

* The Indian Finance Bill

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (Labour Member) : Mr. President, I must at the outset thank you for the opportunity that you have given me to intervene in the discussion on the Finance Bill. Sir, I say so because the points on which I propose to dwell are not points which refer to the Labour Department of which I am in charge. In fact, so far as the discussions on the Finance Bill have gone, I am glad to say that no serious comment has been made against that Department. But I rise because I feel that my Honourable friend, Pandit Govind Malaviya, yesterday in speaking on the Finance Bill made certain observations with regard to the project of a college for the scheduled castes. Sir, ordinarily that matter I should have left in the hands of the representative of the Education Department to deal with because that project was examined by them and the Finance Department sanctioned it. All the part that I have played was to initiate the measure. But, Sir, the reason why I have thought it necessary not to leave the defence of that project in the hands of the representative of the Education Department is because I find that in presenting the case against that project I think my Honourable friend sought to give it a political colour. It is because of that I have risen today to reply to the comments that he made.

My Honourable friend started by saying that he was amazed at the project, and when I read his speech I found that the amazement which he felt was based upon his understanding that this was nothing but the introduction of a sectarian spirit in the educational field. Sir, there is a proverb, and a very well known proverb, that a man who lives in glass houses should not throw stones. I wonder whether my Honourable friend, Pandit Malaviya, recognizes this fact. I am far more than

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amazed—I am astonished—that Mr. Malaviya should have risen up in his seat to preach nationalising to me or to any Member of this House. It is not a new thing to anybody that, so far as his personal habits are concerned. I think it is true to say that he will not even take water not only from an ordinary Hindu but I know he will not take water even from a Brahmin of another caste.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar (Madras Ceded Districts and Chittoor : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : He does equal justice !

Shri Sri Prakasa : Even Brahmins can be stupid !

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : His ideals, if I may say so, are the ideals of rat who believes that in order to keep his personal purity he must live in a hole by himself without any contract with any human being. And I should have thought that a man who believes in that kind of a thing should certainly think twice before talking against sectarianism or preaching nationhood to the people of this country. I should have thought that he ought to have known that he was or he is a great deal concerned with an institution which we all know as the Benares Hindu University. If it is not a sectarian institution, I would like to know what is a sectarian institution. Sir, I know and I can say that this University is not even a Hindu university ; it is a University which is managed in the interest of that particular community. I would like to ask my Honourable friend whether it is not a fact that on the staff of the Benares Hindu University there are hardly any non-Brahmins.

An Honourable Member : There are.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : I would like to ask him whether there is not a standing resolution of the Benares Hindu University Court passed in 1916 whereby a non-Brahmin, no matter how well he is educated in Hindu Dharma (in Hindu Law) is not entitled to function as a Professor of Hindu Religion. I would like to ask him whether he has forgotten that only a few months ago a Kayashtha girl had to go on fast because she was refused admission in the Benares Hindu University in the Faculty of Theology. If that is not sectarianism, I would like to ask what it is.

As I was reading the proceedings of the debate yesterday, I found my Honourable friend, Mr. Ayyangar, uttering an exclamation, which is recorded by the Official Reporter, on a separate college for the

Scheduled Castes. I wonder whether he is aware of what has recently happened in that town of Salem. He probably is forgetful of it.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar : I do not know.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Or he is so much preoccupied with politics that he did not know what his own community members are doing. I like him to peruse the papers of the 'Hindu' of Madras, not of some past year but of the 12th of this month. He will find that Salem Brahmans met in a solemn conclave for the purpose of establishing a Brahman Sangh, for the purpose of protecting the interests of Brahmans, for the purpose of starting a college for Brahmans, for the purpose of starting industries for Brahmans. And who was the President of that Conference ? The great man Sachivotama Sir C.P. Ramaswami Ayer.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar : Your erstwhile colleague.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : I do not know. When everybody in this country while talking of nationalism is practising sectarianism.....

