

*** Muslims have fared much better in Labour Department**

Mr. President : Discussion will now be resumed on the cut motion of Mr. Jaffer.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : (Labour Member): Mr. President, it must be within the recollection of many Members of this House that many stones have been hurled at the Labour Department.....

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan (Meerut Division—Muhammadan Rural)—Bricks, not stones.....

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Or bricks, during the last week which preceded this cut motion. It is only fair that I should rise in my seat to state how the position of Muslims stands in My Department. Yesterday I listened to a sort of running commentary by the two speakers who spoke on this cut motion, they gave some figures regarding the position of Muslim employees in the different Departments of the Government of India. As I listened to that commentary, I cannot help saying that, having the facts before me, I felt considerably proud that the Muslim employees under the Labour Department had certainly fared much better than the story that was revealed by the speakers with regard to other Departments of the Government of India. That this is no vain boast but that it is supported by facts is what I propose to do during the few minutes that I propose to occupy today. I have collected, and if I may say so, I have taken great pains in collecting figures regarding the percentage of the employees of the Government of India in the Labour Department, not only in the Labour section, but in the P.W.D. and in all other attached offices, figures which show what the position of the communities is, the position of

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the Muslims is as well as the position of the other minorities. But I quite realise that within the time that I have it would be quite impossible for me to lay out in completeness the position of these different communities, and therefore I propose today merely to give the figures of Muslims—not only the totals but also the percentages, so that the members of the Muslim League Party may know what exactly the position is.

I begin with the communal composition of the Labour Department secretariat, and in doing so I propose to give not merely the figures as they stand now, but to give the figures on a comparative basis. I think the comparative basis is very necessary and very essential. So far as I have been able to understand the working of this rule, I think I may say that it is somewhat like shooting at a target—a target has a bulls eye, it has an inner circle and it has an outer circle. The percentages are the bulls-eye, undoubtedly. But I do not think that it would at all be possible for any member of the Government of India, no matter what his personal predilections may be, that he can arrange the services under him in such a manner that he would always be able to hit the bulls eye. What I submit is that there should be an endeavour on the part of every member to see that no community as far as possible is pushed out of what is called the centre, and the question therefore that we have to consider in passing judgment upon the doings of any particular Department is to know whether the position of any particular class of employees in that Department has deteriorated or has bettered, and from that point of view I think a comparative statement is the proper way of studying this matter.

I have collected figures in all cases for 1939 and for 1946-March. I said that I will first present the figures with regard to the Labour Department Secretariat. The gazetted posts in the year 1939 were 12 and the Muslim percentage was 8 per cent. In 1946, the total number of gazetted post is 80 and the Muslim proportion is 20 per cent. I will give the figures for the non-gazetted posts. In 1939 the total number of such posts was 75 and of that the Muslims had 23 per cent. In 1946 the total number of posts was 457, and the percentage of Muslims is 24.

Now I will come to that much-talked of C.P.W.D. I will give the figures for the gazetted posts. In 1939 the total number of gazetted posts in the C.P.W.D. was 43., of which the Muslims had 21 per cent. In

1946 the total number of posts was 181, and notwithstanding the difficulties to which my Honourable friend the Home Member referred in the matter of observing the communal proportions during the war emergency, the Muslims had 21.1 per cent. Now, this probably may not quite give enough comfort for the Mover of this cut motion, and I therefore propose to take the time of the house further to analyse the composition of the gazetted posts in the C.P.W.D. in the year 1946, taking the different grades for finding out the percentages. In Superintending Engineers, the total posts are 14 and there is one Muslim—which gives 7 per cent. Of Executive Engineers there are 64 and the Muslim percentage is 18 per cent. Electrical Engineers are 12 and the Muslim quota is $6\frac{2}{3}$ per cent. Assistant Executive Engineers—the quota for Muslims is 14 per cent. Temporary Engineers total 72 and the Muslim percentage is 32 per cent. While discussing the C.P.W.D. one of my Honourable friends—I forget which it was, mentioned the question of contracts of the Lodi Road.....

Mr. Ahmed E.H. Jaffer (Bombay Southern Division—Muhammaddan Rural): Myself.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : I think yourself. I forget exactly the figure mentioned by the Honourable Member.

