are remarkable and he is not afraid of arriving at conclusions which to most people must have appeared as scandalous and shocking. With a ruthless logic he pursues his argument till it leads him to deny even what he believed in. Thought cannot know itself and cannot go outside itself or know another. There is no God apart from the universe, and no universe apart from God, and both are equally appearances. And so he goes on till there is nothing left, no distinction between truth and error, no possibility of understanding or of misunderstanding anything, for how can anyone misunderstand the unreal? Nothing is real: The world has only a phenomenal existence; it is just an ideal system of qualities and relations, in which we believe but which we cannot intelligibly

[Shri V. K. Dhage.] explain. Yet, behind all this experience he hints at something—the Absolute—which is beyond the capacity of our thinking, for in the very process of thought it becomes something relative."

You will see from this that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru holds this great philosopher as one of the great intellects of the world and Nagarjunkonda is the place where Nagarjuna came and stayed towards the later portion of his life. This town of Nagarjunkonda nourished for not less than four hundred years with several kings ruling in that place.

Now, Sir, as to what this Nagarjunkonda is, I shall quote from an article in *Triveni* of April 2, 1955, on Nagarjunkonda by one of the great archaeologists, I hope, Shri Ramachandra Rao, M.A., B.L. He has written as follows:

"Nagarjunikonda is not merely the treasure-trove of our national culture; it was the focus, in its time, of the pursuit of Buddhism of the entire arc of countries from Ceylon through Burma, the East Indian Archipelago, Thailand and Indo-China to China. The art of Nagarjunikonda was the farthest amplitude in India of the art of Amravati, and it was from Nagarjunikonda that this gloriously indigenous art sailed forth to inspire the national arts of East Asia. We are, therefore, as regards Nagarjunikonda, custodians of an international trust in very much the same way as towards Ajanta, Sanchi, Sarnath and Buddha Gaya."

He further states, Sir, as to what happened with the discoveries from Nagarj unkonda.

"At every fresh discovery, ever since the present phase of exploration which is hardly four months old (this article was written sometime during 1955), the theories of yesterday come toppling down. And, there is the vast chartered city of Vijayapuri, the capital of the regnant Ikshvaku dynasty, which has yet to be excavated, not to speak *ct* countless unchartered mounds, the debris of some seventeen hundred years, encrusting a buried civilisation."

Now, Sir, I do not feel that Nagarjunkonda is a place where only the Buddhist thought and the Buddhist movement prevailed. The town known as Vijayapuri flourished—or by some other name—before Nagarjuna came. Hindu kings of the Ikshvaku dynasty ruled there. I shall read this passage to be able to explain as to how the place was more or less inhabited not only by the Buddhists but also previous to them by the Hindus:

"The Ikshvakus, a dynasty of great antiquity (mentioned in the Rig and Atharva Vedas and the 'Satapatha Brahmana') claimed descent from the royal house of Kosala (Ayodhya) and probably originated from the region of the upper Indus or even further eastwards. The Puranic accounts make forty-eight out of the hundred apocryphal sons of Ikshvaku rulers of Dakshina (Deccan), and their southerly progress was doubtless influenced by the rising empire of Magadha, under Bimbisara, overshadowing Kosala. Although, of the two sons of Sri Rama, Lava remained to rule Uttara Kosala from Sravasti, trie other, Kusa, by the 'Padmapurana' moved southwards to establish Kusasthali-pura, named after him, at the foot of the Vindhyas and reigned over Dakshina Kosala. And, it was two Ikshvaku princes, Asmaka and Mulaka, who founded the two contiguous kingdoms, bearing their names, on the Godavari, corresponding to the Aurangabad and Nizama-bad districts of the Hyderabad State today.

"At any rate, the inscriptions of the Ikshvakus, discovered at Nagar junikonda, seem to suggest a south westerly direction in their migration to the Krishna valley;..... "

You will, therefore, notice, Sir, tnat "this town is not merely 1,700 or 2,000 years old but is older than 2,000 years and it is possible that we may probably be ahle to rescue out some of the monuments which will be able to give us[1] the history of India even previous to the Buddhist ages. Why "I am quoting this is to establish the fact that even before the Buddhistic period, there -were Hindu rulers there. I therejjeel, Sir, that this town is not only of Buddhist importance but also of importance from the Hindu point of view, and we might probably be able to retrieve many of the monuments in this place which will establish a connection not only with the Buddhistic thought but also with the pre-Buddhistic history.

