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*** Rao Bahadur Sivaraj to Field Marshal Viscount Wavell**

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No. 592/73/43

A meeting of the Working Committee of the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation was held in Bombay on 4th June 1946 under my Chairmanship to consider the situation arising out of the proposals made by the Cabinet Mission regarding the future constitution of India. The Working Committee has passed a Resolution which they have asked me to send to the Members of the Cabinet Mission for their consideration. In pursuance thereof, I am enclosing herewith a copy of that Resolution. I shall be grateful to know from the Cabinet Mission if they have anything to say in regard to the demands contained in paragraph 6 of the Resolution.

Enclosure to No. 454

THE ALL-INDIA SCHEDULED CASTES FEDERATION
RESOLUTION PASSED AT THE MEETING OF THE WORKING
COMMITTEE HELD AT BOMBAY ON 4TH JUNE 1946

The Working Committee of the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation has taken into consideration (1) the first statement issued by the Cabinet Mission on the Constitution of India; (2) the Press interviews given by the Members of the Mission in amplification of their statement; (3) the second statement made by the Cabinet Mission and (4) the correspondence between the Cabinet Mission and the Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. There are many points arising from the statement of the Cabinet Mission on which the Working Committee

* The Transfer of Power, Vol. VII, No. 454, pp. 808-12.

would like to state its views. For the present, the Working Committee prefers to deal with the plan of the Cabinet Mission for framing the future Constitution of India in so far as it affects the Scheduled Castes.

2. The working Committee has noticed with profound indignation that the Cabinet Mission has not mentioned the Scheduled Castes even once in the course of their statement of 5,000 words. It is difficult to understand the working of the mind of the Cabinet Mission. The Mission could not have been unaware of the existence of the Untouchables, their disabilities, the tyrannies and oppressions practised upon them day to day by the Caste Hindus all throughout India. The Cabinet Mission could not have been unaware of the pronouncements made by His Majesty's Government that the Untouchables were separate from the Caste Hindus and constituted a distinct element in the national life of India. The Cabinet Mission could not have been unaware of the pledges given by His Majesty's Government that no Constitution which had not the consent of the Scheduled Castes would be imposed upon them. The Cabinet Mission could not have been unaware of the fact that at the Simla Conference convened by Lord Wavell only a year ago, the Scheduled Castes were given separate representation from the Caste Hindus. Having regard to these circumstances, the Working Committee feels no hesitation in saying that in ignoring the Scheduled Castes in the manner in which it has done, the Cabinet Mission has brought the name of the British nation into disgrace and disrepute.

3. The Working Committee has noticed the statement made by the Cabinet Mission in the course of the Press interviews that they have made double provision for the representation of the Scheduled Castes in the Constituent Assembly and in the Advisory Committee. The Working Committee feels bound to say that these provisions are absolutely illusory and unworthy of serious consideration. In the plan set out by them the Mission have not reserved any seat for the Scheduled castes in the election by the Provincial Legislatures to the Constituent Assembly as they have done for the Sikhs and the Muslims. There is no obligation on the Provincial Legislature to elect a specified number of Scheduled Caste members to the Constituent Assembly. It is quite possible that the Constituent Assembly may not have in

it any representative of the Scheduled Castes. And even if a few representatives of the Scheduled Castes should find place in the Constituent Assembly, they being elected by Hindu votes, they can never represent the true interests of the Scheduled Castes. As to the Advisory Committee it cannot be substantially different from the Constituent Assembly. It will only be a reflection of the Constituent Assembly.

4. The Working Committee finds it extremely difficult to understand how the cabinet Mission could have come to believe that they had made enough and good provision for giving effective voice to the Scheduled Castes in the Constituent Assembly and the Advisory Committee. Abundant and incontrovertible evidence was presented to the Mission to show that the real representatives of the Scheduled Castes are those who were elected in the primary elections for which the Scheduled Castes have separate electorates, that the present Scheduled Caste members of the Provincial Legislatures who fought the primary elections were at the bottom of the poll and that on account of the vicious system of joint electorates the men who were at the bottom in the primary elections came to the top in the final elections only because of the Caste Hindu votes and that therefore the Scheduled Caste members of the Provincial Legislatures in no way represent the Scheduled Castes but they are tools of the Caste Hindus. Far from making double provision for representing the Scheduled Castes in the Constituent Assembly and the Advisory Committee, the Mission has without compunction ignored this unimpeachable evidence and without any justification committed the gravest act of treachery in leaving the Scheduled Castes to the mercy of the Hindus. The Working Committee desires to inform the Mission that the Scheduled Castes are not impressed either by their logic or by their sense of moral responsibility.