Mr. Ahmed E.H. Jaffer : 5 Crores.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : His complaint was that in the contracts for the Lodi Road works, the Muslim contractors got a very small percentage. I 'forget the exact figure.

Mr. Ahmed E.H. Jaffer : I referred to the Lodi Road colony in particular and there are so many others in general.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : The Honourable Member made his speech towards the end of the day and it was impossible for me to get the necessary figures but the figures are these.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmed (United Provinces Southern Division—Muhammaddan Rural): There was no necessity for you to intervene at this stage. You could have waited for some time longer.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : I am very much obliged to my Honourable friend for this advice but I thought it desirable to let the Muslim League have sufficient time for their oilier cut motions. That is the reason why I intervened. Otherwise it was really a general motion. I had no desire to intervened at all and there was no necessity

to. It is only to allay the fears which some Members have about the Labour Department that I go up.

Mr. Ahmed E.H. Jaffer : Very kind of you.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : The position with regard to the Lodi Road works was this. According to the information supplied to me by the Chief Engineer, the Muslims have got altogether contracts worth 10.5 lakhs of rupees, which is a figure much higher than the figure mentioned by my Honourable friend.

Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer : Out of?

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Out of three crores. My Honourable friend will also remember and take the fact into consideration that on these works the Executive Engineer was a Muslim ?

Mr. Ahmed E.H. Jaffer : What about the official pressure put on him not to give it to Muslims ?

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : My friend is making all sorts of allegations. I hope he has got sufficient evidence to back them up. Nobody has drawn my attention to them. If my friend will give me the facts, I will certainly make inquiries.

Mr. Ahmed E.H. Jaffer : I will give it to you on the floor of the House.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : The fact is that there is a Muslim Executive Engineer in charge of these works. The second fact is that an officer of the Central P.W.D. who is in charge of works, whether he is a Muslim or whether he is a Hindu, no matter what community he belongs to, he is bound by the Central P.W.D. Code. The Central P.W.D. Code requires that the contracts shall be given to a man whose tender is the lowest. I have made inquiries overnight and I have been informed by the Chief Engineer that there was no Muhammadan whose contract was the lowest who did not receive the contract.

Mr. Ahmed E.H. Jaffer : On a point of order.....

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : I am not giving way. I have very little time.

Mr. President : Let the Honourable member go on.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : These rules of the Central P.W.D. that the contract shall be given to the lowest bidder are subject to scrutiny from two different directions. One is the Auditor General

and the second is the Public Accounts Committee. Both of them would require the departmental officer who broke this rule to give the necessary explanation as why he did so.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang : That will be a post-mortem.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : It is a question whether the rules are observed or not.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad : The rules can be changed ?

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : The Honourable Member knows more about it. He did a great deal of work in the Aligarh University. He ought to know something about the P.W.D. and doing the work of this kind. I cannot go into it now.

Let me take the Estate Office. In the Estate Office there are altogether 8 gazetted posts. Of them one is vacant. There the position is that there are six Hindus, one Scheduled Caste. There was one Muslim who recently was sent to his parent province. With regard to the non-gazetted posts, the total posts are 235. Of them the Muslims have 18.2 per cent.

Let me come to what are called the attached offices and I can only give the figures in a collective form—not item by item, which would take me very long. Here again the position in 1939 was this. There were altogether 64 posts. The Muslims had only 1.5 per cent. In 1946 the total posts were 155 and the Muslim percentage has risen from 1.5 per cent to 11.5 per cent. Let me take the non-gazetted posts in the attached offices. In 1936 the total number of posts were 2,238. The Muslims had 34 per cent. In 1946 the total number of non-gazetted posts had risen to 3,929 and the Muslim quota is 30 per cent.

Now, Sir, I will take the geological Survey. As everybody in the House knows, the Geological Survey so far has been only a skeleton. It is during the war under the new projects of the Government of India relating to post-war development that we have taken up the work of the expansion of the Geological Survey. We recently made a beginning by the appointment of 13 permanent posts of Assistant Geologists. Now, I would like to tell my Honourable friend the real position so far as these appointments are concerned. We were naturally bound to fill these posts through the Federal Public Service Commission, which recommended altogether 40 names in order of merit. We had only to

select 13. Out of the 13 there was only one Muslim whom we could select.

Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan : Out of 40 names.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Yes. The names were given in order of merit and we had only 13 posts. Obviously we had to stop with the 13. If we had stopped with the 13, there was only one Muslim in that list of 13. As I said, these posts are technical posts and therefore we had to be very certain about the qualification. If the Labour Department had stuck to their original proposition that they shall only take men recommended by the Federal Public Service Commission on a purely meritorious basis, they would have had only one Muslim Candidate but the Labour Department knowing that tills would not be satisfactory from the point of view of the Muslims went down the list and picked 3 candidates who were far below 13 in order to make up their quota of 4. Another thing we have done and which I know some people might regard as very improper is this. We found that in the office of the Director General of Geological Survey there were no Muslim officers. What did we do. We selected two Muslim students from the University represented by my Honourable friend Sir Zia Uddin Ahmed.....

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad : The credit does not go to you.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : They were not geologists by their training. They had qualified themselves only in geography but notwithstanding this we selected two. We trained them so that they may be subsequently, recruited to the office of the Geological Survey.

Now, Sir, I come to the School of Mines. There were some questions in the last Assembly on that.

May I know, Sir, how much more time I have.

Mr. President : The Honourable Member can have 20 minutes. I am prepared to give him more time if necessary. He can go on till 1/15.

Shri Sri Prakasa (Benares and Gorakhpur Divisions—Non-Muhammadan Rural): You can take 25 per cent of the time.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : I do not wish to deal with this subject in that half-philanthropic and half-flippant manner that my friend has done.

Shri Sri Prakasa : I was not flippant at all.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Coming to the School of Mines, the position is this. We have from 1937 restricted admissions to the School of Mines to 24, originally, there were about 50. It was discovered that there was not sufficient accommodation for such a large number of students and, therefore, it was restricted to 24. Now, the selection for the admission to the college is primarily provincial and not communal. Sixteen seats are allotted to the provinces and two to the Indian States. I had examined the figures up to 1937 and I did not discover any single year in which there were not at least 2 Muslim students, who had sought admission to the School of Mines. I, therefore, did not think that any particular reservation was necessary to safeguard the interests of the Muslim students joining the School of Mines. However, when the matter was pressed by some Members of the Muslim League here, Members of the last Legislative Assembly, I did pass orders that two seats at least should be reserved for the Muslims in the Indian School of Mines.

Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan : Out of how many ?

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Out of 24. Now, Sir, even here I would like to tell the House what steps the Labour Department have taken in order to see that the Muslims are able to realise the full quota which has been reserved for them, and I shall give the figures for this year. This year we have altogether admitted 48 students on the recommendation of the Governing Body. Out of these 48 students there is only one Muslim who had satisfied the qualifying test.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman (Patna and Chota Nagpur-*cum*-Orissa, Muhammadan) : That is what I referred to you.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : But, Sir, in order to make good the reservation that was made, it was ordered that the fifty-ninth student, who was a Muslim, may be taken, over-riding the claims of practically 11 other boys.

Now, Sir, I will refer briefly to the various training schemes which have been sponsored by the Labour Department—some overseas—and to show that even here the Labour Department has not only been correct but has been very considerate. I will first refer to the training scheme sponsored by the Labour Department for training of Assistant Geologists in the Melbourne University of Australia, as a part of the

re-organisation of the Geological Survey. This took place in 1946. The total number of men that were selected was 9. Out of them, 5 were Hindus, 3 Muslims and 1 of other minorities. It will be seen that in this selection the Muslim proportion has been $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent.

