20

SAPRU IN THE WRONG

New Delhi, December 31st, 1944.

"Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in a statement in reply to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's reference to the question of Scheduled Castes co-operation with the Conciliation Committee says:—

"I cannot help being surprised that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru seems to make a grievence of the fact that I refused to co-operate with this Committee. I should think that if anybody has a grievance, it is myself and not SirTej Bahadur Sapru.

"I have no doubt that in going about his business he started at the wrong end. If he wanted the different parties to the communal dispute to agree to appear before the Committee, it was not only desirable but necessary that, before finalising the personnel of the committees, he should have, in fairness show the list of the names to the leaders of the parties concerned and invited them to say whether they had any objections to those names. Instead of doing that, he first decides the personnel at his own sweet will and present the parties with a ' *fait accompli*,' leaving them to accept or reject it. To say the least of it, it is a very unfair, if not preposterous, way of appointing a Committee and expecting people to repose confidence in it.

Names Not Submitted

"When Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru approached me, he never gave me an inkling as to the sort of persons he was going to have in the Committee. We discussed only the general issue, namely, whether it was not desirable for an impartial body of people to consider the different demands put forward by different communities and to evaluate them and state which of those demands were reasonable and which were not. I certainly did expect that after that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru would let me have the names of persons he intended to put on the Committee. He never did that.

"In these circumstances, if I told Sir Tej Bahadur, I was not satisfied with the personnal of the Committee and, therefore, I could not undertake to co-operate with it. I do not think I am in the wrong.

Simon Parallel

"Sir Tej, at any rate, cannot say that my attitude is unresponsible. Everybody knows how in 1929 Sir Tej himself took the lead in opposing and non-co-operating with the Simon Commission on the ground that the personnel of that Commission was not in accordance with the general sentiments of the people of this country.

"Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru while he mentioned the fact that I had declined to co-operate, did not mention the other portion of my letter in which I have stated that if he was prepared to reconstitute his Committee so as to give me satisfaction, I was still prepared to co-operate with him. Evidently, he thinks he can get on with the Committee by examining the literature and resolutions issued by the different communities setting out their demands and getting a miscellaneous crowd from the various communities to co-operate with him. He is, of course, welcome to do that. All I want to say is this, that he has made a grievance against me for which, I have no doubt there is no cause, and if there is a cause for it, he is solely responsible for it."—A. P."[1]

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1. : The Free Press of India, dated 1st January 1945.