

***ON PARTICIPATION IN THE WAR : 2**

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (Bombay City): Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the outset I must mention that I am somewhat chilled at the decision that you have taken that you will not allow more than 45 minutes for any particular member who happens to be in the position of a leader. You also repeated the same just now ; and having regard to the notes that I have before me, I am afraid that I must begin by asking your indulgence for some extension of time. I might tell you that my request is not of an extraordinary character. There is a precedent. We all know the story in *Mahabharata* about king Yayati. He happened to marry in his old age a young girl by name Devyani. After marriage he found that there was so much discrepancy between the ages of the couple that unless some period was added to his youthful life, the marriage would be of no use at all. Turning round he began to find out whether there was any charitable soul who would consent to deduct a part of his life and add the period to his own. He could find no one. Fortunately, his son Pururava who was a very dutiful son, much younger and who needed all his youth to himself, came forward and offered a part of his life to that of his father. Sir, I would assure, you that those who are sitting behind me—and, if I may say, my relations with them are those of sons and father—have all agreed to have some deduction made from their time in order that that may be added to mine. But I know that unless you bless the bargain and sanction it, the addition cannot be made. It may be that this addition may not be necessary, but should the events turn out that the addition is necessary, I will proceed in the hope that you will sanction it ultimately.

Sir, turning to the resolution which the Honourable the Prime Minister has moved, I cannot help saying that this resolution to my mind, seems to be improper and inopportune. This resolution asks the House to demand a certain declaration, and further proceeds to invite the House to sanction a certain procedure in case those demands are not met. First of all, I want to know who made these demands ? Obviously, the demands which have been made to His Excellency the Viceroy were not made by this House.

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The Honourable the Prime Minister did not think this House to be a worthwhile place for him to table the demands in the name of the country and to have the backing of this House before they were sent to His Excellency the Viceroy. The demands, as we know now, were presented by what the Honourable the Prime Minister will call his "High Command" and which I say is nothing but a vigilance committee appointed to check the bold actions of the ministers. (Laughter). My submission is, that this was the proper place where the demands ought to have been placed. He did not choose to do so. If they were tabled they were passed at the back of this House by somebody unknown to the constitution and unrecognised by this House, and after having done that, he now quietly comes to the House and says : "Well, the thing has been bungled ; come to our rescue." I submit that this is a most insulting procedure.

The second thing which I have to say about this resolution is, that this resolution asks for a declaration in certain terms. Now, Sir, it seems to me that a certain kind of declaration has been made by His Excellency the Viceroy. That declaration was known to the people of India on the 18th of this month ; some seven clear days have now elapsed after that. Now all that the House, in all propriety, could do is to express its opinion that that declaration is not a satisfactory declaration ; but the resolution does not do that. Although there is a declaration ; the Honourable the Prime Minister has worded his resolution without in any way expressing whether that declaration is acceptable or not, or whether some other declaration ought to be made or not. The whole thing seems to sound trivial. Sir, I do not wish to proceed in that strain, because my honourable friend the Prime Minister has requested the members of the Opposition to treat this resolution as though it was a non-contentious matter. But I would say that it is very seldom that a dog gets a chance to eat a dog, and such a resolution is one which shows that a dog can eat a dog. However, I am prepared to respond to the invitation of the Honourable the Prime Minister and treat the resolution and the amendments which have been tabled in a non-contentious manner.

Sir, as I am going to make some comments upon the resolution as such, and also upon the amendments, I would like at the outset to show to the House in what respect I agree with the resolution. In so far as the resolution says that India has been made a participant in the war between Great Britain and Germany without the consent of the people of India, I am in wholehearted agreement with it. In fact, I would have gone a step further because the position is really very anomalous. Here we are tied down to the chariot wheel of the British Cabinet. The British Cabinet controls the foreign policy of the Empire. In the making of the foreign policy this country has no voice. In the declaration of war this country has no voice. In the settling of peace terms this country has no voice.

Probably an invitation might be extended to some members from the public to go to Versailles or to some other place, where the peace is signed, in order to sign their names on the document. Beyond that, this country, I am sure, will not have any place. That is certainly a most anomalous position. I say that India has a greater right to participate in the foreign policy of Great Britain, a far greater right than the Dominions have. As the Honourable the Prime Minister referred in the course of his speech, under the Statute of Westminster it is open to a Dominion to declare herself to be neutral and to exempt herself from the consequences of a war for the outbreak of which she was not responsible. Unfortunately, we have at present no Dominion Status. We have no right to declare ourselves to be neutral. Without our will and without our consent we are dragged in this slaughter ; and I say that, if this is the case, we have a far greater right than any Dominion possesses in order to insist that we shall be consulted all along. Therefore, so far as that portion of the resolution is concerned, I give my full support.

There is one other matter also to which I would like to make a brief reference. Although this country has been involved in the war without her consent, as the resolution rightly says, this country from the standpoint of defence, is in a most defenceless condition. Supposing the question of defence of this country arose, then where is the army? Where is the navy? Where are the aeroplanes that can protect this country? As a member of the Round Table Conference, I remember we fought for one principle, and that principle was that the defence of India should be recognised as the responsibility of Great Britain and Indians should be taught to defend themselves. I am sorry to say that so far as I have been able to observe the defence policy of the Government of India, they have not taken any satisfactory measures along that line. I see nothing in their policy so far as the fulfilment of that principle is concerned. Therefore, I think that also is a legitimate part of the complaint which India could make. Now these are the points on which I agree with the Government ; but I am sorry to say that there my agreement ends.