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar : I am sorry for both.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : for Members to come here and to tell a struggling community like that of the Scheduled Castes, who for the first time in their life have become conscious of their disabilities and are trying to found educational institutions in which they will be able to get higher education that they are acting in a sectarian spirit to my judgment is nothing short of imprudence. I would like to tell this House that it is complete misnomer to say that this is a Scheduled Caste college. It is a college which like any other college is open to every community. There is no bar to any body.

Pandit Govind Malaviya (Allahabad and Jhansi Divisions : Non-Muhammadan Rural): What is stated in the Budget ?

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : The Budget was before you for full one month, and you ought to have put a short notice question to ask for full details before you got up to oppose it. Now, as I said this is an institution which is open to every community. The college is not only open to all but the staff selected is also cosmopolitan. There are Hindus, there are Brahmans, there are non-Brahmans, there are Parsis, there are Christians, there are Muslims on the staff. And I like to tell the House that when the affiliation application came before

the University of Bombay they had not the slightest hesitation to granting affiliation. In fact it was admitted that there was never such a project placed before the University of Bombay during all these years so sell thought out. And if I may say so, this is the first instance in the whole history of the Bombay University where permission has been given to start a full-fledged college at the start. This is because, the organisation, the staff and the arrangements have been so good. The College therefore is in no sense a Scheduled Caste College. The only thing which the College will do so far as the Scheduled Castes are concerned is to give them preferential treatment in the matter of admissions and freeships and reservation in the hostel. I like to tell the House why the establishment of this college became necessary. Honourable Members are probably not aware that the Bombay Province at present is suffering from a terrible congestion of the student population. My Honourable friend, sitting opposite, Mr. Gadgil, will know that during last year nineteen new colleges were allowed to be opened by the Bombay University, That shows how difficult it is for boys to get admission. The Scheduled Caste boys suffered the most from this congestion because the Scheduled Caste boys after passing their matriculation were not able to get their admission in the different colleges. I therefore represented the matter to the Government of India that there should be an institution whose primary function should be to give preferential treatment to these boys. There is nothing else in this project which may be called sectarian or which may be called communal.

Now, Sir, there was another matter which my Honourable, friend introduced, and I am at a loss to understand why he introduced it. He introduced politics and he said that so far as the elections were concerned, I was a wash out. I do not know what he wanted to convey. But I believe what he wanted to do was to give a hint that I should not have been listed to by the Government of India, or some such thing, which I do not know.

Pandit Govind Malaviya : Don't you ?

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Well, Sir, from what has happened in the elections it may be said that I am now a withered plant. But I like to tell my Honourable friends opposite that I am not dead at the roots. Not at all. My Honourable friend talked about the results

of the election. He said that the Scheduled Caste seats were won by the Congress. Yes, they were. But what I like to ask my Honourable friend is, does he care to examine the ways and means by which this victory was obtained by the Congress ?

Prof. N.G. Ranga : We are ready !

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : I would like to tell my friend of the ways and means that were adopted.

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar : The usual accusation!

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : It is not the usual accusation. It is a matter of proof which can be put to the test.

Prof. N.G. Ranga : Do not tread on doubtful ground !

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : My Honourable friend ought to know that in many places the Untouchable voters have not been allowed to go even to the polls. I am referring to a case in the Satara District, which ought to be familiar to many Members of this House because in that district there was in existence what is called a parallel government. The Scheduled Caste voters from 361 villages were taken to the village Katcheri by the Hindu villagers. They were asked whether they were prepared to vote for the Congress candidate. When they refused, they were asked to sit in the Katcheri and a watch and ward was kept around them. They were not allowed to move. I can give many cases.

Pandit Govind Malaviya : Yes ? please do !

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Even the candidates of the Scheduled Caste opposed to the Congress were assaulted. Take a nearer case like that of Agra which has happened only recently. Fifty houses of the Untouchables were burnt on the day of election. Some twenty houses were looted in the absence of the voters who had been to the polls. In Cawnpore seven persons were murdered.