I had been to this place and *1* have seen as to how the -valley is situated. It is suggested that it is impossible to do anything to save this town, and if anything is to be done, they feel that the expenditure involved would be -very heavy or, -what they call, prohibitive. My point is that if we "have to construct the Nagar-junsagar dam, the saving of this city must form part of the construction project of Nagarjunsagar, and that can be done. Not that it is impossible. There are two methods that have been proposed. One is a site •above the river at Domalgonda, or -whatever it is, where a dam can be 'constructed, but I shall not go into the engineering aspect about that place because I am not competent to say about it. Still I am told that this valley which is situated on the river T£rishna can be saved by the erection of walls of about 500 feet in length. I cannot tell you as to what the height -will be, I shall leave it to the expert, "but it is possible that the Dam can be constructed and at the same time the town can be saved by the erection of walls. Probably the expenditure will "be more than what has been estimated now for the Nagarjunsagar project. The containing of water in that reservoir of the valley of Nagarjunkonda will probably not be even 5 per cent. of the total water to be saved in Nagarjunsagar. This can probably be compensated by the erection of walls or raising the dam of Nagarjunsagar itself by a few feet high.

Now, Sir, with regard to the construction of the walls and the expenditure. I feel that the expenditure should not be taken into consideration when we have to save a town of such historical importance. The expenditure shoul'[1] -.–t be considered as too high in order to construct the walls. I am told, that the cost of the Dam is to be about Rs. 180 crores. Now by the construction of the walls probably Rs. 5 crores might be the extra expenditure. To save the town, I do not think that we can consider Rs. 5 crores out of Rs. 185 crores to be so high as to be impossible for us to provide for it.

Sir, I will not say as to what Lord Curzon thought of the preservation of the art, etc. The Archaeological Department itself is a monument to his memory for previously there was no such department in existence. Sir, when the question came up with regard to the expenditure to be incurred at that time, Lord Curzon said that "it would be too mean for us to consider the question of cost when we have to preserve the art of history."

Now, my resolution is nothing different from what the Government of India is at the moment committed to. The Government of India has issued various notifications from time to time under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act of 1904— in 1926, 1927 to 1938, and 1954. My Resolution does not say anything beyond what the Government of India is at the moment committed to. You will see, Sir, my Resolution speaks in terms of protection and preservation of the town as well as the monument. I shall read to you the preamble of the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act under which the Government of India has for many years issued various notifications. It is as follows: "Whereas it is expedient to provide for the preservation of ancient monu-

[Shri V.. K. Dhage.] ments, for the exercise of control over traffic in antiquities and over excavation in certain places, and for the protection and acquisition in certain cases of ancient monuments and of objects of archaeological, historical or artistic interest; It is hereby enacted as follows:—" Sir, notifications can only be issued under sections 3 and 2(1 of the Act. Section 3 refers to the preservation and protection of monuments. Section 20 refers to the preservation and protection of areas. Now the Government of India, having issued various notifications, are committed to the protection of it. If they go and destroy this town, they will be committing an act which will come under section 16 of the Act. Section 16 says that any person who destroys, removes, injures, alters, defaces or imperils a protected monument shall be punishable by imprisonment which may extend to three months.

DR. P. C. MITRA: Who will be punished?

DR. RAGHUBIR SINH (Madhya Pradesh): Does that apply to Government as well?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: It is given here "any person". I do not wish to enter into any argument over this. My friend is probably a lawyer. He would know that a 'person' is defined in a particular manner where Government is also included in 'person'.

DR. P. C. MITRA: But not the Krishna river.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: What I am trying to make out is that if any citizen were to go to the Supreme Court and ask the Supreme Court to issue an injunction against the Government to prevent anything like that being done, as is provided under section 16, I suppose that that person will be able to succeed against the Government unless the Government takes action in the matter. But I am not going to do that. What I am trying to point out is that the Government is morally and legally committed to the preservation and protection of this city and no expenditure should be considered too high for the purpose of erecting the walls to prevent the water from going into the valley and destroying this town.

DR. P. C. MITRA: Here it is not the person but the Krishna river-which is destroying.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: There is another point which must not be lost sight of, and that is, if we were to preserve this town and the monuments and the other stupas and viharas that are to be excavated from there, we should be attracting a lot of tourist traffic not only from India but also from abroad. This will become a seat, of pilgrimage for various Buddhists and people of other nationalities interested in archaeology, and that would′ be a great source of income to us.