Sir, as you know, I have tabled in all four amendments. They are three, but they are in fact four. I propose to take together the two amendments which deal with the rights of the minorities, and I will take the other amendments separately. I do not propose to read the amendments again to the House, because I want to economise time. The House fully knows what the amendments are. The Honourable the Prime Minister ended by drawing the attention of the House to the principle embodied in the constitution of the United States. He read a passage from the constitution of the United States which referred to democracy, to life and liberty and to pursuit of happiness. And he commended that those of us who are sitting on the Opposition benches should have a regard for that ancient and

very human document which embodied the principles of democracy. Sir, I would on my part, take the liberty to remind the Honourable the Prime Minister of the condition of affairs relating to South America. He referred to North America, and I shall be referring to South America—they are countries which are very near each other. My honourable friend the Prime Minister, I am sure, will recall the fact that when the Spanish American colonies such as Brazil and others separated from the Spanish empire, they also thought of framing their own constitutions. They did not know how to frame their own constitutions. Consequently, they sought the assistance of a man whom I am sure the Honourable the Prime Minister is familiar with. What they did was this—they referred the matter to Jeremy Bentham. Jeremy Bentham must be known to every lawyer, if not to the outside world. Jeremy Bentham was a great legislator; he was a man who indulged in formularies; he was a man who indulged in symmetrical classification of things; he wanted to reform the English law on the basis of pure rationalism. The South American colonies thought that a man who believed in nothing but applying reason and who believed in doing things a priori was a proper person who would be asked to frame a constitution for themselves. They sent emissaries with briefs, I believe, marked, as they usually are for counsel, to draft the constitution. There were innumerable colonies in South America, all spilt out of the old Spanish empire. Jeremy Bentham jumped at the opportunity of drafting constitutions for these new countries in South America. He took great pains and framed the most elaborate documents. I see the Prime Minister laughing, because he knows the facts. And, Sir, they were shipped all these documents, constitutional documents framed by Jeremy Bentham, were shipped over to South America, for the protection of the life and liberty of the people and for the intonement, if I may say so, of the democratic principle. When they went there, they were tried by the South American people for a few years. And afterwards every constitution that was framed by Jeremy Bentham broke to pieces, and they did not know what to do with the surplus copies that had arrived; and all the South American people decided that they should be burnt publicly.

Sir, the point that I want to emphasise is this, that a constitution, like a suit, must fit. A constitution which does not fit is no constitution—it cannot be a constitution. For instance, the coat which the Honourable the Home Minister, with his slim body, is wearing could not fit on the corpulent structure that I carry. (Laughter). Could it? Would a suit made for a man with a hunch-back fit a normal man's back? (Laughter). Can a shoe which fits a man who can place his feet firmly and straight on the ground fit a man who has a crooked leg? It cannot. Therefore, in talking about democracy, we must talk about fitting theories to facts. Now, the point that I am going to elaborate is this: Would the principle of democracy suit the

people of India ? My honourable friend the Prime Minister has not enlightened us by enunciating what he regards as the principles of democracy. But I take of that what he means by democracy is majority rule, because unless we all accept majority rule as the fundamental working principle, there can be no political democracy. Obviously that is the root, that is the basis, that is the line from which we must proceed to discuss this question.

Now, Sir, I think everybody will agree with one observation that the Leader of the Opposition made, namely, that in this country, the facts being what they are, there is one thing which is unalterable ; and that one thing which is unalterable is this, that the Hindus will remain in a majority, and the Muslims and the Scheduled Castes will remain in a minority, that, I submit, is an incontrovertible fact, a fact which whether we believe in one thing or other, we must all accept. Now the question, to my mind, is a very simple question, and I am going to deal with it purely from the standpoint of what are called the untouchable people of this country. To begin with, I will ask the House to note the relative position that we shall occupy under this democracy. Under this democracy which the Prime Minister wishes to be established in this country one thing, as I said, will be unalterable, namely, that there will be a Hindu majority, and, scattered all throughout this land, scattered all throughout every village there will be a small appendix, if I may use that expression a few clusters of huts, a few mud-houses of people who are called untouchables. In every village you will have in juxtaposition a colony consisting of Hindus, and a Maharwada or a Chambharwada or a Bhangiwada or whatever you like to call it attached to that colony. That will be the unalterable fact.

Now, my honourable friend asks me to submit to democracy. Well, I think he will allow me to say that my answer to this question would depend upon how this majority behaves towards me. Is this majority a tolerant majority ? Does this majority recognise equality, liberty and fraternity ? Will this majority permit me to live, to breathe, to grow ?

