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BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNCIL

THE summer sessions of the Bengal Legislative Council concluded on April 1. The day was mainly devoted to questions and answers. Among other business transacted were the formal introduction of Bengal Municipal Bill, 1932 and the passing of the Bengal Rhinoceros Protection Bill.

APRIL 1, 1932.

BENGAL RHINOCEROS PROTECTION BILL

Discussions were resumed on the Bengal Rhinoceros Protection Bill, introduced on March 31, 1932 by the Hon'ble Sir A. K. Ghuznavi to provide for the preservation of wild rhinoceros which was fast getting extinct due to organised poaching. A number of amendments were moved and rejected or agreed to. The Bill thus amended was put to vote and passed.

BENGAL MUNICIPAL BILL, 1932

The Hon. Mr. B. P. Singh Roy introduced the Bengal Municipal Bill, 1932, which aimed at consolidating and amending the law relating to municipalities in this province.

In introducing the Bill, the Hon. Minister said that, if passed into law, it would introduce important and salutary changes in the municipal administration of this province, would democratise the constitution and would be the first experiment in extended franchise. "It will," he continued, "place powers of additional taxation in the hands of the representatives of the ratepayers to enable them to undertake schemes of town improvement and schemes conducive to the health and happiness of the people.

"If proper use is made of this measure, with imagination, foresight and tact, it may be reasonably hoped that in 25 years' time our towns instead of being conglomerations of unhealthy houses built with utter disregard of hygienic rules, served with dusty narrow roads and instead of being the dumping grounds of all nuisances as they are at present—will be transformed into beautiful urban areas with well-planned houses, broad, clean and well-lighted streets, with an abundant supply of filtered water and nice open spaces, where healthy children will play and develop as able and useful citizens."

REASONS FOR INTRODUCING THE BILL

It was stated that although the existing Act, which had been in force for nearly 50 years, was still wide enough in its scope to meet the needs of many towns in Bengal, it naturally failed to reflect or provide for several new developments in municipal administration which merited the attention of even petty municipalities.

Explaining further the reasons for the Bill, the Hon. Minister said that there was quite a large number of municipalities whose population, education, wealth and importance as centres of commerce and industry, justified increased popular control over civic administration and power to undertake useful projects for improving the health and comfort of the citizens.