Sir, I require five or ten minutes-more.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can have.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: Therefore, if the expenditure is to be incurred for the protection of this city on the erection of the walls, the expenditure-should be treated as an investment which will bring income to us. Besides, we shall not have to displease the Buddhist world by showing that we were the persons who were responsible for demolishing or destroying this town which was in existence 1,700-years ago.

I am told, Sir, that for the purpose of providing benefit to the modern generation, from a utilitarian point of view, we should not look at the protection of these monuments at all. I am afraid such a utilitarian view will probably be striking at the root af all our civilisation. Civilisation and culture is not built piecemeal. It is built in the course of ages, and it is from the past that our culture can find foundation to sustain itself. Now,, Sir, if we destroy this town, I feel that we shall have marked a *kalank* ort-our face that soon after independence

we were so short-sighted that we were] not able to save this city at all I | therefore feel, Sir, that the Government should take into consideration these aspects of moral, legal and economic nature before they think of demolishing the town.

With regard to the expenditure to be incurred and the difficulties that they have to face, Sir, I am reminded of a Persian couplet which says:

'मर्द बायद कि हरासां न शवद
मुश्किले नेस्त कि आसां न शवद ।"

Man should never get disheartened because there are difficulties, for there is no such difficulty which cannot . become easy.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Resolution *zncv*-■ed:

"This House is of opinion that in view of its association with early Buddhist history and the development of various schools of Buddhistic thought, Government should take all necessary steps to protect and preserve the town of Nagarjun-korsda."

DR. SHRIMATI SEETA PARMANAND adhya Pradesh): Sir, I move:

"That for the original Resolution, the following be substituted, name-ly:-

'This House is of opinion that Government should appoint a Committee consisting of ten Members of Parliament and two others being persons possessing special knowledge of the subject to enquire into and report on measures to protect and preserve the town of Nagarjunkonda in view of its association with early Buddhist history and the development of various schools of Buddhistic thought.' "

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Resolution and the amendment are before the House.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND (Andhra Pradesh): Mr. Chairman, the hon. the mover of the Resolution has placed very important facts before you. But may I point out to you, Sir, that the prosperity of Andhra Pradesh very largely depends upon the better utilisation of the river Krishna? That is one of the biggest rivers of Andhra Pradesh, and until and unless we can find any alternative methods or an alternative site for this Dam, we must proceed with the construction and completion of this project. It is a question of divided loyalty. On the one side, we have this problem of the preservation of archaeological monuments, and on the other side is the question of the progress and the economic advancement of Andhra Pradesh, and where there is a question of divided loyalty, I think the revised Resolution is a very proper one, because it suggests that a committee of the Members of Parliament be appointed to consider this question from all aspects. This Resolution does not say that we should not proceed further with the construction of the Dam, and it also does riot say that we should select only that very site. Some time back, Sir, there was a conference of engineers which went into this question. The report of those engineers was that the site of the Dam cannot be changed. The mover of the Resolution has suggested a new method. Of course, it was also considered by the engineers that the Dam should be constructed at the same site, but that area which was formerly occupied by Nagarjunkonda should be protected by a high wall, such a high wall that the waters do not go into it. Whether that is possible from the engineering point of view, whether the cost will not be prohibitive, whether it will be practicable, and whether there will be no seepage of water into that area, all these are very difficult engineering questions, and until and unless it is looked at from an engineering point of view, I do not think any useful purpose will be served by asserting or the mover asserting that it can be done, because it is a highly technical thing. But keeping in view the point that the prosperity of

[Shri Kishen Chand.]

Andhra Pradesh should not be jeopar dised, I should like to know from the Government—this question of archaeological monuments was known for the last 30 or 40 years—as to what they have done so far.