Diwan Chaman Lall (West Punjab : Non-Muhammadan): Who looted ?

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Hindus. Those are the ways and means by which these elections have been won. (Interruptions). I would like to tell my Honourable friend that the test whether the Congress has won these seats, or whether the Scheduled Castes Federation, which I represent, has won these seats, is to be decided not by the final elections. It would be stupid to do so. In a final election

where the Untouchables sometimes form a microscopic minority of 5 per cent as against a majority of 95 per cent. Hindus, it would be idiotic for any man to think that the final election was any test as to who represented whom. The real test is the test of the primary election. For the primary election is an election through a separate electorate of the Scheduled Castes. What has happened in the primary elections. Let me give my friends opposite some idea of the results of the primary elections. In the Punjab there were three constituencies in which a primary election took place. In Bombay there were also three constituencies in which primary elections were held.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena : Out of how many ?

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Let me finish.

Mr. President : Let him proceed.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : In the Central Provinces there were four. In the Madras Presidency ten, in the United Provinces two. (Interruption). If my Honourable friend wants to know the fact, he ought to know that a primary election is not compulsory. Unless five people stand there cannot be a primary election and no Scheduled Caste wants a primary election because it involves a lot of expense and we have no black market money to finance it (Interruptions). In all there have been 22 primary elections. They were all contested by the Congress. I want to tell the House that out of the 22 primary elections, 19 have been won by the Scheduled Castes Federation.

Diwan Chaman Lall : How many in the Punjab ?

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Wait a minute. In the Bombay Presidency—I cannot give the whole lot of figures because my time is short.....

Pandit Govind Malaviya : It may go against you !

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : In the Bombay City there were two Constituencies in which the primary election was fought. One was the Byculla constituency. The Scheduled Castes Federation candidate got 11,334 votes and the Congress candidate got 2,096 votes. In the Suburban Constituency of Bombay City the Scheduled Castes Federation candidate got 12,899 votes and the Congress candidates got only 2,088. In the Central Provinces—I again take two constituencies for illustration.....

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar : The black market did not prevail.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : In the Nagpur constituency the Scheduled Castes Federation got 1,933 votes and the Congress candidate got 270. In Bhandara District the Federation candidate got 3,187 and the Congress candidate, including others who were independent, got altogether 976. In the Agra constituency in the United Provinces the Scheduled Castes Federation candidate got 2,248 while the Congress and others put together got only 840. In the Punjab, Ludhiana—Ferozepur Constituency, I am taking one as an illustration—the Scheduled Castes Federation got 1,900 votes and the Congress got only 500.

Diwan Chaman Lall : There was no Scheduled Caste candidate in the Punjab.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Will my friend let me go on. I know more about these matters than I think he does.

Diwan Chaman Lall : My Honourable friend knows there was not one single candidate.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : The Scheduled Castes Federation who.....

Diwan Chaman Lall : It is a tissue of lies.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : My Honourable friend will withdraw it. Sir, I seek the protection of the Chair.

Diwan Chaman Lall : I challenge my friend to deny the fact that there was not a single candidate of his Federation put up in the Punjab.

Mr. President : Order, order. It is no use introducing heat in the debate when the Honourable Member is giving the facts. The point was raised and the reply was invited and whatever he has to say must be heard patiently. I am not concerned with the question as to whether what he said is a fact or not but no Honourable Member of the House is entitled to or can say that what the other Honourable Member was saying was “a tissue of lies.”

Diwan Chaman Lall : I withdraw it, Sir, and substitute for it “a tissue of terminological inexactitudes.”

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : I will give one constituency from Madras, viz. Amalapuram. The Federation candidate got 10,540 votes and the Congress candidate 2,683. That is the result of the primary election and I say that if anybody wants to apply an honest test, that test ought to be the test of the primary election. I want to tell my

Honourable friends opposite that if what they have done in this election is of any value, it has to my mind substantiated and proved the case which I have been fighting for that the electoral system is a humbug and that the Scheduled Castes must have separate electorates.

