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* **Precis of Discussion in the Viceroy's Executive Council**

Enclosure to No. 298

December 1942

The Viceroy explained at the outset that the discussion was necessarily on an informal basis and without prejudice to existing constitutional arrangements, and then examined briefly and objectively the three directions in which he understood in advance to be desired—

- (a) The complete Indianisation of his Council;
- (b) The elimination or reduction of the powers of control and interference of the Secretary of State; and
- (c) Mitigation of the purely official nature of the administration in the Section 93 Provinces. The general discussion was then opened.

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Dr. Ambedkar (Member for Labour) was opposed to any change unless it was in accordance with the Declaration of August 1940* (providing for consultation with important minorities). Subject to that, he was in favour of change, since what was needed was a strong Government, i.e. one with public opinion behind it. In the Provinces, ministerial government was best, even if merely a minority ministry. An Executive Council would be better than advisers. As for the Centre, Indianisation by itself would not placate Congress and might merely irritate them; and were Non-Congress elements worth placating? Before Indianisation took place the communal composition of the Council must be settled, and that by Indians themselves. Congress had shirked this problem; they had not the will to solve it. His suggestion

*Transfer of Power, Vol. III, (End. to No. 298), p. 426. (*Extracts concerning Dr. Ambedkar alone are reproduced. Rest of the discussion is omitted.*—Ed.)

was to take the Cripps proposals as a basis and try for a national Government composed of Congress, the Moslem League, Depressed Classes, Sikhs and Christians. The Indian members of Council ought to sit down and prepare a scheme for communal representation. Though he preferred an autocratic Viceroy to a distant Secretary of State, he would not press for interference with the Secretary of State's powers.

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