

Shrimati Annie Mascarene (Travancore & Cochin Union): Mr. President, Sir, after hearing Dr. Ambedkar's explanation two days back I thought I would abide by this Article. But after listening to Mr. Munshi's speech this morning I am provoked to speak again on the subject and resume my old position. Sir, I am a believer in the right of the people of the Province to elect their representatives independent of any control, supervision and direction of any power on earth. I believe that to be democracy. If the Centre is to think that expediency demands that they should supervise and control the election, as one sitting in the Provincial Legislature I can see in the Centre as many delinquencies as they see in us. From this Article it looks as if the Centre is assuming to be the custodian of justice. Well, justice is not in the custody of anybody but of those who are lovers of truth. Mr. Munshi this morning spoke that Article 289 is calculated to defend the rights of the people in the provinces in view of expediency and reality. May I remind him of the expediency and reality of nations in days long gone by-of the Parliament of Rome, of the Long Parliament of England? Cromwell thought that it was expedient to run the administration by a unicameral legislature. The Napoleonic heroes thought that it was expedient to run the administration by a unicameral legislature. But time has proved the effect of those expediencies. What is reality and expediency today is not reality and expediency tomorrow. We are here laying down principles - rudimentary principles - of democracy, not for the coming election but for days to come, for generations, for the nation. Therefore principles of ethics are more suitable to be considered now than principles of expediency. I am a believer in politics as nothing but ethics writ large. I am not a believer in politics as a computative principle of addition, subtraction and multiplication. If this section is to be accepted we are to believe that thereafter the Provincial election will be under the perpetual tutelage of the Centre. That means, Sir, that the integrity of the provincial people is questioned. I wish to turn the tables on the Centre itself. Sir, should we, at this psychological moment when the people of India are demanding their rudimentary right of electing their representatives without being interfered with by any authority on earth, impose any restriction? If democratic principles are to be accepted, this Article should be deleted from the Constitution.

Then I come to the latest amendment, giving the legality of Parliament to a section which was hitherto blooming as autocratic. Well, Sir, whatever may be the amendment added on to it, it cannot lose its old shade or colour and it stands there as the ancient Roman tutelage under the patriarchal system. If the Provincial or the States people are to be guided, let them be guided by experience. If we have erred, we will err only for a time or a period. They say that this is a deviation from the democratic principle. Well, I ask where is the necessity to deviate from the experience of nations and ages? Have you any *prima facie* case to show that we have erred in our democratic principles? In that case I am willing to accept this clause. But, as it is, we have not tried the experiment. We are only in the making of it. If in the experimental stage we fail, well, there is provision in the Constitution to amend it when time and circumstances demand. But let us not sully the fair name of the nation by believing in the first instance that the provincial people will not be guided by principles of truth and justice and will not keep up the democratic principles of fairness by electing by fair means.

Centralisation of power is good enough for stable administration, but centralisation of power should be a development at later stages and not from the very inception of democracy. At the very inception of democracy, centralisation would look more autocratic than democratic. We are living in an age when democratic experiments are being tried by many a nation. Dr. Ambedkar quoted from the Canadian Act of 1920. How is it that he did not travel down to the United States from Canada? Why would he not look at the Australian Commonwealth? If Canada has adopted a measure, is it necessary that India, with twenty-five times the population of Canada and half the size of Europe, should adopt those very principles in her Constitution and take it as a salutary example for experiment in democracy? If democracy could succeed in the United States, if it can succeed in England, why should it not succeed in India without this Clause? Well, Sir, I hope this House will give consideration to this Article and be guided by principles of democracy rather than by principles of expediency.