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WE ARE THE MAKERS OF THE DESTINY OF THIS COUNTRY

Accompanied by P. N. Rajbhoj, General Secretary, Scheduled Castes Federation and V. Ramkrishan, ACM, Labour Department, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar reached Rajmahendri on Thursday the 28th September 1944 in the afternoon. Dr. Ambedkar was presented with Civic Address on behalf of Municipality in the Museum Hall. Somina Kameshwar Rao, Municipal Chairman and K. Vyankatadri Chaudhari, Municipal Commissioner welcomed Dr. Ambedkar.[1]

While replying to the Civic Address, Dr. Ambedkar said :

"We are meeting today under the shadow of very sad piece of news that has come to us. It has been reported that the talks between Mr. Gandhiji and Mr. Jinnah have failed. We have never been able to muster together. We have never been able to sink our differences and patch up things in order to march on. Something has always happened at the most critical moment. The Old Testament somewhere says, "The Nation which has lost its vision will be destroyed." One of the defects which I have noticed in Mr. Gandhi is the complete lack of vision. I wonder what the founders of the Congress would think of this Pakistan. Those who met for the first time in 1885, in order to see that India get Home Rule, no doubt, by stages, never dreamt that the movement will be carried on in such a manner, in such a spirit, that just about the time when India was about to reach her destiny, India would be cut up in two parts. We are told that the old fellows who had started the Congress were too slow. They were only arm-chair philosophers and were doing nothing but sending letters to the Viceroy. It was said that those methods did not suit the country. The result was that the most dynamic movement was started under the aegis of Mr. Gandhi. We had mass movement and agitations. We had everything except light and vision. Mr. Gandhi is approximated to a large extent to Abraham Lincoln. The attitude that Abraham Lincoln took with regard to the question of slavery was very much the attitude about the minorities problem that Mr. Gandhi took in India. Abraham Lincoln was passionately devoted to the Union. He

[1] : Khairmode, Vol. 9, P. 394.

was the upholder of the slave system, yet the Proclamation of the Freedom of the Slaves was issued in 1863 by Abraham Lincoln. He was free to do so in order to win the Negroes to get their help for the Northern Armies. Mr. Gandhiji's attitude seemed to be exactly the same. He always said, "I want freedom, but I want *Chaturwarnashram Dharma*." One of the reasons why Mr. Gandhi had failed all along was because of this attitude of his. I hope and trust that Mr. Gandhi will be able to realise the mistake.

Every one desired Independence for the country. They did not, however, realise that there is in politics a graded system of equality. They wanted equality and liberty and freedom for minorities. Any Indian who objects to the provision of safe guards to the minority interests is not a friend of this country and he is not a democrat. He is the enemy of the country. May I again say that, this is probably the finest opportunity that this country has. There are many friends who believe that because the British Government has not given any clear declaration to the position of India after war that they are rather apprehensive as to what will happen. He did not feel apprehensive about India's future after the war. He did not believe that the destiny of this country would depend on the decision of one man, however great he might be, in the British Empire. We are the makers of the destiny of this country. The whole thing depends on how much solidarity we can build up among ourselves. If we could manage our internal affairs, our quarrels in such manner that we can draft a constitution which can be signed by all those who are the representatives of the different sections and communities in the country. We can send Mr. Gandhi as the single and solitary representative of the people to the Prime Minister or to any body. It depends upon what ideas Mr. Gandhi will have....."[1]

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[1] : The Hindu dated 2nd October 1944.