The Honourable Mr. B. G. Kher : Of course, it will.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : What is the attitude of the majority ? That is the only question that will have to be considered. My honourable friend said "Yes". But let us look to the facts. I am not going to travel into past and ancient history ; I propose to begin with the year 1929. The House knows that in the year 1929 the Bombay Legislative Council, by a resolution, appointed a committee to enquire into the grievances of what are called the Depressed Classes and the Aboriginal Tribes. That committee was presided over by an officer, named Mr. Starte, who was in charge of the criminal tribes. I was a member of that committee ; my colleague, Dr. Solanki, was a member ; the rest were Hindus. I would mention particularly one person, who happened to be a member of this

committee, and that was Mr. Thakkar, because I know that my honourable friend the Prime Minister will far more readily accept the testimony of Dr. Thakkar than of myself. Now, Sir, what was the attitude of the majority of the Hindus towards the depressed classes in the year 1928 ? I will just take your permission to read one paragraph from this report. Para. 102 of this report says :

“Although we have recommended various remedies to secure to the Depressed Classes their rights to all public utilities we fear that there will be difficulties in the way of their exercising them for a long time to come. The first difficulty is the fear of open violence against them by the orthodox classes. It must be noted that the Depressed Classes form a small minority in every village, opposed to which is a great majority of the orthodox who are bent on protecting their interests and dignity from any supposed invasion by the Depressed Classes at any cost. The danger of prosecution by the Police has put a limitation upon the use of violence by the orthodox classes and consequently such cases are rare.

The second difficulty arises from the economic position in which the Depressed Classes are found today. The Depressed Classes have no economic independence in most parts of the Presidency. Some cultivate the lands of the orthodox classes as their tenants at will. Others live on their earnings as farm labourers employed by the orthodox classes and the rest subsist on the food or grain given to them by the orthodox classes in lieu of service rendered to them as village servants. We have heard of numerous instances where the orthodox classes have used their economic power as a weapon against those Depressed Classes in their villages, when the latter have dared to exercise their rights, and have evicted them from their land and boycott is often planned on such an extensive scale as to include the prevention of the Depressed Classes from using the commonly used paths and the stoppage of sale of the necessities of life by the village Bania. According to the evidence, sometimes small causes suffice for the proclamation of a social boycott against the Depressed Classes. Frequently it follows on the exercise by the Depressed Classes of their right to the use of the common well, but cases have been by no means rare where a stringent boycott has been proclaimed simply because a Depressed Class man has put on the sacred thread, has bought a piece of land, has put on good clothes or ornaments, or has carried a marriage procession with the bridegroom on the horse through the public street.”

That was the condition in 1928. The question I should like to ask is this : Has there been any change since 1928? Now, Sir, so far as evidence is available to me, I have no hesitation in saying that the situation has not only not changed, but has worsened. I will give a few illustrations in order to support my contention.

The first thing I would refer to is the election of 1932 that took place

to the Legislative Council. As my honourable friend the Prime Minister would recall, in 1932 the Congress boycotted the legislature. They refused to fight the elections. Now, Sir, the Congress in 1932—I stand to be corrected if the date is wrong; I quote it from memory—

An Honourable Member : It was 1930.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : 1930 ; the Congress in 1930 adopted various devices to scare away people, to persuade people not to participate in the elections. Sir, I should like to remind the House that that was the year in which the civil disobedience movement had also begun. And, if I mistake not, according to Congressmen, that is a momentous year, because it was the year in which the Dandi March took place. Sir, what were the slogans that were used by Congressmen in 1930 in order to prevent the people from joining the legislature ? One slogan used by these people was this, so far as I remember : Council may jana haram hay. But that was not all. The other slogan was this : Council may kon jayaga ? Dhed jayaga ; Chamar jayaga. These were the slogans that Congressmen had used. (Interruption). Please. If my honourable friends want evidence, I will produce unimpeachable evidence. And I may say in this House that the slogan was so insulting that even the *Times of India* felt it necessary to write an editorial about it. Now, Sir, the point that I was illustrating was this : that Hindus, even of the Congress persuasion,—who say that they have forgotten caste, who say that they have forgotten religion, who say that they have forgotten untouchability—, Hindus even of the Congress persuasion used that slogan. If, Sir, the pick of the nation as I see here, the best informed, the most enlightened part of the Hindu community, is capable of expressing this kind of abomination towards a community so helpless, so downtrodden, what can you expect from the orthodox to whom the law of Manu is far greater than the law passed by my honourable friend the Prime Minister ?

Sir, let me take another case. I am taking mostly cases from Gujarat, for a very deliberate reason, because I am told that that is the most enlightened part of our presidency. The instance I am speaking of now comes from a village called Kavita in Dholka taluka in the Ahmedabad district. Let us all be particular about it. In this case, the facts were these. On a certain day, a certain Brahmin of the village had assaulted certain members of the untouchable community resident in Kavita. My honourable friend may note that these facts are taken from the *Harijan*, the last word on it.

