

***Election of Members to the Standing Committee for the Labour Department**

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar (Labour Member):
Sir, I beg to move :

“That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, three non-official Members to serve on the Standing Committee to advise on subjects with which the Labour Department is concerned.”

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Motion moved:

“That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, three non-official Members to serve on the Standing Committee to advise on subjects with which the Labour Department is concerned.”

Dr. P.N. Banerjea (Calcutta Suburbs : Non-Muhammadan Urban): Sir, there are several Standing Committees attached to the different Departments, but there is no Standing Committee of this House which numbers only three. Now, what can be the reason for the small number of Members elected by this House ? Either the Labour Department is not an important Department, or it may be due to the fact that the Standing Committee is never called, or called very rarely, do discuss any matter. I should like to have information on either of these two subjects. Is the Labour Department an important Department ? I find that it is in charge of a very eminent person like Dr. Ambedkar. Even if it was an unimportant Department before, it should cease to be an unimportant Department at the present day at least so long as he is in control of the subject. But if it is to be an important Department, the Standing Committee should consist of a much larger number of persons. Look at the Standing Finance Committee, look at the Standing Finance Committee for Railways, and look at the Public Accounts Committee. The number of Members of any of these Committees is much larger than three. I am told that this Committee does not meet

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very often I do not know whether it is a fact and that even when it meets, not much business is placed before this Committee. If that be so, I am afraid the utility of the Committee will be greatly diminished. I, therefore, appeal to the Government to increase the number of Members to eight. I understand that two Members are selected from the other place. I suggest that eight Members should be elected by this House. If you like, you may increase the number of Members given to the other House.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Sir, I am very glad to notice that this motion of mine has excited so much interest from the House. The number three, as I understand, is based neither on the importance nor on any other consideration, but I am told that it is a standard number and that if there are any enlargements or deviations from the standard number, they constitute only an exception and not the rule.

Now, Sir, with regard to the point raised by my Honourable friend Dr. Banerjea that the reason why the number was fixed at three is because the Department pays scant courtesy to this Committee, I submit, is not borne out by facts. The House will notice from what I am saying now that in 1940 there were two meetings of this Committee held and some very important business was placed before the Committee. For instance, at the two meetings that were held in 1940 the subject matter that was placed before the Committee included the conclusions of the Labour Conference, report of the Technical Training Inquiry Committee, scheme for the training of skilled artisans and accommodation in Delhi. In 1941 one meeting was held and there the business placed before the Committee included conclusions of the second Conference of Labour Ministers and progress made with the technical training under the Bevin training scheme. In 1942 one meeting was held and there was also an adjourned meeting held subsequently. The proceedings of the third Conference of Labour Ministers, the summary of the views of the employers and workers' representatives on certain subjects, building programme in Delhi and Simla, proposals relating to the recognition of Trade Unions, progress made with the technical training under the Bevin training scheme and amendments of the National Service (Technical Personnel) Ordinance, 1940, were the subjects that were placed before the meeting of the Committee. I am sure nobody can say that the Department has not been

placing before the Committee matters which are of importance and interest to Labour.

Then, the other thing I would like to submit to the House is this that this is not the only Committee to advise the Labour Department. Besides this, we have now instituted a Plenary Conference which consists of representatives of the Central, Provincial Governments, and also the Indian States, the representatives of employers and of labour are also represented on the Plenary Conference on a very extensive scale. There is no case for so large an increase asked for by the Honourable Dr. Banarjea. In addition to that we have also got the Standing Labour Advisory Committee. Having regard to the circumstances I hold the view that if there was any case for the enlargement of the personnel of the Committee, that case has considerably suffered by reason of the constitution of the Plenary Conference as well as by the Standing Labour Committee. However, if my Honourable friend is anxious that the personnel of this Committee should be increased, I am prepared to increase the number to eight-assigning five to this House and three to the upper Chamber: and I hope this will satisfy my Honourable friends in this House.

Mr. H.A. Sathar H. Essak Sait (West Coast and Nilgiris : Muhammadan) will the Honourable member please tell the house whether Members of this Committee are members of the Plenary Conference ?

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Some of them are Messrs Mehta and Joshi are Members both of the Plenary Conference as well the Standing Committee.

Mr. H.A. Sathar H. Essak Sait : Are they ex-officio members of the Plenary Conference ?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : No, they represent their organisations.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani (Tirhut Division : Muham madan) : Sir, in view of the war conditions this Labour Committee has become very very important. It deals with the labour questions. Besides, as has just been pointed out by the Honourable the Member in charge, this Committee deals with many other important questions such as building matters.....

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Labour Member has already replied. The question is :

“That this Assembly do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Honourable the President may direct, five non-official Members to serve on the Standing Committee to advise on subjects, with which the Labour Department, is concerned.”

The motion was adopted.

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