

Mrs. Hamid Ali : The Mussulman never has an objection to taking his wife's name. As Sir Hari puts it, there is a certain feeling of delicacy, but I have never known any feeling of difficulty among Muslims to take their wives' names. It is true the women do not take their husband's name frequently, but they do it occasionally.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : It is in Hindu households, where the husband may object to taking the wife's name.

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C342. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : I thought the point of the question raised by Sir Hari Singh Gour was not whether there was some mental objection on the part of the Hindu husband or the Muhammadan husband to give utterance to the name of his wife. I thought the point of the question was : Which one of the two, or anyone, would object to the sort of enquiry that a registration officer will have to make ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : I do not understand what sort of enquiry the registration officer have to make.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : It will be, "Have you a wife ; if you have a wife, what is her name ?"

Sir Hari Singh Gour : And "How many wives have you got ?"

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : Who would object to the sort of enquiry that will have to be made by the registration officer is the point of the question.

Marquess of Lothian : "Is she over 21" ?

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : That is the sort of question.

C343. *Chairman* : The witness might care to interpose an answer now. Will you answer Dr. Ambedkar's suggestion, if you have any views ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Yes ; I can only say that I do not think anybody will have any objection to a question like that. I cannot understand the mentality that even prefers a question of this nature. It seems to me wholly incomprehensible.

C344. *Chairman* : Do you agree with that answer, Mrs. Hamid Ali ? Do you agree that there will be no difficulty ?

Mrs. Hamid Ali : I think it will depend on the way and the tone, in which a question like this is put. Ordinarily a question like that asked in good faith and with no evil intention would not be taken amiss by anybody at all.

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C346. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : I want to ask (Mrs. Hamid Ali) one more question. You come from Bombay. You know that there are certain distinct wards which are exclusively Musselman quarters. From your experience do you really think it is possible for an election officer to enter these wards and make these enquiries ?

Mrs. Hamid Ali : As far as Bombay is concerned, yes. I do not think anybody would take objection in Bombay, because in Bombay we have municipal elections so often and people are trained to this kind of thing.

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C352. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : I have not exactly followed what is stated in this supplementary statement No. 56 in regard to the representation of women in the Federal Assembly. It is said "We have repeatedly urged that we do not desire the communal virus to enter into our united ranks." You see that the proposal of the White Paper so far as the representation of women in the Lower House is concerned is not by communal electorates, but is by a general electorate by a single transferable vote ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Yes.

C353. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : From that point of view I should have thought it could not be objected to on the ground of its being a communal electorate ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : In the first place the seats in the Lower House of the Federal Assembly for Women are definitely to be on a communal basis. We have the Secretary of State's clear dictum on that point, in his evidence the day before yesterday or three days ago. In the Lower House of the Federal Assembly the reserved seats to which this indirect system of election refers are definitely to be on a communal basis.

C354. *Mr. M. R. Jaykar* : Your objection is to the reservation of seats on the communal basis ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Yes ; and further the indirect system of election to those seats by legislatures which must, in the very nature of the Constitution as proposed today, be on communal lines.

Miss Mary Pickford : May I just interpose here ? In the Secretary of State's reply when he said that the communal question was involved he was then referring to the women's seats on the Provincial Council of Bengal. It was not in reference to the seats in the Legislative Assembly.

C355. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : That is what I thought If I may draw the attention of the witness to page 89 of the White Paper, Appendix II, I should have thought that that matter had been settled once and for all. You also refer to it. "Election to the women's seat in each of the provinces to which one is allocated will be by the Members of the Provincial Legislature voting by means of the single transferable vote"?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Yes ; but my point is this. May I, then know if the Secretary of State in answer to Miss Pickford's question was referring to reserved seats on a communal basis for the Provincial Council of Bengal. May I understand whether the communal question does not enter into the reserved seats for women in the Lower House ? Are they to be reserved on a non-communal basis ? I should like to be clear on this point. I want to know on what basis these seats are to be reserved.

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C363. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Let me follow this further, because, to my mind, there is a certain amount of confusion, and I should like to get it cleared up. First of all, do you object to indirect election as such ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Yes.

C364. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : You do ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Yes.

C365. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : That is one objection?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Yes.

C366. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : You do not want the women representatives who are to represent women in the Federal Lower House to be elected by indirect election from the Provincial Legislative Council ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Most definitely not.

C367. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : You want some sort of a direct constituency provided ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : As we are against reserved seats, if they are reserved for us on a communal basis, of course, really this question as far as we are concerned does not arise, but we would, of course, want women to enter.