The Honourable Mr. B. G. Kher : I had been to that place ; I know the incident. The honourable member need not quote it.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : The facts were these. A certain Brahmin assaulted certain members of the untouchable community in that village. Thinking in their impudence, if I may say so, that it was possible for these untouchables to have a Brahmin prosecuted and punished, they took it into their heads to go to the District Police to lodge a complaint against

the assailant. In the meantime, what had happened was this. On the day on which the male members of the untouchable quarters had gone out, an invasion of the quarters of these untouchables took place by caste Hindus of the village. Their houses were demolished, their roofs were thrown out. Finding that the male members were not present to receive blows, all these gentlemen lay in wait till evening thinking that these people would return at night. Some women who had come to know their plan sneaked out of the village and met the male members half way at night and told them that it was most dangerous to come to the village, because their life was not safe. These people spent the night outside the village and did not return. The next day, they came back in a scattered manner without being noticed, and managed to come to the village. They found that all their huts were demolished. Subsequently, they came to know that the village had declared a boycott. They were not allowed to purchase anything from the village Bania. Not only that, the villagers went further, purchased tins of kerosine oil and poured it into the watering place from where these people used to get their water. Then, they felt that something ought to be done. They thought, ill-advised as they were, they should have recourse to law. They went again and lodged a complaint. Some Congress friends of theirs intervened. What did they do ? Did they help these poor untouchables to vindicate their rights ? No. They persuaded them to withdraw the complaint and submit quietly. The distressing part of the whole business is here. What wrong have these untouchables of Kavita done ? Why were they persecuted in this manner ? For no other reason but this. The untouchables of Kavita persisted in sending four of their children and admitting them in the school where they should be admitted according to the orders of Government.

The next case to which I am coming is the case of a Bhangi boy who had the misfortune to be appointed a talati. His name is Parmar Kalidas Shivram. With your indulgence, I propose to read what Parmar Kalidas Shivram said at a public meeting in Bombay under the chairmanship of Mr. Indulal Yagnik at which I was also present. I was tremendously moved on hearing the story. I asked him to give me in writing the whole thing. I have merely translated what he has given to me in writing. This is the story :

“I passed the vernacular final examination in 1933. I have studied English up to the 4th Standard. I applied to the Schools Committee of the Bombay Municipality for employment as a teacher but I failed as there was no vacancy. Then I applied to the Backward Class Officer, Ahmedabad, for the job of a Talati and I succeeded. On the 19th February 1938, I was appointed a Talati in the office of the Mamlatdar of the Borsad taluka in the Kaira district.

Although my family originally came from Gujarat I had never been in Gujarat before. This was my first occasion to go there. Similarly, I did

not know that untouchability would be observed in Government offices. Besides, in my application the fact of my being a Harijan was mentioned, and so I expected that my colleagues in the office would know before hand who I was. That being so, I was surprised to find the attitude of the clerk in the Mamlatdar's office when I presented myself to take charge of the post of Talati.

The Karkun contemptuously asked, "Who are you ?" I replied, "Sir, I am a Harijan." He said, "Go away, stand at a distance. How dare you stand so near me. You are in office, if you were outside I would have given you six kicks. What is this audacity to come here for service !" Thereafter he asked me to drop on the ground my certificate and the order of appointment as Talati. He then picked them up.

While I was working in the Mamlatdar's office at Borsad I experienced great difficulty in the matter of getting water to drink. In the verandah of the office there were kept cans containing drinking water. There was a waterman in charge of these water cans. His duty was to pour out water to clerks in office whenever they needed it. In the absence of the waterman they could themselves take water out of the cans and drink it. That was impossible in my case. I could not touch the cans for my touch would pollute the water. I had, therefore, to depend upon the mercy of the Waterman. For my use there was kept a small rusty pot. No one would touch it or wash it except myself. It was in this tin that the waterman would dole out water to me. I could get water only if the waterman was present. This waterman did not like the idea of supplying me with water. Seeing that I was coming for it he would manage to slip away with the result that I had to go without water and the days on which I had nothing to drink were by no means few.

I had the same difficulties regarding my residence. I was a stranger in Borsad. No caste Hindu would rent a house to me. The untouchables of Borsad were not ready to give me lodgings for the fear of displeasing the Hindus who did not like my attempt to live as a clerk. Far greater difficulties were in regard to food. There was no place or person from where I could get my meals. I used to buy 'bhajias' morning and evening, eat them in some solitary place outside the village and come and sleep at night on the payment of the verandah of the Mamlatdar's office. In this way I passed four days. All this became unbearable to me. Then I went to live at Jentral, my ancestral village. It was six miles from Borsad. Everyday I had to walk twelve miles. This I did for a month and a half.

Thereafter the Mamlatdar sent me to a Talati to learn the work. This Talati was in charge of three villages, Jentral, Kanpur and Saijpur. Jentral was his headquarters. I was in Jentral with the Talati for two months. The headman of the village was particularly hostile and offensive. Once he said, "You fellow, your father, your brother are sweepers who sweep

the village office and you want to sit in the office as our equal ! Take care, better give up this job."

