

Shri Brajeshwar Prasad (Bihar: General): Mr. Vice-President, Sir, I am opposed to federalism because I fear that with the setting up of semi-sovereign part-States, centrifugal tendencies will break up Indian unity. Provincial autonomy led to the vivisection of the country. Federalism will lead to the establishment of innumerable Pakistans in this sub-continent.

Our Ministers at the Centre have been at the helm of affairs since the last fifteen months. They know how difficult it is to secure the approval of provincial Ministers on any measure of reform which they like to introduce. Much time is wasted in securing their approval, which is rarely obtained.

The existence of provincial governments does not benefit the common man in any special sense. Its abolition will not jeopardise his welfare at all. On the other hand, I am convinced that his lot will improve considerably. The professional politicians will of course be deprived of their means of livelihood. The average man in the provinces has to bear the burden of a costly administration. Salaries to Governor, Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and members of the legislatures swallow a large part of the revenue. The poor man is exploited in order to maintain the dignity of the State.

Federalism is a conservative force in politics. It checks the rise and growth of radical economic movements. It perpetuates economic inequality between one province and another and this accentuates provincial rivalries and bitterness which lead to the demand for the formation of linguistic provinces.

Federalism is entirely unsuited to the needs of a collectivist age. Vast plans of national development await immediate enforcement. It will be a crime against the people of India to set up obstacles and hurdles in the form of part-States in the path of the Central authority which has to tackle the fourfold problems of illiteracy, poverty, communalism and provincialism. Those who talk of federalism, regionalism, provincial autonomy and linguistic provinces do not fully comprehend that they are talking the language of a bygone age. These concepts were appropriate to the needs of the 19th century when industrialism was in its incipient stage. These instruments of political organisation suit the requirements of agricultural communities interspersed over a wide area. Today the picture is entirely changed. We are thinking in terms of a world State which must be vested with all powers to regulate the problems of migration of people from overpopulated zones to areas which are under populated. The world State will have all powers to regulate the entire economic wealth of humanity. The existence of Nation-States has become an anomaly and a hindrance in the path of human progress and welfare. The dominant tendency of the age is towards greater concentration of power in the hands of some sovereign international authority. To talk of sub-national groups and federalism is to put back the hands of the clock. We do not know what will happen to India if a world war breaks out. If India gets an opportunity to build up the nation for a period of ten years at least, she will be in a position to meet the onslaughts of international powers. If India proceeds on collectivist lines unhampered by any provincial or federal part-States, she may be in a position to meet the challenge of the third world war. India lags centuries behind the Great Powers of the world. We must skip over certain stages of development and compress centuries into moments if we are to survive the forces of reaction both external and internal. By adopting parliamentary federalism we shall be playing into the hands of our enemies. A divided Germany, a vivisected Korea, pre-eminently fits into the political plans of international gangsters. A divided India provides some security to those who have plans of their own. The incorporation of federal principles in that part of India which has been left to us will provide hundred percent security to those Jingoists and Junkies who survive on loot and plunder. No foreign power wants a strong Central Government in India. A strong Central Government in India will embarrass all. It is suicidal to divide powers into federal, concurrent and provincial. Any such division of powers will weaken the hands of the nation on all fronts.

One party rule is in perfect consonance with the ideals of democracy. This fact has to be grasped. We can have perfect democracy only in a classless society. It is only after war, and nation states and capitalism have been liquidated, that we can achieve perfect democracy. Friends may retort that one party rule will lead to Fascism. To this I would reply that parliamentary governments, as in Germany and Italy, facilitate the rise of Fascism if the people are not highly conscious of their political responsibilities. Are the people of India conscious of their political responsibilities? The vast majority of the people of India are sunk in the lowest depths of illiteracy, poverty, communalism and provincialism. Only philosopher-kings can tackle these problems. Both parliamentarism and federalism will aggravate the malady.

Critics may urge that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. I do not believe in this maxim. Was Hitler corrupt? Is Stalin corrupt? The records of Mushtapha Kemal and Mussolini are as good as that of the leaders of parliamentary democracy.

In this atomic age, the problems of the modern state have become so complex and baffling that more and more people are beginning to realise that the affairs of government can only be tackled by experts. Parliamentary democracy has outlived its utility.

If we want to meet the challenge of Anglo-American imperialism in Asia, if we want to meet the demands of international trade and commerce, if we want to meet the threat of the third world war which is looming large on the horizon, if we are to meet the onslaughts of international politics, we must hand over full power into the hands of our leaders.

It is not possible for our foreign friends to meddle in the affairs of Spain or the Soviet Union because they have hung an iron curtain around their frontiers. Parliamentary democracy facilitates foreign intervention into the internal affairs of a people. If we want to be free from the machinations of our foreign friends, we should not provide any opportunity to them. Our constitution must be fool-proof and knave-proof. Parliamentary democracy must be discarded.

Dr. Ambedkar said the other day that our Constitution is both federal and unitary. It is federal during times of peace and it is possible of being converted into unitary type during times of war. The distinction between peace and war is fictitious, because we are now living in a state of cold war. If we want to meet the onslaught of foreign powers the type of democracy which we are trying to build will perhaps obstruct us. The demands of peace time are as urgent and insistent as that of war. If we have an unitary type of constitution now, we may be able to meet the demands of the third world war. I do not know whether there are more competent leaders than Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel. Then why are we wasting the time of the Government of India by all sorts of criticisms? We must build up our economy. If we are not able to meet the challenge of war, we may go down in history. I am not very sure what will be the outcome or the fate of this country if a war breaks out. The whole of Asia is in the melting pot; let us not try to weaken the hands of our leaders. They are the best people; they are the only people who can govern this country. Is it necessary that in order to keep them in control, we must be sitting in the legislature and talking all kinds of nonsense?