

CABINET MISSION AND TRANSFER OF POWER

Editorial—Note

“The patriotic upsurge emanated from the I.N.A. Revolt and their Trials, the Revolt raised by the Royal Indian Naval Ratings and the Royal Indian Air Force seemed to break down the imperial structure. It was a clear indication that the Indian army was feeling and experiencing the pangs of freedom. Politics and nationalism had reached their ranks and magnetized their hearts. The Britishers knew that it was no longer possible for them to keep India in bondage. So on March 15, 1946, the British Prime Minister, Clement Atlee, acknowledged India’s right to attain full independence within or even without the British Commonwealth and said that they would not allow a minority to place their veto on the advance of the majority.

The British Premier sent out a delegation of three Cabinet Ministers, Sir Stafford Cripps, A.V. Alexander and Lord Pethick Lawrence who was then the Secretary of State for India, to discuss with Indian party leaders on the spot the question of resolving the political deadlock. The British Cabinet delegation* reached New Delhi on March 24, 1946.”

“Dr. Ambedkar was authorised by the Scheduled Castes Federation to place memorandum before the Cabinet Mission and plead the Scheduled Castes’ case with all force and insight. He emphasised the need of a provision in the Constitution for the election of Depressed Classes candidates through Separate Electorates and demanded adequate representation in the Central and Provincial Legislatures, in the Central and Provincial Executives, in the Public Services and the Public Service Commissions, Federal as well as Provincial. Dr. Ambedkar also urged for earmarked sums for the education of the Scheduled Castes and stressed the need of new settlement for them.

* For role of the British Cabinet Mission see Appendix-III.

¹: Keer, P 378.

On May 16, 1946, the Cabinet Mission for the final solution of the Indian deadlock, announced their scheme in the form of a 'State Papers' which contemplated a Formal Union of India with three groups of Provinces, a plan for Interim Government, and the formation of Constituent Assembly, the members of which were to be elected as a communal basis by the Provincial Legislatures and the representatives of the States joining the Union. The State Paper, however, had no reference to the demands of the Scheduled Castes as put forth by Dr. Ambedkar.¹

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar made strenuous efforts to secure the Constitutional Rights in the proposed Constitution for the Scheduled Castes. All these are depicted in the following documents which are self explanatory—Editors.

¹: Jatav; Dr. Ambedkar's Role in National Movement, Pp 184-185.