C368. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Let me put a question first to clear the ground. Do you want any seats to be reserved for women at all in the Lower House ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : I have said that we would recommend for the time being until such time as adult suffrage is obtained through our organisations, the acceptance of reservation, provided it were definitely laid down that the women's seats would be on a non-communal basis, and through the means of joint electorates. That is the only condition on which we would accept it.

C369. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : I quite follow two things. You want for the time being a certain number of seats reserved for women ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : We have always been opposed to reservation.

C370. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : The second thing I have understood from you — correct me if I am wrong — is that you do not want that provision for the representation of women in the Federal Lower House by any system of indirect election. That is the second point you have made ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Yes.

C371. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : What I want to ask you is that?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : You say we want reservation, I have told you we have always been opposed to reservation.

C372. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : You do not want any reservation at all ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : We have always said that we do not want reservation, but, as I say, if reservations are to be forced down on us as so many things have been forced down on us against our wishes, then the only conditions on which we would recommend the acceptance of reservation to our organisations would be definitely that they would be through a system of joint electorates and direct election, and if the seats were on a purely non-communal basis, that is to say, that we have the right to put on woman of our choice.

C373. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : If the matter were left to your choice, you

would not want any earmarking of seats for women as such in the Federal Lower House ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Certainly not.

C374. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : If it is to be, then you would want it on a system of joint electorate and direct election ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Yes ; direct election and a non-communal basis.

C375. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Let me take the non-communal basis. Do you want this constituency for direct election to consist only of women in that particular constituency ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : No ; we want men and women.

C376. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : You want this constituency to be a sort of composite constituency, in which the voters will be both men and women ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Yes.

C377. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : With this restriction that the candidate to be ultimately elected from that constituency would be a woman ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Yes ; that is to say, if a woman was to be elected to a reserved seat, it would naturally follow that it must be a woman.

C378. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : How would you provide these direct constituencies for the Legislative Assembly ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : As I say we have not got any constructive proposals on this because we have throughout been opposed to reservation. We would leave that to the discretion of the Committee, but if reservations were given to us, on the terms and the only terms on which we would accept it, we would leave it to the discretion of the Committee to form such constituencies as would be the most representative.

C379. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : I thought you said in answer to a question that you objected to this indirect system of election provided in the White Paper for the representation of women in the Lower House of the Federal Legislature, because, in a certain sense, it would be, what shall I say, communally-minded ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Yes.

C380. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : That the representatives in the various Provincial Councils would act in a communal manner in the exercise of their votes, and that is the ground of your objection ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : I have already answered this question, have I not?

C381. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Yes ; I want to put one more question. Further, I see, and I want to get this matter clear, that you object to the indirect election that is proposed in the White Paper because you think that the representatives of the different communities in the Provincial Legislature will be communally-minded, and, therefore, communal considerations will be imported in that election ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : May I give you the answer again? We object to indirect election first of all, because naturally we want direct election.

C382. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Yes. I follow that.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : That is the first objection. The second objection is that when this indirect election for us is proposed through the Provincial Councils, these Provincial Councils which are going to be on communal lines will naturally bring that communal question again to the women that they elect

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar : That is true, but I want to put a further question. I quite understand your objection that to have different representatives of the different communities in the Provincial Legislative Council would import a material consideration in the election of women.

C383. *Mr. M. R. Jayakar* : That is only one of your objections to the indirect election, but I understand another objection is also on the ground that it is indirect ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : I have said so more than once.

C384. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : The question is this. Take, for instance, your direct constituency, any constituency that you may like to take, for instance the City of Bombay. You will have in that constituency, which you would desire to be specially designed for the election of a woman representative in the Lower House, electorates of both men and women drawn from different communities ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Yes.

C385. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Do you mean to suggest that those voters who would take part in the election of a woman representative would be less communally-minded than the representatives of those larger communities in the Provincial Legislative Council who would be participating in the election of a woman candidate on the indirect basis ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Without doubt, because the communal question exists far more among the type which goes into the Legislature than it does among the masses of the people.

C386. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : But I want to draw your attention to this fact, that these very electorates will be electing the men who will be the voters for the indirect election ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : It may be so, but when it is a question of joint electorates and we are going to get the votes of joint electorates, the communal question will not exist there — it cannot exist — to the same extent that it does in a Provincial Council which has been elected by separate electorates and where the communal question is alive and must be very much alive.

C387. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Do you think that in the general electorate the men and women in India do not act in a communal manner ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Certainly not in the general mass.

C388. *Dr. B. R. Ambedkar* : Have you ever seen a poll going on ?

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur : Yes. We have had a very recent example in the case of one of the women members of our organisation who topped the poll