

RESIGNATION NOT DUE TO ILLNESS

Dr. Ambedkar's statement, New Delhi, October 12, 1951.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said here to-day that he had not resigned on grounds of illness.

In a Statement he said that in his letter of August 10 last, to the Prime Minister, he had referred to his illness but had not mentioned it as a ground for his resignation. He had mentioned it is a ground for getting higher priority for the Hindu Code. In their letter of resignation of September 27 last, he had not mentioned illness as a ground for his resignation.

"How anybody can spell out from those two letters that I resigned because of my health, I am unable to understand. I knew that attempts were being made to give such an impression, that is why I wanted to make a statement in the House so that nobody should be under any false impression."

The former Law Minister expressed surprise over the question about his statement in Parliament on his resignation having been raised against at 6 p. m. yesterday. After reading the press reports of what had happened in the House in his absence, he found that some confusion had been created in the minds of the members by what was said by the Prime Minister and the Deputy Speaker.

"Unfortunately," Dr. Ambedkar said, "the Prime Minister did not inform me that he was going to raise the question in the evening at six O' clock. If he had told me of his intention to do so, I would have certainly been present in the House to hear what he had to say, and offer my explanation there. But I received no such intimation from him and consequently was not present in the House.

"I, therefore, think it necessary to clarify the position. I have not been able to understand what exactly the Prime Minister wanted to gain by reading the correspondence between him and me. I can only guess. If the impression which the Prime Minister seems to be desirous of creating by reading the correspondence was that the ground for my resignation was my illness, it is not difficult to dispel that conclusion."

Propriety of Reading out Dr. Ambedkar's letters

Mr. Kamath's Query in Parliament,

New Delhi, October 12: The propriety of the Prime Minister's reading out to Parliament last evening the letters exchanged between Dr. Ambedkar and himself, without taking the permission of the former and without informing him, has raised in Parliament this morning by Mr. H. V. Kamath.

Soon after Dr. Ambedkar had taken his seat in the front bench amidst cheers. Mr. Kamath raised this question and asked whether Dr. Ambedkar would be permitted to make a statement commenting on the correspondence. The Deputy Speaker said that every member should speak for himself. He pointed out that he had fixed 6 p. m. last evening as the time Dr. Ambedkar to make the statement. At that time Dr. Ambedkar was not in his seat and the Prime Minister wanted to read out certain relevant papers and permission was given. No particular notice need be given to any member.

Clarifying his position, Dr. Ambedkar said that when he left the Chamber in the morning, he was quite sure that he had left the impression on the House and the Chair that he was not prepared to make a statement at 6 p.m. He was not saying that he felt injured by the Prime Minister's reading out the correspondence at 6 p.m. "knowing fully well that I had stated clearly in the morning that I was not going to obey your observations and make the statement at 6 p.m."

Dr. Ambedkar added :—

"Whether it was justifiable for the Prime Minister to have read out the letters or not is a matter I leave to the Prime Minister and yourself, because I have other channels open to me for correcting wrong impressions".

Closing the incident the Deputy Speaker said. It is always open to a member to change his mind and make the statement especially when once I had fixed 6 p. m. as the time for the statement."¹

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¹: The Times of India, dated 11-10-1951, the dates '11' seems to be incorrect—Editors.