Sir, there are two types of monuments. There are some archaeological monuments which can be preserved at the same site, and there are others which can be moved away and reconstructed. It is obvious that a monument like Taj Mahal cannot be shifted, cannot be broken into pieces and preserved in museums, but in the case of Nagarjunkonda, it is a ruined and an old city which has got buried and which has to be excavated. Is it possible, Sir, that by working on it expeditiously the excavation part will be completed and the parts to be preserved can be removed from the site and only a barren area left over? If only a barren area is left over, I do not attach much sentimental value to that spot. If all the articles of importance and of historical reference are removed from that site and placed in proper museums, I suppose the Nagar-junsagar Dam may continue at the very same site. But if we cannot remove it from that site and that particular site has to be preserved, then according to the new Resolution, a committee may be appointed which may HO into this question and carefully examine whether it is practical or not. Of course, in this committee there must be some experts, because a committee merely consisting of Members of Parliament—all non-technicians—just going into this question and giving its opinion on sentimental basis will not be sufficient and will not be proper. Therefore there is a place for technical experts also in the proposed committee. I wholeheartedly support the appointment of a committee by Parliament with this proviso that in no case should the prosperity of Andhra Pradesh be affected by it. If the question of prosperity comes in, in that case I will certainly vote for the continuance of the Nagarjun-sagar Dam at the presert site.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA: Mr. Chairman, I am afraid that I am not *ins* agreement with the Resolution or the amendment as they are worded. I entirely agree with the mover of the Resolution that Nagarjunkonda is a city of great archaeological and historical importance, great and sacred associations. It is a city or it is a: place where one of the most important trends of Buddhism was developed. It is an area where the descendants of the- great Ikshvaku Dynasty,, from which the great hero Rama came, ruled. It is a city or a place where in pre-historical times—our women Members would be pleased *to* know—the vestiges of matriarchal' society were found and Ikshvakus practised limited matriarchy over that territory. Mr. Chairman, its greatness, is not denied. It is not only sacred to Buddhists, but it is sacred to Hindus also. It is specially dear to me because of my associations with Buddhism. You know, Mr. Chairman, that I come from an area where Buddhism had its origin and flourished. I have been associated for a large number of years with Buddhistic institw-tions including that institution which is to the Buddhists of the world what Mecca is to the Muslims and Rome to> the Roman Christians, I mean the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya. *I* come, Mr. Chairman, from a village whose existence is traced back to the period -when Nalanda University flourished in Bihar. Slabs have bnern found in the Nalanda University which associate my village with the past, with that institution of the past Buddhism, though in the formal sense-is supposed to be dead, yet it still lives; in the thoughts and beliefs of the people of my region; nay, as a matter of fact, in the thoughts and beliefs of the people of India as a whole. My love for Buddhism is as great as, if not greater than, the love that the mover has for Buddhism. All the same, the issue is not whether the site should be preserved or destroyed. The point. is, is it possible physically to preserve it intact? Can any alternative scheme be devised in such a way that Nagarjunkonda remains all the same when the dam is constructed? Associated

with this is another issue, subsidiary issue, whether it is possible to save it at a cost which is not prohibitive, which is not fantastic. I am aware, Mr. Chairman, that this matter was thoroughly gone into by the engineers of the Central Water and Power Commission, and after going into this matter thoroughly, they came to the conclusion that it was not possible to save it physically and that, if at all it could be done, the cost would be prohibitive. Often, the choice is not between good and evil, but between good and greater good, between evil and lesser evil. We choose the greater good and we choose the lesser evil. If it is possible to save it and save it at a cost which is not prohibitive, it should be saved, but if that is not possible, I think that there is no reason why on sentimental grounds we should not allow this sacred area to be submerged, submerged in the interests of the people. India is a land of hoary antiquity; it has the oldest civilisation, the oldest culture, in the world. At every sq. mile, at every second sq. mile and at every third sq. mile in this great land of ours, we come across ancient monuments, some known and some unknown. If for feelings which have a basis only in our sentiments and not in our reason, we protect all of them, I am afraid we will have to protect at least one-third of the area of India. I therefore feel that, if it is necessary in the interests of the people of Andhra that a dam should be built and Nagarjunkonda submerged, let it be submerged. Let us take care of the living, and the dead shall be taken care of. In this connection, Mr. Chairman, I am reminded of the initial message that the Buddha, g*U*_ to his disciples. The Buddha, after his Enlightenment trekked to *Rishipa-than Mrigerdava* which is now known as Sarnath. There he gave this message to his five old associates who were his first disciples:

''लश्क भिख्खवे बहुजन-हिताय, बहुजन सुखाय''

"Oh, you Bikkus, spread yourself to the four corners of the world, go into the four corners of the world for the good of many, for the pleasure of many."