One day the Talati called me to Saijpur to prepare the population table of the village. From Jentral I went to Saijpur. I found the headman and the Talati in the village office doing some work. I went, stood near the door of the office and wished them good morning, but they took no notice of me. I stood outside for about 15 minutes. I was already tired of life and felt enraged at being thus ignored and insulted. I sat down on a chair that was lying there. Seeing me seated on the chair the headman and the talati quietly went away without saying anything to me. A short while after, some people began to come to the village library. I could not understand why an educated person should have led this mob. I subsequently learnt that the chair was his. He started abusing me in the worst terms. Addressing the Ravania, that is, the village servant, he said, "Who allowed this dirty dog of a bhangi to sit on the chair?" The Ravania unseated me and took away the chair from me. I sat on the ground. Thereupon the crowd entered the village office and surrounded me. It was a furious crowd ranging with anger, some abusing me, some threatening to cut me to pieces with a dharia and I implored them to excuse me and to have mercy upon me. That did not have any effect upon the crowd. I did not know how to save myself. But an idea came to me of writing to the Mamlatdar about the fate that had befallen me and telling him how to dispose of my body in case I was killed by the crowd. Incidentally, it was my hope that if the crowd came to know that I was practically reporting against them to the Mamlatdar they might hold their hand. I asked the Ravania to give me a piece of paper which he did. Then with my fountain pen I wrote the following on it in big bold letters so that everybody could read it :—

"To the Mamlatdar,

Taluka Borsad.

Sir,

Be pleased to accept the humble salutations of Parmar Kalidas Shivram. This is to humbly inform you that the hand of a mean death is falling upon me today. It would not have been so if I had listened to the words of my parents. Be so good as to inform my parents of my death."

Now, I will refer to certain instances showing the behaviour of the majority towards the Scheduled Castes. One is the case from the Kekatnim-bhore village, taluka Jamner. It is as follows :—

"The Depressed Class people of this village have given up observance of any Hindu festival and have adopted a clean mode of living. One holiday they were asked by the caste Hindu to provide for their Holi cowdung from the fields. The Depressed Class people did so. But they did not have Holi and hence they did not provide for fire to the caste Hindus. Therefore the Hindus rushed into their colony, beat them in

their homes and have declared severe boycott on them and have made their life miserable.”.

Another case is a case from Vadali village in Jamner taluka. In that village a marriage procession of the Depressed Class people was not allowed to pass through the common gate of the village. The procession was broken and the caste Hindus did not allow the marriage ceremony to be performed on the same day. The Depressed Class people were socially boycotted.

Then there is another case from Manded in Amalner Taluka. In Manded the Depressed Class people held a conference and passed a resolution supporting abandonment of bad habits and to take to a clean mode of life. Some of the caste Hindus did not like the idea. They killed one small pig and put it into the drinking water of the Depressed Class people. This process was repeated twice. The Depressed Class people are now socially boycotted and harassed. Many of the Depressed Class people have vacated their places due to harassment.

Sir, I do not wish to repeat *ad infinitum* cases which show how intolerant this Hindu majority is so far as the untouchables are concerned. I may say that I will take not only a day but probably a month in order to recount all the material that I possess.

Now, the next question that I ask is this: What protection do the Scheduled Castes get as against this harassment? On that point before I make my submission to the House, I would like to draw the attention of the House to the composition of the administration of this country. I have only figures for the Bombay Presidency with me but, in my judgment, these figures are the typical ones; they would be true not only of this province but they would be true of any part of India. How is the administration of this presidency manned? This is how it is manned. I am taking the figures given by the Government themselves; they are not my own figures. I am taking, first of all, the Scheduled Castes and the Revenue Department. So far as the District Deputy Collectors are concerned, they are 33 and there is only one person belonging to the Scheduled Castes. There are hundred mamlatdars in this province; out of these hundred mamlatdars there is only one from the Scheduled Castes. There are 34 Mahalkaris, but there is none from the Scheduled Castes. There are 246 Head Karknns, but there is none from the Scheduled Castes and, coming to the number of clerks in the Revenue Department, they total 2,444. Of them, persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes are just 30.

Now let us take the Public Works Department. In the Public Works Department there are 829 clerks. In this number of 829 clerks the Scheduled Caste people are just seven.

In the Excise Department there are 189 clerks. Of them, the Scheduled Castes can claim not more than three.

Coming to the Police Department, according to the figures given, the

total number of sub-inspectors is 538. In this number of 538 the untouchables are only two. It is, therefore, obvious that the composition of the administration is entirely Hindu. No question on that point at all.

I would further draw the attention of the House as to how the position of the Scheduled Castes stands in comparison with the other minorities in this province. In the Revenue Department, so far as the district deputy collectors are concerned, out of 33, 8 are Muslims, 3 are Christians and only 1 belongs to the Scheduled Castes. Out of the 100 mamlatdars, 30 are Muslims, 3 Christians and 1 belonging to the Scheduled Castes. Out of 34 Mahalkaris there are 4 Mohomedans, 3 Christians but no man from the Scheduled Castes. Out of 246 Head Karkuns, 17 are Mohomedans, 7 are Christians but no one from the Scheduled Castes. Out of the total number of 2,444 clerks, there are 283 Mohomedans, 61 Christians, 58 backward class people and 30 Scheduled Caste people. In the Police Department, out of 538 sub-inspectors, 106 are Mohomedans, 17 are Christians, 6 are backward class people and only 2 are untouchables. In the Public Works Department out of 829 clerks, 41 are Mohomedans, 28 Christians, 7 Backward Classes and 7 untouchables. In the Excise Department out of 189, 13 are Mohomedans, 19 Christians and 3 untouchables.

