

INJUSTICE TO TILLERS OF SOIL

Analysis of Prakasam Committee's Recommendations

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Leader of the Independent Labour Party, has issued the following statement:—

I have read the recommendations of the Prakasam Committee on conditions in zamindari areas. While the view that the zamindar is no more than an assignee of revenue may be justified, the stand that the Committee has taken that no tenancy rights for the actual cultivator can accrue in lands belonging to proprietors of the soil is neither legally correct, nor just to the cultivator, nor conducive to the sound development of the agricultural economy.

It is legally incorrect, because grades of proprietary rights grown during that last century and have been recognised in law in all tenancy legislations. It is unjust to the cultivator, because the purpose of fixing a low rent or revenue is to leave a wide surplus for him and to provide him with a living income, to improve his farm and tide over scarcity years, and not to create a large number of smaller zamindars to enrich themselves both at the expense of the zamindar and the cultivator.

It is against the interests of agriculture, because proprietary interests ought not be allowed to exploit land as a property for rack-renting the cultivator as against its conservation for use for agricultural purposes.

The report of the Prakasam Committee is nothing more than an assessment of the distribution of the rack-rent collected from the cultivators among the superior holders.

MR. PRAKASAM'S RECENT REPLIES TO A QUESTION IN THE LEGISLATURE THAT TENANCY LEGISLATION WILL NOT BE UNDERTAKEN IN RAYATWARI AREAS BECAUSE RAYATWARI HOLDERS ARE PROPRIETORS OF THE SOIL SHUTS OUT ALL HOPES OF ANY GOOD COMING TO THE CULTIVATOR FROM THE CONGRESS MINISTRY.

I have no doubt that the Scheduled Class representatives in Madras will not be a party to any legislation which, in the name of proprietary rights, creates a new class of rent receivers. And I think that any support given by them to any such legislation would be grave betrayal of the interests of the cultivator.”¹

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¹: The Bombay Chronicle : dated 18th January 1939.