The second scheme sponsored by the Labour Department was to train men in commercial and administrative side of electricity. Electricity is going to play one of the greatest part in the reconstruction of India's economic and social life. Obviously, there must be people in India who are trained in the commercial and administrative side of it and we decided to train some men. Obviously, for a training of this sort, you could not take up raw boys from the university. You ought to have some men who have had some experience in this matter. We, therefore, decided to ask the Provincial Governments whether they would suggest names of some of their employees in their Electricity Department for being sent abroad. The selection, therefore, was not a selection made by the Labour Department or in the Government of India. The selection was entirely within the purview and charge of the Provincial Governments. The total number of men selected was 10. Out of them one was a Muslim. He was selected by the Hyderabad State. The other provinces did not suggest the name of any Muslim. I do not know why. Probably because there were not any Muslims in their Electricity Department.

Khan Abdul Ghani Khan (North-West Frontier Province-General) : In the Frontier Province there are about 90 per cent, Muslims in the Electricity Department.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : I am sorry, but your Province did not recommend any Muslim name. You had better address a question in the Assembly of the Frontier province.

I am coming now to three other schemes which were sponsored by the Labour Department for training abroad. One was the Bevin training scheme. The total number of boys who were sent was 787. Out of them, Muslims were 154, or 19 per cent. Then, we have in the Government of India a scheme for training Labour Officers for welfare purposes. These officers are not selected by the Labour Department, they are selected by the different Departments concerned. And here the position is this. Altogether 23 have, so far, been sent. Out of these 23, 18 are Muslims, which is a proportion of 79 per cent. Then. Sir, we have

another scheme which is a scheme for giving higher technical training to the employees of private employers. The Government of India circularised private employers that in view of the necessity of improving technical efficiency of Indians if they desire to send any of their employees for training abroad, the Government of India in the Labour Department would do their best to secure opportunities for training in foreign countries. In this connection, so far, 6 men have been sent. Unfortunately, there was no Muslim amongst them, but that certainly is not the fault of the Labour Department, because they were not responsible for the training.

Now, Sir, another point which I would refer to is the recruitment of what are called project Officers and Utilisation Officers and 8 of what are called Project Officers. These appointments, again, had to be filled through the Federal Public Service Commission. Unfortunately, there was no Muslim among the 9 posts that were filled. In this connection, I would like to draw the attention of the Mover of the cut motion to the correspondence which the Labour Department had with the Federal Public Services Commission. We queried when we got the selection and found that there was not a single Muslim. I asked my Department to address a query to the Federal Public Service Commission as to why there was no Muslim in the names that they had suggested. The reply of the Federal Public Service Commission was this. It is interesting, I think, because it throws a different light on the subject. The Federal Public Service Commission said that, in response to their advertisement, altogether 240 applications were received. Out of that number, only 8 were Muslims, and out of these 8 Muslims, they invited 3 for interview. Out of three, they found not one suitable for the post. Well, Sir, this is in brief a record of the Labour Department in the matter of communal representation. I claim, Sir, that during the period that I have occupied this post, it can be fairly said that the position of Muslims far from having deteriorated has considerably advanced. Sir, I do not claim anything more for the Department in which I hold charge. I should like to conclude just by making two observations. I have no idea how many Honourable Members of the Muslim League Party know what I played in the issue of this communal Ratio Resolution. I think if any Member of the Muslim League Party was present when the Round Table Conference was held in London,

he would very well realise that among those who fought for securing these privileges to the minority communities, I claim that I have played a considerable part. It cannot therefore be said that I am out of sympathy with the demand of the Muslims or the demand of any other minority community. It is for this that I have fought, it is for this I have been fighting, and it is for this that I will fight.

The second proposition that I should like to make, if my Honourable Colleague, the Home Member would permit me to say so, is that the action which he promised the House that he will take in order to see that the Government of India will not be merely content with rearguard action on the various Departments making default in this matter but that he will take some substantial steps so that as and when appointments are made, proper check is applied at the time, the credit must go to me because it is I who wrote to him a letter that this state of affairs ought to be rectified. I do not want to say anything more.

Mr. Ahmed E.H. Jaffer : On a point of information, Sir, I want to know whether in the figures which he just now quoted, are the appointments in the resettlement also included ?

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Yes, it is a consolidated section of the Labour Secretariat.

Mr. Ahmed E.H. Jaffer : Including resettlement.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : I have so many figures. I must say they are so interesting that if my Honourable friend wants, I am quite prepared to pass it on to him for his further study.

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