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WITH THE HINDUS

[Reproduced from the handwritten Ms—ed]

It is impossible to believe that Hindus will ever be able to absorb the Untouchables in their society. Their Caste System and the Religion completely negative any hope being entertained in this behalf. Yet there are incorrigible optimists more among the Hindus than among the Untouchables, who believe in the possibility of the Hindus assimilating the Untouchables. Whether these incorrigible optimists are honest or dishonest in their opinion is a question which cannot be overlooked. Within what time this assimilation will take place, they are unable to define. Assuming that the optimists are honest, there can be no question that this process of assimilation is going to be a long drawn process extending over many centuries. In the meantime the Untouchables will have to live under the Social and political sway of the Hindus, and continue to suffer all the tyrannies and oppressions to which they have been subjected in the past. Obviously no sane man will think of leaving them to the will and the pleasure of the Hindus in the hope that some day in the unpredictable future they will be assimilated by the Hindus. Long or short, there will be a period of transition and some provision must be made against the tyranny and oppression by the Hindus. What provisions should be made in this behalf ? If the question is left to the Untouchables they will ask for two provisions being made : one for Constitutional Safeguards and two for Separate Settlements.

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The nature of Constitutional Safeguards for the protection of the Untouchables have been defined by the All-India Scheduled Caste Federation, apolitical organization of the Untouchables of India in the form of resolutions. Resolution Nos. 3 and 7 in which they are defined are set out below :

Resolution No. 3

[Quote p. 359]

(Not written in the Ms—ed.)

Resolution No. 7

[Quote p. 361]

(Not written in the Ms—ed.)

The Hindus are very reluctant to allow the Untouchables these safeguards. The objection is general. There is also objection to particular safeguards. The general objection that the Untouchables are not a minority and therefore they are not entitled to safeguards which may be allowed to other minorities. The argument proceeds that the basis of a community to be called a minority is Religion if one is entitled to be recognized as a minority. The Untouchables are not separate from the Hindus in the matter of the religion. Consequently they are not a minority. That this definition of a minority is childish will be obvious to all those who have studied the question.

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