My Honourable friend, Pandit Malaviya, tried to make out another point. He said that the Hindu community has been taking interest in the Scheduled Castes and that they could subscribe a great deal of money for the moral and material advancement of the Scheduled Castes. Sir, I do not know.....

Pandit Govind Malaviya : On a point of order, Sir: May I know from you that if an Honourable Member of this House goes on misrepresenting and misquoting and stating utterly wrong facts about any other Member, who has already spoken and who is not likely to get a chance to reply to or expose those misstatements and terminological inexactitudes, may I know from you what is the way open to the other member to meet that situation ?

Mr. President : The question is hypothetical and I do not think I need take the trouble of replying to it But statement of facts is one thing and version is another and the Honourable Member need not confound versions with facts.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : Sir, I was dealing with the point which my Honourable friend made in the course of his speech that the Hindu community was taking a great deal of interest in the welfare and the material and moral advancement of the Scheduled Castes. All that I would like to say is that if one were to judge by what happens within the four corners of this House, I think it would be very difficult for any honest man to subscribe to the statement that my Honourable friend has made.

I have been, it is true, a member of this House for a very short time but I have been a very regular reader of the proceedings of this House and there is nothing about this House which I have not read, which is worth reading. And, Sir, having regard to the past, I think it is correct to say that it is very seldom that any member of the Opposition has ever asked any question of any member of the Government sitting here with regard to the many atrocities, tyrannies and oppression that have been practised upon the Scheduled Castes in every village from day

to day. I have not seen it in the proceedings. I have never seen any Honourable Member moving a resolution.....

Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar : You would say that it is a Provincial subject.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : that certain things might be done for the uplift of the community. There was one occasion which I remember, in which Honourable Members opposite made a bold bid in order to abolish untouchability. I believe, it was in the year 1932 or 1934, I forget exactly which.....

An Honourable Member : 1933.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : when a Bill was brought in for temple entry. And what a hullabaloo was made when the Viceroy refused to give his sanction. Men went on fasts and threatened to commit suicide if permission was not given to introduce the Bill. And when permission was given what happened? What happened was that these gentlemen threw away the Bill. They disowned it. They left Mr. Ranga Iyer with the baby in his hand. He abused them roundly for having betrayed him. There were only two occasions I remember when the question.....

An Honourable Member : You have not read the debates.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : I have read every thing about what happened in this House. I find only two occasions when this House discussed the question of the Scheduled Castes. One was in the year 1916 when Mr. Maneckji Dadabhoy, now the President of the other House, moved a resolution asking the Government to appoint a committee to investigate into the grievances of the Scheduled Castes and if my Honourable friend opposite who started this debate were to brouse into the proceedings of that debate, he will find that it was his father who turned out to be the most vehement opponent of that resolution. The other occasion was in 1927, that was when the late Lord Birkenhead happened to refer to the Scheduled Castes as a minority to be protected under the Constitution. My friends opposite are very fond of me only when I try to make a political issue of my existence. If I ask for separate electorates, if I ask for reservation in the services, if I ask for an educational grant, then they know that I exist. Otherwise, I am dead to them.....

An Honourable Member : Nothing.

The Honourable Dr. B.R. Ambedkar : and all social and political rights are denied to me because they say that I am a Hindu. If fraternity is to involve this cost, then I say that I am their cousin and not their brother.

The other thing that I would like to say, is this and I would like to say it very positively. I want to tell my Hindu friends that I shall not live on their charity. I do not want their charity. I am a citizen of this country. I am entitled to claim from the Government Treasury whatever rights and benefit every other community is claiming for itself. I do not want charity; charity, the object of which is to enslave and demoralise me and my community. The Scheduled Castes want to stand on their rights and I take this opportunity to tell the House that if their claims are met with opposition, they will not hesitate to shed their blood in order to get their rights.

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