That was the essence of the teaching of the Buddha. That was the essence of all that Buddhism enjoins on us to practise. This is the standpoint from which we should judge any of our actions: The greatest good of the greatest number. The greatest good of the greatest number, numbers that are living, and not numbers that are dead. If the interests of the living demand that it should be submerged, it has to be submerged. I do not think that civilisation or culture will perish simply because certain ancient monuments are remaining unexcavated there. Indian civilisation did not perish when the whole city of Dwarka went down into the sea. Indian civilisation or for the matter of that Tamil civilisation did not perish when the seat of ancient Tamil culture and Tamil learning went down into the sea. Tamil culture remains; Indian culture remains and Indian civilisation remains. I therefore feel that the Resolution and the amendment as they are worded should not be accepted. I could very well agree to a proposition that a Committee should be set up to again go into the question whether it is possible to physically save the site at all, whether it is possible to save it at a cost which is not prohibitive. If these were the terms of reference of that Committee, I would be agreeable to supporting the resolution, but I am afraid I cannot extend my support to the resolution or the amendment as worded.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY (Mysore): Mr. Chairman, it is with very great reluctance that I stand to oppose the Resolution and the amendment to the Resolution. The antiquity of the place I do not dispute. Nobody disputes its importance also. I am certain that the Government was anxious, as the mover of the Resolution is, to preserve and maintain a place of such architectural and historical interest. But we have to view it from the point of view of the reason why the hon. the mover of the Resolu-

[Shri M. Govinda Reddy.] tion wants to save the town from being submerged. I do not think he to say that people should go and live in the town; that is not possible because it is buried. The reason wants the site to be that the historical remains that are found in the place should be available there for people to see and appreciate. Well, the Government after long consideration have taken this point of view and have tried to all the remains that are found there. Where excavation has 'one, we have already excavated number of objects and their l hey should build a >car the site on a hillock and remains there for people to see. So, the purpose which my hon. friend has in view in moving served. When that purpose is served, what object is iving the town, I cannot understand. The hon. the mover that the five crores of rupees which have already been spent in icting the Dam should not be considered as important in relation to the over-ell cost of the Dam, if it could be found possible to avoid the place from being submerged. But what would people outside think of us? To waste Rs. 5 crores just to ve a place no doubt of ancient historical importance from being submerged, R:;. 5 crores which means so much social welfare to the people, which means so much of necessaries like food and clothing! What immense good these Rs. 5 crores would do for the people! That five crores should be thought as a trifle to be wasted just for the sake of preserving a town, a buried place, which, apart from its remains which could be removed, is of no precious value, I don't see. The Government have really failed now after two years, to find out an alternative site. The best '-•rains have attended to this aspect. After all laymen are not able to judge a question of engineering importance. It Is the engineers that should be able to say whether that place could be saved by any means and with all the earnestness and their technical skill at their command, they have conducted a wide survey of the place and they not been able to find another site for building the Dam without inundating this town. When that is so, I submit with all respect to the hon. mover and to this House that we must agree with the technical opinion. A few Members of Parliament, appointed as a Committee, will not be able to bring to bear on this subject any extra skill or wisdom than the engineers who have been specialists. So I don't think it would be advisable and I don't think it would be common-sense to ask any Members of this House or anybody else or any people from the public to go into this question and examine a decision which has already been thoroughly scrutinised by technical experts and engineers.

To say that by inundal place we would be destroying our civilisa tion is far-fetched. The hon. previ ous speaker has submitted to this House that any number of inunda tions will not destroy our civilisation. Our civilisation has thrived for thousand:? of years and it will conti nue to thrive. We have to consider that we have to preserve such things only after we have enough bread to eat and after we have secured all our necessities for physical existence. Here no purpose is achieved by sav ing a town which is being inundated apart from just preserving it for people to come and see. The hon. mover suggested that a wall could be built round the place.....

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: Not round it. On the opening to the valley.

SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY: That aspect, I learn, has also been consi dered by the experts who have gone into this question. If it should be preserved as he suggests, one will have to go through the water, sail through it in order to reach the place. Even.....

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: The hon. Member has not seen the site.

. SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY: I have not seen it. I did not profess to have seen it.

(Interruption.)

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: I went by land and so did the Prime Minister.

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SHRI M. GOVINDA REDDY: ..... nor do I know the geography of it, I confess. But I don't suppose the particular place could be preserved so as to make it accessible to people who want to visit the place without trouble. Whatever it is, no purpose is served in saving that town. All that we want is that those historical remains should be preserved and whatever objects are found should be removed from the site and that everything would be done by the Government to preserve them. Government are earnestly devoting their attention to it. I don't see any use in appointing a Committee. I don't think any of us could be a better judge than the engineers in this respect. I would only appeal to the Government to do their utmost to excavate the entire area and remove all possible objects that could be of any interest to us.

Therefore I would request the hon. mover to withdraw this Resolution since his object of making those remains preserved is served.

