27

ASCERTAIN WISHES OF MINORITIES

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar while returning from London to India was interviewed at Karachi air port on November 15, 1946. The following is the report: Editors.

KARACHI, November 15, 1946 :- The hope that before the passing of the Act in Parliament transferring sovereignty to India the British Government would take some definite steps to ascertain the real wishes of the minorities, including the Depressed Classes, was expressed by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, in an interview here on his return from the United Kingdom.

Dr. Ambedkar urged the Congress even at this eleventh hour to grant the Depressed Classes separate political representation in order to ensure absolute peace between them.

He said that he discussed the Depressed Classes problems with the British Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for India as well as with Mr. Churchill, Mr. R. A. Butler, Lord Templewood, formerly Sir Samuel Hoare, who as Secretary of State for India piloted the India Act of 1935 and Lord Scarborough.

Dr. Ambedkar said that there was in Britain not only a great deal of sympathy but a general resentment that the Depressed Classes should have been ignored in the manner in which the Cabinet Mission had done. He added : The memorandum which I submitted and which contained an analysis of the figures of primary elections caused great surprise because the statement made by the members of the British Cabinet Mission in the Commons that the Congress represented the Scheduled Classes were absolutely disapproved by the figures. I am, therefore, quite certain that when the matter comes to be examined by Parliament at the time of the passing of the Act, transferring sovereignty, they will not be guided by the mere fact that the decision by Constituent Assembly with regard to minority safeguards is a decision arrived at by the majority and that some definite steps will be taken to ascertain the real wishes of the minorities concerned."

Asked whether he would participate in the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Ambedkar said he certainly would and added : "I

would act in a Constitutional manner to further our cause. After all constitutional means are exhausted, we shall then consider what other means we can adopt.,

Dr. Ambedkar left for Bombay by Air this afternoon."[1]

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[1]: The Times of India, Saturday, dated 16th November 1946. Reprinted : Khairmode, Vol. 8, P. 142-143.