

COMPLAINT AGAINST ME IS ABSOLUTELY UNFOUNDED

“Denies Statement alleged to have been made before Commission.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar has sent us a lengthy statement from which we take the following material points :—

My attention is drawn to the statement appearing in your issue of 6th instant in which the President of the Sholapur Municipality has given publicity to the resolution of the Municipality strongly repudiating the implied suggestion in my evidence to the statement that the grant to the Depressed Classes Hostel at Sholapur was stopped as a repercussion of Hindu-Moslem riot and explaining the facts that led to the stoppage, of the grant.....

The complaint against me seems to be based upon the supposition that, in the course of my evidence before the Simon Commission, I stated that the grant given to the Depressed Classes Hostel at Sholapur was deliberately discontinued by the Municipality because the Depressed Classes of Sholapur had refused to help the Higher Class Hindus during the Hindu-Moslem riots in 1925 which the Municipality holds is an untrue statement.....

My reply to the statement by the Municipality is that its complaint against me is absolutely unfounded and is based upon a deliberate misreading of my evidence.....

I am sure, every fair-minded man would agree that in my evidence I have never stated that the grant was stopped because the Depressed Classes refused to aid the Caste Hindus in the Hindu-Moslem riot. On the contrary I have clearly stated that I did not know what the cause was.....

I wish the Municipality had stopped with vilifying me for the implication that, it thinks, arises from the statement made by me on the course of my evidence. It goes a step further and tries to give what it considers to be the true reasons for the stopping of the grant

to the Hostel. The statement says that the President “noticed serious irregularities in the subscription book and called for account books and the Society having refused the grant was stopped.” I am sorry to have to use strong language but I must state that all these statements are issues of untruth for which there is no mitigation.

Now the real facts are these :—The Hostel at Sholapur was opened in 1925. The Municipality gave a grant from the commencement of the Hostel. For the two years 1925 and 1926 the grant was paid regularly without any hitch. There was no inspection nor was there any examination of the accounts of the institution. The Municipality was satisfied with the audited accounts of the institution. But the attitude of the Municipality, which came into existence after the elections in 1927 and particularly of the President, Dr. V. V. Mulay, underwent a complete change. It so happened that the Chairman of the School Board paid a surprise visit to the Institution in the beginning of the year, 1927, in the course of which he inspected the hostel and examined the accounts. As usual he wrote out his remarks in the Visit Book stating that the accounts were kept in the best manner possible. *The copy of the said remarks was forwarded by the Superintendent to the President.*

But that gentleman, instead of being pleased, showed by his subsequent conduct as though his plan was foiled by the favourable remarks of the Chairman of the School Board. For, immediately afterwards he demanded from the Superintendent by his letter dated 19th March 1927 to produce the accounts of the institution for the years 1925 and 1926. To this a reply was sent by the Superintendent that the old books of account were sent to the Head Office in Bombay and were destroyed after the close of the year and that the books of the current year were available and were offered for examination.

In the meantime the Municipality appointed a Sub-Committee consisting of Mr. Buwalal Vakil, Vice-Chairman of the School Board and Mr. Shivrul Appa Deshmukh, Member of the School Board to examine the accounts. This Committee composed of the

President's men who were far from being well disposed to the institution, after examining the accounts reported on 2nd May 1927 that the accounts were kept in the best possible manner and that they could say nothing against the Hostel. The report was submitted to the Municipality.

Such a favourable report by his own men against an institution which he intensely disliked instead of changing the attitude of the President only served to exasperate him so much so that he still insisted upon producing books of accounts for the past years of 1925 and 1926. He was given from the Head Office the only reply that could be given namely that the old books of accounts of the Society are examined by auditors whose certified accounts are submitted and should be accepted and that current accounts are open for inspection to the Municipality at any time. Thereafter the Administrative Officer of the Municipality examined the accounts and certified that there was nothing wrong about them. This seems to have put the President to shame. For, thereafter he gave up his demand for producing the old books of accounts and intimated to the Superintendent that he would be content if the account books of the current year were produced before him. This was done and the President, I am glad to say, could find nothing against the institution. Disappointed at every stage to disqualify the institution on the ground of mismanagement the President at the time of the last budget meeting of the Municipality brought forth the proposal that the grant to the institution be stopped. But the allegations he then made against the institution were known to be false and malicious and were treated by the Municipal Councillors with the contempt they deserved All except one Councillor united in sanctioning the grant over the head of the President. It will thus be seen that far from the grant having been discontinued, the Municipality has in fact sanctioned the grant in its budget holding the allegation of its own President unworthy of belief. What has really happened is that the President after the grant was sanctioned refused to pay it out on the ground that the reply of the Society regarding the showing of accounts was not satisfactory.

Now I don't understand how the reply of the Society can be deemed to be unsatisfactory. The Society has always been ready to show the accounts of the current year. Regarding the production of accounts of the past years, the reply given by the Society is the only reply that can be given. For who on earth can produce books of years past? The demand is not only unreasonable but is perverse and can be met by no Society. From this, every fair minded man will see how the Municipality and its President in trying to expose, be it remembered, not a lie, in fact, but an implied lie have ended in giving publicity to issues of lies unmitigated by any extenuating circumstances whatsoever.....

Damodar Hall,
Parel, December 8, 1928.

B. R. AMBEDKAR” ¹

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¹: The Indian National Herald, dated 10th December 1928.