With these few words, I express myself against the Resolution before the House.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU) : Mr. Chairman, I venture to speak on this Resolution for two reasons. One is because I have been deeply interested in this matter ever since its inception and secondly because I have visited the place and spent some time there. When the idea of this project was first broached, the immediate thought that came to me was that this ancient site of Nagarjun-konda should be preserved and it was with that strong urge that I approached this question and discussed it with all kinds of people connected with this matter in the Ministries here, the «ngineers and ethers. I went there and discussed it there. I discussed it with the Archaeological Department also. I came to the conclusion that one could not give up this major scheme which would bring relief to a very large number of persons even for this important consideration of preserving the site. Secondly, the site itself, unless you consider the site as a covered up place which should not be uncovered, was not going to be preserved by leaving it there and digging it up. It was going to pieces. What ever had been uncovered was deteriorating and disintegrating with great rapidity as it always does. The question therefore was of leaving it as a historical site with hardly any of the memorials visible or appearing. The moment you make them visible anywhere, they deteriorate, they disintegrate, unless of course you build them up afresh. But the major consideration certainly was that one could not spcriflce the interests of vast numbers of people round about for this purpose. Then we examined what could be done about it and I wanted and I suggested not only tha.t the special articles should be removed from there and put in a museum—that was not enough—I suggested that these ancient structures should be bodily lifted and rebuilt nearby. Now the site is such that when this big lake comes into being, it will be a huge lake, there i^ a hill which becomes an island and the hill has got a fiat area at the top. So a suggestion was made that this flat area should be converted into some kind of a park with all these excavated buildings being rebuilt there such as could be—one cannot do it with everything—plus a museum there, which really would probably nreserve these places much better than merely leaving tbem where they are. In fact they will be built in a part of the site, you might say. It is part of the site which remains above the water. We told the Archaeological rv-nartrnpnt tf go ahe^d with this. It was a very difficult task because these archaeological excavations have to be i 'lone with extreme care by experts. In fact we made special provisions for engaging new staff, engaging young people who may be studying archaeo-

(Shri Jawaharlal Nehru.) logy in the Universities to go and work there and help in that and we made it clear that whatever extra expenditure was involved in this will be met. We gave them almost a free and open cheque for that because we attach so much importance to preserving these monuments. There really was no other possible way out of it. First of all, it seems to me in the balance, however much you might have liked to preserve them, you could not go back on this huge scheme, giving benefit to vast numbers of people, merely to maintain something which is likely to disintegrate anyhow, and even from the point of view of preservation, this was a better way of preserving them, that is to say, first of all, taking the principal structure there which was disintegrating and removing it bodily, or rather removing it bit by bit, and reconstructing it in a part of the site itself which would be above the water level, and having a museum and a part there. That would really become a place, if you like, for some people, those who think that way, a place of pilgrimage, and for others a great site of historical and cultural interest. It has a tradition. I went there last year. It was very difficult at that moment, to see much there. Of course, they will be dug up, but the *moment* they are dug up, they go to pieces, they disintegrate. There is, for instance, a small amphitheatre, a small one, which is rather uuique. I do not think there is any such amphitheatre existing anywhere, not in India certainly. I do not know what is going to happen. It is disintegrating. The moment it is reopened it disintegrates. We cannot do much except that after taking every possible care to preserve such of those structures by removing them, if you can do so, and having a museum and paying every attention to their preservation and proper upkeep. There is nothing more to be done about it.

There is a proposal, an amendment to this Resolution, about a committee jgoing into it. What exactly was the committee to do? Hon. Members of this House, of course, are not only welcome to go there, we would invite them to go there and elsewhere also. There is no difficulty about their going there, about their being shown round there by the people in charge, and if they have any suggestions to make, we shall welcome those suggestions. But as for the appointment of a committee, is that committee supposed to consider whether this scheme is to go on or not? I submit that would be a very major decision and an unusual decision to make at any time, more especially at this time when the scheme has gone pretty far, archaeologically and in the engineering way. Vast sums of money have been spent, after paying the fullest attention to this very aspect that has been raised here.

PROF. HUMAYUN KABIR (West Bengal): May I make one suggestion to the Prime Minister at this stage?