Therefore, Sir, the position with which we must start at the outset is that the Hindus are not only in a majority so far as the population is concerned, but the Hindus are in a majority so far as the administration is concerned. And the question that I want to ask the Honourable the Prime Minister is this. I think I have shown, I trust to his satisfaction, that the Hindu majority must undoubtedly be reckoned as a hostile majority. He nods his head. He is welcome to his own conclusions. I shall not quarrel with him. But that is the position. How do the untouchables fare in the matter of protection against this harassment? I want to take again a few cases to show that the whole of the administration, manned as it is by the caste Hindus, is certainly hostile to the untouchables; that they do not wish, that they do not desire, and they do not care for justice when the parties to the quarrels are the caste Hindus on the one side and the untouchables on the other.

Now, the first case to which I want to refer is this. I am giving the number, so that my honourable friend may make inquiries. It is a judgment in Criminal Case No. 191 of 1938 on the file of the Magistrate of the First Class, Sangamner. In this case 7 Hindus were charged under offences falling under section 147, i.e., rioting, 323, 341, 452, 454 and 149 of the Indian Penal Code. The facts were briefly these. The complainant was an untouchable coming from the village which is called Vadgaon Langda. His case was that on a certain day, the villagers in a body of 200, armed with sticks, lathis and other instruments invaded the Mahar quarters and assaulted not only men but also the women. The hurts were grievous hurts.

They were in hospital for several days. Fortunately for them the police took up the case as a cognizable case, which they were bound to do on account of the fact that the hurt was a grievous hurt. These nine people were prosecuted in the court of the First Class Magistrate of Sangamner. The evidence was led by the Police. There was ample medical evidence to show that hurt was caused, and yet what happened? And, if I may say, these nine accused felt so convinced of their guilt that they had actually sent word to me that they were prepared to compromise the matter by paying Rs. 300 to the Mahar men and women who were assaulted. In my poor judgment, I advised the Mahars not to compromise, but to allow the law to take its course. And what did the law do? What did the Magistrate do? To the surprise of everyone, what the Magistrate did was that he acquitted all the accused.

Dr. K. B. Antrolikar : Sir, is it competent to the honourable member to offer comments on the judgment of a Magistrate?

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Certainly. I am stating facts.

The Honourable the Speaker : I was just considering the point. But I wanted to hear the facts which the honourable member, was stating. I do not think it will be proper on his part to criticise the judgment of the Magistrate?

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Sir, I am not criticising. I am only stating the facts. I am stating how much protection we get. It is to give a notion as to the protection that the untouchables get, that I am submitting this to the House. I am not challenging the judgment in any way. What I am saying is this : that these people, who felt in their heart of hearts that they were guilty, and were prepared to compromise by paying Rs. 300 by way of compensation, were ultimately acquitted by the Magistrate. And the point that I want to emphasise is this : Why was this assault committed? Why? The reason why the assault was committed was simply this, that the untouchables had the audacity to make an application to the Magistrate that some forest lands should be given to them. That was the offence that these poor people had committed. Another case to which—

The Honourable the Speaker : I would not like to “chill” the honourable member, to use the honourable member’s own expression, but I may only remind him that he has already taken one hour. He will take some more time, I am sure. But if he goes into the minor details of the cases which he is citing then I think another hour would not suffice, and I am anxious to see that the debate comes to a conclusion much sooner.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Sir, I just want to refer to two other matters in order just to complete my argument. Another case where the untouchables feel that the officers of the State have failed in giving them the protection to which they are entitled, is the case which comes from a village called

Akushi. Now, in this village what had happened was this. This village is in the Wai taluka in the Satara district. The facts are very simple. In that village there was some trouble between the untouchables and the touchable Hindus. The untouchables and the caste Hindus were at loggerheads. But the untouchables decided that on the *Ekadashi day* they should go for what is called *deo darshan*. The caste Hindus, who had proclaimed a boycott against them, did not want the untouchables to go for *deo darshan*. Notwithstanding this, the untouchables went. The result was that the Patel of the village, in combination with the other villagers, assaulted the untouchables who went to *deo darshan*. As usual, the untouchables filed a complaint against the Patel of the village. The position was this: The Patel knew that he was guilty. A summons was issued. He went away and would not take the summons. Then the summons was pasted on his door. He absconded for three months. Ultimately he came back and the law took its course. Even in this case the learned Magistrate, who tried the case, thought it fit to acquit the accused person who had absconded for three months knowing full well that he was guilty.

The other case to which I would make a brief reference is a case which comes from the Poona district from the village of Thatwadi in the Mulshi Peta. In that case what had happened was this. This is an inam village. Somebody had cut some two or three trees of the inamdar. The inamdar lodged a complaint with the police saying that some Mahars, without mentioning anybody, had cut his trees and had stolen the wood. The police officer who made the investigation prosecuted four persons in the court of the magistrate. Now what happened was, that in the course of the prosecution, the pleader who appeared for the accused persons called for the Public Prosecutor to produce the fabricated first information and entered the names of the four Mahars as accused persons although originally no mention of any name was there. Fortunately, the Mahars were acquitted, but the fact remains that even the police officers who are supposed to give protection to these untouchables go to the length of fabricating evidence in order to involve them in such cases.

