

Autonomy to Ministers from Party Affiliations

Begum Aizaz Rasul (United Provinces: Muslim): Sir, I wish to move that at the end of the amendment moved by Mr. Aziz Ahmad Khan to Clause 12 the following words be added:

“and shall hold office during the life of the Assembly.”

Sir, my purpose in moving this amendment is that the Ministry should be a strong and stable Ministry and that it should not be subject to the whims and fancies of the party or legislature to which it is responsible. Sir, in England and France the Ministry is responsible to the legislature. We see what happens in France every day. The Ministry is weak and the Cabinet has fallen several times. That always happens where there are more than two parties in the legislature, and therefore in India which is so young in democracy, where the sense of responsibility is neither ingrained nor so well developed, we should have a strong and stable Ministry which can initiate long range policies and be uninfluenced daily by the repercussions in its party. We do not want a repetition of what is happening in France in our country. Sir, my experience of the last ten years after the introduction of the Government of India Act of 1935 has been that in the Provinces where the Ministers are responsible to the legislature and are liable to fall on a vote of no-confidence by their party or the provincial legislature, they cannot put forward any long range policies. As I said before, often they are influenced daily by party feelings and are therefore necessarily weak. I therefore feel that a Ministry that has been elected by the legislature should have a long life in which it can formulate its policies and not be influenced by party factions. We may have the American system under which the President nominates his executive, but our country may not be ready for that. But the Swiss system under which the legislature elects the executive for a certain period during which it is irremovable is to my mind the best form of government for the Provinces, because the Ministers who have once been elected by the legislature cannot be removed by a vote of no confidence in it by the legislature. I feel therefore that the Swiss system is the best via media that can be accepted by us in this country, keeping in view the political and other conditions that are prevailing here and will continue for a long time to come. The system of the single non-transferable vote is to my mind the best system that can be adopted for the appointment of the executive because in that all interests will be represented and no party in the legislature will have any occasion to feel that it is not represented, and therefore, I strongly support the amendment that has been moved by Mr. Aziz Ahmad Khan.

I also wish to point out that the best thing for a Ministry is to have its life synchronous with the life-time of the Assembly so that it can be an irremovable executive. My other point is that in the constitution we are framing, we are giving such strong and wide powers to the Governor who will be an elected Governor, that there is no need for another head of the State, because the Governor is there and will be in a position to allot portfolios, to represent the State on ceremonial occasions and to preside at meetings and to co-ordinate the work of the Ministers. All these things will come under the duties of the Governor and the Ministers who will be responsible men elected by the legislature will be able to initiate their policies and work out their long range policies not at the whim of the party but from their own strong positions.

My experience is that where the Ministers are the representatives of a party, it is impossible for them to carry on the day to day work and the administrative work of the province uninfluenced by their party members. This necessarily means that the Ministry is weak and the administration suffers on this account because it is natural that Ministers who have to keep their party men pleased, have to do many things which are not good from the administrative point of view. Therefore I hope that this amendment of mine which is moved with a view to having a strong and stable government in the provinces will be accepted.