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INDIAN CITIZENS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS BEFORE THE LAW

Dr. Ambedkar's interview with Alan Campbell:—

"Government House, New Delhi,
Saturday, 24th April, 1948"

"They and I dined tonight amid fairy-lights on the lawn of the Delhi Gymkhana Club. Our host was Shri Krishna (well-known Delhi political correspondent), who had collected an interesting party. The principal guest was Dr. Ambedkar, the Minister for Law, the Leader of the Untouchables, and a colourful personality in Indian politics over the past twenty years. He is now one of the principal figures associated with preparation of India's new Constitution which finally removes the stigma of Untouchability from the Statue book. As part of his emancipation, Dr. Ambedkar, himself is Untouchable, has only recently married a lady doctor who is a Brahmin. The custom of centuries cannot be uprooted overnight, and the event has caused quite a stir. His wife was with him this evening, but, as it is the custom with so many Indian ladies on social occasion had little to say.

Dr. Ambedkar himself was in expansive viewing, gave us a revealing analysis of some of the features of the new Constitution. He pointed out, instance, that the special powers reserved for the judiciary under its provisions were greater than enjoyed by the United States Supreme Court. As evidence of the enduring quality of the 1935 Act, said that some two hundred fifty of its clauses has been embodied as they stood into the new Constitution.

We had a discussion on Cabinet Government, Dr. Ambedkar referred to the complaint that the present system was working too slowly in India. He thought that where the matter of policy affecting two department was involved the issue should at once be settled as between the Ministers concerned. He comments the Ceddes proposals and the system of non-departmental Cabinet chiefs with groups of departmental deputies under them. He said he was sorry. Mountbatten was leaving before the Constitution was finally

passed. The Commonwealth issue, he felt, was likely to be decided outside the Constituent Assembly." (Mission With Mountbatten. Pp. 318-20 by Alan Campbell—Johnson).

"The Indian Constitution, which was under active preparation and discussion during Lord Mountbatten's term of office, is a synthesis of the great Western charters of liberty. The obvious hiatus between the vision of this document and the realities of Indian life does not destroy the validity of the vision. It represents a great tribute to the liberalising influence of British thought, and is a fundamental attack upon the aims and aspirations of communalism. The Indian Constitution offers fresh hope for the eighty million Untouchables, who under purely Hindu dogma were parials polluting food with their shadow, but are now Indian citizens with equal rights before the law. It is significant that one of the principal personalities in Nehru's Government, and as such a prominent personality in the preparation and sponsorship of the Constitution, is Dr. Ambedkar, the well- known leader of the Untouchables." [1]

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1. : Mission with Mountbatten, Pp. 361-362, by Alan Campbell-Johnson. Reprinted : Khairmode, Vol. 10, Pp. 36-38.