There is, I believe, a committee already appointed which is looking into the question of preservation of these things and if one or two Members of Parliament of this House and of the other House can be associated with that committee, it would be useful. This could be done by an executive order of Government.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: That might be possible, of course. It is quite possible to add some people to that committee. They had formed a committee,—I am not quite sure—and we made the Governor of Andhra the chairman of that committee. Of course, we wanted to give it considerable importance and we wanted the Governor himself to pay attention to its preservation. I am told the present committee is called a coordination committee. It is coordination between the engineering side and the archaeological side. The present committee consists of the Governor of Andhra Pradesh as chairman, the Chief Minister of Andhra as member, the Administrator, Nagarjunsagar Project as mernber, Superintendent, Nagarjunkonda, Excavation Branch,.

Department of Archaeology, Guntur, as member-secretary. I think it will certainly be possible for some additions to be made to this Committee, from this House and the other House and people who are interested can be in this committee. But it should be clearly understood that we cannot go back on this project which has gone so far. That is neither feasible nor desirable.

The appointment of an *ad hoc* committee would be very very unusual and much depends on what terms of referance you give it. If they give a report to go back on all that is done, that would produce a most embarrassing situation. First of all, as Prof. Humayun Kabir has suggested, we shall gladly add to this committee persons who are interested, from this House and the other House. Secondly it does not require the appointment of a special committee. Hon. Members can always go there, individually or in a group, and if they inform us before of their going, arrangements will be made there for them to be shown round and explained everything. I submit, Sir, that both these, this Resolution and this amendment, should not be pressed.

DR. RAGHUBIR SINH: Mr. Chairman, it is rather presumptuous for me to say anything after what the hon. the Prime Minister has said. But I have taken this chance to address the House at this moment more by way of explanation than any thing else. I had known it very well personally also that the Prime Minister was taking a personal interest in this matter. I also knew from what little association sometimes I had with the archaeological department that the hon. the Prime Minister had laid down a programme and a time-table and he had been asking for weekly reports also, if I am not wrong, about the progress of the work and how speedily the works are going on. But the only reason why some of us had sponsored or rather supported this Resolution for an *ad hoc* committee was that we wanted that the Members of the two Houses of Parliament should be taken into confidence and they should be told what exactly was happening in this respect.

Sir, this site of Nagarjunsagar, this city of Nagarjunkonda is important, not only for historical and antiquarian reasons, but it has great international importance as well. It was from this city that for the first time the missionaries or rather the persons who carried the cultural message of India to the Far East and to the Indonesian archipelago, went. It was from this place that the message of Buddha went from this land to those distant lands. Therefore, it has got its own importance, and what we were anxious was that we should know that everything -that possible under the present circumstances was being done to preserve and to maintain all that could be preserved. I know also that possibly many of the decisions taken might have been different if this site had been explored much earlier and the full importance of this site had been known to the Archaeological Department. In that case the decisions might have been different. We know it very well that the whole town was submerged or was buried deep because of the flood and the high tide in the Krishna River, at some periods, when there was such **a** flood in that river, the entire city must have been devastated. This is all that we can now say about it. Therefore, we were keen to see that everything possible should be preserved. We were not at all anxious that the whole project should be stopped. We were not anxious to press that some major changes in the project should be made. We only wanted to see how best things could be preserved and to see that all efforts were made to preserve them.

Therefore, all I have to say at this moment is that after what the hon. Prime Minister has said, it is not our desire to press for this amendment.

Thank you.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (DR. K. L. SHRIMALI).-

[Dr. K. L. Shrimali..] Mr. Chairman, I do not think I havt: to add anything to what the Prime Minister has said about this Resolution. It was a very painful decision for the Government to take, to construct this project at this place as much of ouv civilization has been woven round this place. At the same time, Government could not ignore the basic interests of the life of our people. We necessarily have to look to our past, but we have also to look to the future needs of our people. It was under these conditions that the Government had to take thij decision and I think it is the right decision which the Government have taken.