Sir, I will not mention any more instances now. I think this story is a sickening one; it certainly sickens me. I know that the Hindus as a whole care nothing. They laugh at it. They only think that the problem in this country is the problem between the Hindus and the Muslims. I want to tell them that this is a far more serious problem and not only the Hindus, but even the State has not taken sufficient care of these people. If any argument was needed in support of the two amendments which I have tabled, namely, that in any constitution that is going to be framed the untouchables must have adequate safeguards, I think the arguments that I have now submitted to the House would be more than sufficient. I know that there is a certain amount of response on the other side. Two amendments have been tabled

by the Honourable the Home Minister. I must tell him frankly that I am not in a position to accept those amendments, and I shall tell the House presently why I cannot accept his amendments in preference to mine.

The first amendment of the Honourable the Home Minister is to the effect that the constitution shall provide adequate safeguards for the protection of the minorities. The position that I take is very simple and it is this : Not only we must have safeguards, but the safeguards must be to our satisfaction. That is the fundamental point. The Honourable the Home Minister evidently supposes that he is a trustee for the untouchables and that as a trustee he could enact certain provisions in the constitution which according to him, must suffice for the protection of the rights of the minorities. Now, I at once want to say that I repudiate that position. Nobody is my trustee ; I am my own trustee. They may make their constitution, but we shall claim our right. Whatever provisions they may make relating to our safeguards must be certified by the accredited representatives of the Depressed Classes that they are adequate. Their definition of adequacy will not satisfy me, and that is why I am not in a position to accept the first amendment moved by my learned friend.

With regard to the other amendment, no doubt the Honourable the Home Minister is prepared to meet half way. He is prepared to recognise that the minorities should have a voice in the governance of the country. There again I find that there is a certain amount of difference between him and me. My second amendment has been most deliberately worded. I have taken particular care to use the words “fundamental right,” and I want to explain my position to some extent as to why I have used the expression “fundamental right”. The one thing that I have realised in the course of the working of the constitution is this : Whether we admit it or not, the political system of this country is reflective of what we call the *chathur varna*. In that system, the theory was this : that the *Kshatriya* must rule ; that the Brahmin must advise ; that the Vaishya must trade but the Sudras or the Adi Sudras must serve. That was the position in olden times. I find in politics the position has changed to some extent. The Vaishya no longer trades. If he trades he trades in politics only. (Laughter). One thing has, however, remained unalterable, and it is that the Sudras shall have no part in the governance of this country. As I observe conditions in this country, as I observe the political constitution of the different cabinets that have been formed all throughout India, I notice that while we untouchables are Sudras or Adi Sudras socially, the Congress Government—if not the Congress Government, the exigencies of the situation—are such that it will ultimately lead us to become political Sudras. I will not tolerate it. I will shed the last drop of my blood to uproot that position. (Loud cries of “hear, hear”). I will not tolerate it if to the social dominance, the economic dominance and the religious

dominance which the Hindu exercises over me, is added the political dominance also. I will certainly not tolerate it. I repeat again that I will never allow it. We shall fight tooth and nail against politics being perverted for the purpose of establishing an oligarchy of a ruling class. I will not allow that. I repeat, I cannot allow a constitution which will mean liberty for them and empire over me. I will not allow a constitution in which I am not free and I am not an equal partner. Never will I allow that. Sir, I know these are strong words. But I want to remind the Honourable the Prime Minister that these words are not stronger than the words that were used by Ulstermen in connection with Ireland. I know that in this country when a man belonging to a minority community stands up to fight for the rights of his community, the whole crowd comes out against him, dubs him as communal, dubs him as an anti-Indian and dubs him as a tool acting in the hands of some bureaucrat working for the destruction of this country. Sir, I want to caution this crowd which is taking this attitude ; I say that the attitude that the minorities in this country are taking is far better, far nobler, than the attitude that Ulstermen took. What was the attitude of Ulstermen ? I remember reading the proceedings of a conference which was held at the instance of the late King Edward VII at Buckingham Palace in order to bring together the Southern Irish Nationalists and Ulstermen. The question was whether Ulster should be brought under the majority rule of the Southern Irishmen. What were the proposals made by the Nationalists in Southern Ireland to Ulstermen ? Many people probably might not be aware of that history. Those who are will know that Mr. John Redmond, who was the leader of the Irish Nationalist Party, did his level best in order to induce the Carsonites to come under the constitution. He said : "You can have any amount of weightage you like ; I do not mind." Let us not live under the belief that weightage is being talked of only in India ; weightage was talked of a great deal in Ireland, and Redmond was prepared to give weightage to Ulstermen. He was prepared to give power in the constitution to some officer to prevent any kind of discrimination being made against Ulstermen. A further provision that the Irish Nationalists were prepared to make for Ulstermen was this, that if after 10 years the Ulster people found that the Southern Irishmen—who undoubtedly would be in a majority—abused their powers and maltreated and persecuted the Protestants of Ulster County, the Ulstermen had the right to go out of the constitution. Sir, they were tremendous provisions. What was the reply of the Ulstermen to this offer? The reply that the Ulstermen gave to Redmond was this : "Damn your safeguards. We do not want to be ruled by you." Are we saying that? Would I not be entitled to say, in view of the stories that I have recounted, "Damn your safeguards. I do not want to be ruled by you?" I am not saying that. What I am saying is this : "Give me my safeguards, which I think are necessary ;

and you can have your democracy." I am sure that is a position which no man can quarrel with.

