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COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE CONFERENCE

Comments on the Report of Sub-Committee No. VII (Defence)—16th January 1931

**Dr. Ambedkar:* What I want to do is to move an amendment to clause (2) of paragraph 4 of this Report to the following effect, that immediate steps be taken to see that recruitment to the Indian Army is thrown open to all subjects of His Majesty, including the depressed classes, consistently with consideration of efficiency and the possession of the necessary qualifications. I do not merely wish to have this matter recorded ; I wish to move it as a substantive amendment, so that the sense of the House may be taken on it. My amendment is very simple one ; it seeks to remove all discriminations between the different classes of His Majesty's subjects to enter Military Service. No doubt I move the amendment primarily with a view to protecting the specific rights of the depressed classes, but in doing so I am not asking the Committee to confer any favour, I am asking the Committee to see us realize in practice the principle recognized in the Government of India Act, that no subject of His Majesty shall be debarred from entering any Public Service by reason of his caste, creed or colour. In doing so, therefore, I do not think I am asking for any special favour.

I may point out to you, Sir, this amendment is on the lines adopted by the Service Committee. If you will refer, Sir, to the Report of Service Committee appointed by this Committee, you will find that the Service Committee did make a serious effort to see that all subjects of His Majesty had a fair and adequate chance in Public Services of the country, and that they not only enunciated certain fundamental rights protecting subjects of His Majesty from being debarred from entering any Public Service, but they went out of their way to make special recommendations, mentioning certain specific communities, such as the Anglo-Indians and the Depressed Classes.

But, Sir, this amendment is not merely in the interests of the depressed classes. I submit it is also in the interests of all communities and subjects of His Majesty. I think, Sir, that it is a great public danger that any

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community in India should be allowed to monopolise any services in the country. I say it is a great public danger, because it not only excites a sense of superiority in these particular communities which have been placed in the position of advantage, but it also jeopardises the welfare of the people by making them dependent upon the protection afforded to them by certain specific communities, I therefore submit that as we are enunciating a new constitution for India, we ought to begin with a system which will permit every member of His Majesty's community to play such part as he is capable of by reason of his fitness in any Public Service of the country. And, if I may say so, Sir, the amendment which I am moving is only a logical consequence of the principle enunciated in this paragraph itself, because if you refer to sub-clause 1 of clause 4 you will see this:

> "The Sub-Committee consider that with the Government of the new political structure in India, the defence of India must to an increasing extent be the concern of the Indian people, and not of the British Government"

Now Sir, if that sentence has any meaning, that the defence of India should be to an increasing extent the concern of all the Indian people, it must be the concern of Indian people and not the concern of any particular community.

I therefore submit that this House do accept the amendment which I am proposing.

Dr. Moonje: With regard to Dr. Ambedkar's proposal that recruitment should be thrown open to all classes, I entirely agree with him provided the standard of efficiency is maintained.

Dr. Ambedkar: That is my amendment; I say that it shall be consistent with efficiency.

Sir Tejbahadur Sapru: I also associate myself with Dr. Ambedkar.

Mr. Basu: Mr. Chairman, I raise a point of order. This amendment overlaps a portion of the Department of the Services Committee which says, in clause 5(4) regarding membership of any Committee that castes, creed or race shall not be a ground for promotion or supersession in any public services.

Dr. Ambedkar: We excluded the Army for our consideration.

Mr. Thomas : Mr. Chairman, I do not think there is any need for the amendment. The paragraph was deliberately put in. "The Sub-Committee consider that with the development of the new political structure in India, the defence of India must to an increasing extent be the concern of the Indian people and not of the British Government alone." That does not say that the defence of India must be the special concern of any section in India. It was deliberately framed to cover that, and the word "Indianisation" is applicable.

Dr. Ambedkar: Yes, but I mean there may be Indianisation without there being the opportunity of men to all communities to enter Public Service. Indianisation may still mean the monopoly of some communities.

Chairman : The position is that, it will be noted.