The Prime Minister has already explained that no purpose would be served either by accepting this Resolution or by appointing this committee as suggested in the amendment. I, therefore, regret that I cannot accept the Resolution or the amendment before the House. I would like to assure the House that by the end of 1959 or by April 1960, when the project begins to operate, all the important relics will be removed to the neighbouring hill, and we will prepare replicas of those monuments which cannot be removed and place them in the museum. That is all that I can say at this moment.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: After the speech of the Prime Minister, Sir, it is rather difficult for me to reply to the debate, but I must say respectfully that I am not satisfied with the suggestion that the Prime Minister has made as an alternative to the amendment that has been moved in the House. He has said that the Member? of Parliament could go and visit the place and make certain suggestions. Now I am not so very strict as to say that the amendment or the Resolution should be accepted. What I am very keen about is that the preservation of the town should be looked into rather very dexterously. 11 is possible, and "the Prime Minister has stated, that the matter has been gone into. My information is—*!* dLi not know if I can put it that way—that the matter ha.-; not been gone into very dexterous'y and the engineers were rather not working in co-operation with the Archaeological Department at th< beginning stages and they came to the ielusion that neither an alternative site could be found nor any othet thing could be done to preserve the town. My main proposition is—I am not asking the future generation to suffer; you might have noticed in my speech, Sir, that i did not ask tht future generation to suffer. Don t abandon the Nagarjunsagar Dam, 1 also said. I merely emphasised that there wa- the possibility of preserving the town by constructing a certain wall and in the coistruction of that wall expenditure should not bethought of. That was my propositi™, and I said that probably a few crores of rupees were necessary to be ab;c to protect that town. To that I don't know whether the Prime Minister -..- e-eable or disagreeable because in his speech he did not deal with that point.

SFRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: That suggestion seems to be absolutely impossible of accomplishment. I cannot understand how in the middle of a lake to preserve the town a 500 feet wide wall could be constructed. *i* just cannot conceive of it.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: I have also made enquiries from the people concerned in this matter and I am told that it is possible to construct a wall for the purpose. I do hot want to dispute what the hon. the Prime Minister has to say, but what I am saying also is based on certain authority, namely, that we can construct a wall in the middle of the lake by pushing off the lake on one side and keeping the town on the other. Not only that. I have visited the site myself and I feel that it seems to be feasible. Though of course it means construction of a wall, it may probably mean another dam—I might probably be able to concede that point. But my point is no expenditure should be considered to be too big in order to preserve the town, and the town is

a very ancient and historically important one. Now that is the point and I think I should not insist upon my Resolution being accepted but I would want the Prime Minister to say that if the Government of India invites a Parliamentary Committee and makes them visit the place and see the site, etc. and if they make certain recommendations they would give due consideration to them. The point is as to whether or not the construction of the wall can take place irrespective of the consideration as to how high the cost will be, and if the Government will pay consideration to it, I will have no objection in withdrawing my Resolution.

Thank you, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now I shall put the amendment first.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: Sir, may I have the Prime Minister to say something with regard to the committee?

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no committee. All that the Prime Minister said was that to that co-ordination committee presided over by the Andhra Governor some representatives of this House and the other House might be added. *(Turning to the Prime Minister)* That is all that you said?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: What I said was two things. One was that in that co-ordinating committee Members of this House and the other House can be added. Naturally in adding them to the existing number the addition should be as small as possible and it is not convenient if such committees be big; as it is, it is a committee of four, I think. I would suggest that a Member of this House, and a Member of the other House be added. Apart from that, I said, I merely reminded the House, that it is completely easy for hon. Members of this House to visit the place and, if I may say so with all respect, it does not cost them anything because they can travel free, and we will arrange with the people there for any group of hon. Members or any single hon. Member to be shown round the place and they can discuss the matter with them. It does not require the appointment of a formal committee to consider all kinds of engineering and other problems. We cannot accept the particular thing that the hon. Member has referred; to, about some walls being constructed. It has been considered by engineers, etc. and considered as not at all feasible.

These two things I submitted, Sir.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: Not feasible from the financial point of view or the engineering point of view?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL, NEHRU: Purely engineering; the financial part did not come in. The engineers said that that was not feasible. So far as I remember the financial part was not considered—might have been, possibly, I don't know. Of course if you are prepared to spend enormous sums you can even create a new world; it depends on the sum completely.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I now put the amendment first.

The question is:

"That for the original Resolution, the following be substituted, namely:-

> 'This House is of opinion that Government should appoint a Committee.consisting of ten Members of Parliament and two others being persons possessing special knowledge of the subject to enquire into and report on measures to protect and preserve the town of Nagarjunkonda in view of its association with early Buddhist history and the development of various schools of Buddhistic thought.' "

The motion was negatived.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now comes the original Resolution.

Ths question is:

"This House is of opinion that in view of its association with early JBuddhist history and the development of various schools of Buddhistic thought, Government should ■stake au necessary steps to protect and preserve the town of Nagarjunkonda."

The motion was negatived.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no other business. We stand adjourned till 11 O'clock on Monday.

The House then adjourned at seven minutes past twelve of the clock till eleven of the clock on Monday, the 25th March 1957.