5. While the whole plan of the Cabinet Mission is mischievous inasmuch as it proposes to solve the minority problem by allowing freedom to the Muslim majority to dispose of the non-Muslim minorities in the Muslim zone and the Hindu majority to dispose of the non-Hindu minorities including the Scheduled Castes in the Hindu zone, the Working Committee finds that the Cabinet Mission in framing

its plan has shown greater concern for the protection of the Muslim community than for safeguarding the interests of the Scheduled Castes. In paragraph 15 of their plan the Cabinet Mission have prescribed what matters are to be beyond the reach of the Constituent Assembly. The object behind this provision in paragraph 15 is to prevent the domination of the Muslim community by the Hindu community. The fear which the Scheduled Castes have of the Hindu majority is far greater and far more real than the Muslim community has or can have. The Scheduled Castes have been urging that the only effective protection they can have is representation through separate electorates and the provision for separate settlements. The Cabinet Mission were aware of these demands and all the evidence in support of them. Following the principle adopted by the Cabinet Mission to guarantee freedom to the Muslim community from the domination of the Hindu majority in the manner referred to above, it was possible for the Cabinet to lay down in the same paragraph 15 a further limitation on the powers of the Constituent Assembly by prescribing that the Scheduled Castes should have the right to be represented in the Legislatures through separate electorates, and to have a statutory provision for separate settlements as means of escape from the domination of the Hindu majority.

6. The Working Committee has noted that the Cabinet Mission has, in its second statement,* provided that the ratification of the treaty between the United Kingdom and the Indian Constituent Assembly will be subject to proper safeguards being made for the protection of the minorities including the Scheduled Castes. The Cabinet Mission in its hurry to placate the Congress Party had not dared to include this provision in clause 22 of its first statement although it had formed part of the Cripps proposals of 1942. While the Working Committee is glad that the Mission has retrieved its position and saved the honour of the British people in whose name pledges were given to the Scheduled Castes, the Working Committee demands that the plan of the Cabinet Mission should be amended in the following respects :

(1) The following clauses should be added as clauses (7) and (8)

* No. 376.

to paragraph 15 of the statement:

“(7) The Scheduled Castes should have the right to be represented in the Legislatures through separate electorates.

(8) That the Constitution shall contain a provision making it obligatory on the Government to undertake the formation of separate settlements for the Scheduled Castes.”

(2) Paragraph 20 of the first statement should be so amended as to make those members of the Scheduled Castes who topped the polls in the last primary elections, members of the Advisory Committee and be allowed to elect five other representatives of the Scheduled Castes to the Advisory Committee.

7. The Working Committee desires to inform His Majesty's Government and the British Labour Party that they should prove their sincerity towards the Scheduled Castes by proceeding at once to rectify the wrong done to them by the Cabinet Mission. Failing this, there will be no alternative for the Scheduled Castes but to resort to direct action. If circumstances require, the Working Committee, in order to save the Scheduled Castes from this impending catastrophe, will not hesitate to ask the Scheduled Castes to resort to direct action.

8. The Working Committee is aware of the panic caused among the Scheduled Castes by the Plan put forth by the Cabinet Mission. The Working Committee desires to tell the Scheduled Castes to maintain the courage and heroism they have shown in fighting the last elections against the Congress single-handed and without resources in spite of the acts of violence, coercion and arson practised by the Congress and when every other Party had shut its shop, and assures them that there is no reason to be panicky and given courage and solidarity, their cause which is the case of justice and humanity is bound to triumph notwithstanding the machinations of their enemies.

9. The Working Committee hereby authorizes the President to constitute a Council of Action charged with the duty of examining the lines of direct action and to determine the one most effective and fix the time for launching the same.

10. The Working Committee has noticed :

(1) the campaign of tyranny and oppression which is being carried on by Caste Hindus against the Scheduled Castes in villages

and towns throughout the length and breadth of India for no other reason except that they fought the elections against the Congress, and which has caused many deaths and injuries ;

- (2) the shameful part which the Hindu police have been playing in siding with the Caste Hindus in belabouring and arresting innocent men and women from among the Scheduled Castes ;
- (3) the unlawful part which the rationing officers are playing as partisans of the Congress in refusing to the Scheduled Castes supply of rations;
- (4) the conspiracy of silence observed by the newspapers who have never cared to condemn these outrages on innocent men and women;
- (5) the utter indifference shown by the Provincial Government in protecting the lives and properties of the Scheduled Castes.

The Working Committee cannot help feeling that this conduct of the majority community proves beyond the shadow of a doubt how unworthy the Hindu community is to be entrusted with power and that if the majority community does not improve its morality, the Scheduled Castes would be forced to protect themselves by every means open to them.

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