

**Shrimati Dakshayani Velayudan** (Madras: General): Mr. Vice-President, Sir, we cannot expect a Constitution without a clause relating to untouchability because the Chairman of the Drafting Committee himself belongs to the untouchable community. I am not going into the details of the history and the work done by all the religious heads from time immemorial. You know that all the religious teachers were against the practice of untouchability. Coming to a later period, we found a champion in the person of Mahatma Gandhi and one of the items of the constructive programme that he placed before the country is the abolition of untouchability. While I was a student in the College, one of my classmates approached me for subscribing to a fund for the abolition of untouchability. My reply was, 'you people are responsible for this and therefore it is for you to raise the money and it is not proper that you should ask me for money'. Even from my younger days, the very thought of untouchability was revolting to me. Even in public places like schools, untouchability was observed whenever there was a tea party or anything of that kind. What I did on those occasions was that I always non-cooperated with those functions. The change of heart that we find in the people today is only due to the work that has been done by Mahatma Gandhi and by him alone. We find that there is a vast change in the outlook and attitude of the people today towards the untouchables. Nowadays what we find is that the people who are called caste Hindus dislike the very idea of, or the very term, 'untouchability' and they do not like to be chastised for that, because, they have taken a vow that they are responsible for it and that they will see that it is abolished from this land of ours. Even though there is a large improvement on the part of the so-called caste Hindus, we cannot be satisfied with that. When this Constitution is put into practice, what we want is not to punish the people for acting against the law, but what is needed is that there should be proper propaganda done by both the Central and Provincial Governments. Then only there will be improvement that we want. If the Provincial and Central Governments had taken action previously I think there would have been no necessity for an article of this kind in this Constitution. Last year I brought a resolution before the Constituent Assembly for declaring that untouchability should be made unlawful. When I approached Panditji, he said that this is not a Congress Committee to move such a resolution, and that it will be taken up in course of time. My reply was that if a declaration was made in the Constituent Assembly, it will have a great effect. Even people in South Africa were chastising us because we were having this practice here. If a declaration is made by the Assembly here and now, it will have a great effect on the people and there will be no necessity for us to incorporate such a clause in the Constitution.

**Mr. Vice-President:** You have exceeded the time-limit. It is only because you are a lady I am allowing you.

**Shrimati Dakshayani Velayudan:** The working of the Constitution will depend upon how the people will conduct themselves in the future, not on the actual execution of the law. So I hope that in course of time there will not be such a community known as Untouchables and that our delegates abroad will not have to hang their heads in shame if somebody raises such a question in an organisation of international nature.