I would say one word in the end. I know my position has not been understood properly in the country. It has often been misunderstood. Let me, therefore, take this opportunity to clarify my position. Sir, I say this, that whenever there has been a conflict between my personal interests and the interests of the country as a whole, I have always placed the claim of the country above my own personal claims. (Hear, hear). I have never pursued the path of private gain. If I had played my cards well, as other do, I might have been in some other place. I do not want to say anything about it, but I did not do it. There were colleagues with me at the Round Table Conference who, I am sure, would support what I say—that so far as the demands of the country are concerned, I have never lagged behind. Many European members who were at the Conference rather felt embarrassed that I was the enfant terrible of the Conference. But I will also leave no doubt in the minds of the people of this country that I have another loyalty to which I am bound and which I can never forsake. That loyalty is the community of untouchables, in which I am born, to which I belong, and which I hope I shall never desert. And I say this to this House as strongly as I possibly can, that whenever there is any conflict of interest between the country and the untouchables, so far as I am concerned, the untouchables' interests will take precedence over the interests of the country. I am not going to support a tyrannising majority simply because it happens to speak in the name of the country. I am not going to support a party because it happens to speak in the name of the country. I shall not do that. Let everybody here and everywhere understand that that is my position. As between the country and myself, the country will have precedence ; as between the country and the Depressed Classes, the Depressed Classes will have precedence—the country will not have precedence. That is all that I would say with regard to these two amendments of mine.

Now, with regard to the other amendments, I do not propose to detain the House at all. I was rather surprised at the remarks made by the Honourable the Prime Minister with regard to a part of the resolution which says that whatever arrangements are to be made they should be made with the consent of the Provincial Governments. I knew that he was not aware of the amendment which is being moved by my honourable friend Mr. Mukadam, because, I see, those parts are to be deleted. Therefore, I will not make any comments upon that part of the resolution, although I must say that on principle I do not agree with this part of the resolution.

Now, Sir, before sitting down I would like to say one or two words with regard to the other amendments that are before the House. In doing so, I would advert first to the amendment moved by the honourable member the Leader of the Opposition. With regard to that amendment, I would

request the Prime Minister to note one thing which I think he has failed to note. It is true that the Leader of the Opposition in his amendment says that democracy has failed. But, Sir, the point that I wish the Prime Minister to note in making his comment upon the amendment of the Leader of the Opposition is this. We see now that he is opposed to democracy ; but, Sir, he may not be opposed to self-government. After all, democracy, autocracy, republicanism—these are all forms of government ; they all come under self-government. So long as the honourable member the Leader of the Opposition does not take the view that this country is not entitled to self-government, I think too much blame ought not to be attached to the unfortunate language that has been used. After all, he is with us.

And I do not understand my honourable friend the Prime Minister insisting upon democracy as the only solution. I remember reading the speeches of the leaders of the Honourable the Prime Minister at the Tripuri Congress. Unfortunately, the volume which I had with me I forgot to bring today. So much the better, because I could save time. But I think at the Tripuri Congress the friends of the Honourable the Prime Minister, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant, Mr. Rajgopalachari, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and all of them were singing the praises of Mussolini and Hitler—

The Honourable Mr. Morarji R. Desai : When ?

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I will quote chapter and verse if it is wanted. In fact I wanted to bring the book, but I forgot to bring it.

The Honourable Mr. B. G. Kher : I was present there, and I heard the speeches. What the honourable member says is not correct.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I am sorry, I have not got the volume with me now. If I had it, we could have decided the issue right now.

The Honourable the Speaker : There is no time for that now.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : All that I am saying is this, that so long as people in India have self-Government, whether the self-Government takes the form of democracy, whether it takes the form of autocracy, or whether it takes some other form, it is a matter of detail, about which there ought to be no quarrel. And, therefore, my submission is this : that in judging of the resolution, which, as I said, is somewhat unfortunately worded, his intention should not be misconstrued.

With regard to the amendment moved by the Congress Party, join with the Prime Minister in saying that they ought to be felicitated on the amendment that they have moved, and I agree with the main basis of their resolution. There is one amendment, however, to which I cannot lend any support, and that is the one which is to the effect that the House approves of the intention of the ministry resigning—or something like that. Now, Sir, what I should like to say is this. My honourable friend the Prime Minister would agree—he is as good a politician as any politician can be—that this is really a matter for their party caucus. It is not a matter for

the House to decide. Whether the ministry should go out or should not go out is entirely a matter for their party to decide. Why does he want my sanction for his going out?

The Honourable Mr. B. G. Kher : I do not want it.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Why does he need it? I put to him another conundrum. Suppose I bring an amendment to say that the ministry shall not come back unless I invite them, will he accept it? I am sure he would not tie himself down in that manner. If you want my sanction for going out, it will be some honour to me if you will also make your re-entry dependent on my sanction. But you will not do that, and I feel bound in conscience to oppose that amendment.

Sir, I thank you for the indulgence you have given me. (Applause).

The Honourable the Speaker : I would repeat my appeal to curtail the time. The honourable member Dr. Ambedkar has taken an hour and a half. I hope other honourable members will now curtail their time.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : I apologise, Sir.

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