

# "Constitution To Hold Country In Times Of Peace & War"

## DR. AMBEDKAR COMMENDS DRAFT TO CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

From Our Special Representative

NEW DELHI, November 4.

**M**EETING here after a lapse of eight months, the Constituent Assembly entered today on the final phase of its task of framing the constitution of free India.

Commending the draft constitution to the House, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, declared that it was not only workable and flexible, but strong enough to hold the country together in times of peace as well as of war.

The Law Minister's speech, which lasted over an hour and was heard with rapt attention, was a masterly analysis of the draft constitution, and sought to answer various criticisms made against some of its provisions.

Dr. Ambedkar pointed out that the draft constitution had been framed to work in normal times as a federal system, but that in times of war it was designed to work as though it were a unitary system.

After illustrating the redeeming features of the Indian constitution by comparison with those of America, Britain, Australia and Eire, Dr. Ambedkar said that the constitution settled by the Drafting Committee had sought to forge means and methods whereby India would have a federation, and at the same time also uniformity in all basic matters which were essential to maintain the unity of the country. Such means were three—a single judiciary uniformity in fundamental laws and a common all-India civil service to man important posts.

### BALANCE MAINTAINED

Referring to criticisms about the Centre being too strong or its being made stronger, Dr. Ambedkar maintained that the draft constitution had struck a balance between the two points of view. "We must resist the tendency to make it stronger. It would be folly to make it so strong that it may fall by its own weight."

Dr. Ambedkar observed that the draft constitution reproduced a good part of the provisions of the Government of India Act relating to details of administration. This was justified by the fact that democracy in India was "a top-dressing on Indian soil." It was wiser in the circumstances, not to trust the legislatures to prescribe forms of administration.

Making a special appeal to the Indian States still standing out to fall in line, Dr. Ambedkar said they would thereby give the Indian Union the strength it needed, and they would also lose thereby nothing that was of value to them. He felt hopeful that before the constitution was passed they would be able to wipe out the differences between the provinces and the Indian States.

### SAFEGUARDS FOR MINORITIES

On the question of safeguards for minorities, the Leader of the Depressed Classes stated that although the existence of minorities had been recognised to start with, the minorities would vanish if the majority realised its duty not to discriminate against them.

Concluding, Dr. Ambedkar struck a note of warning, saying: "If things go wrong under the new constitution, the reason will not be that we had a bad constitution. What we should have to say is that man was vile."

At the outset, members stood in silent homage to the Father of the Nation at the bidding of the President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, who said that Mahatma Gandhi had lifted them out of the darkness of despair and despondency and led them from slavery to freedom. The House also paid homage to Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah, who, the President said, had been able to carve out Pakistan by his grim determination, and whose passing away at the moment was an irreparable loss. He sought the permission of the House to extend their sincere sympathies to their brethren across the border.

### BY-ELECTION RULES

The House thereafter passed Shrimati Durgabai's motion, as amended by Mr. H. V. Kamath, laying down rules for by-elections to fill vacancies among representatives of the States and States Unions. The prolonged debate on the motion reflected the anxiety of members about States which were still unrepresented in the Assembly.

The language controversy also cropped up during the proceedings, but the President appealed to the members not to indulge in heated argument at the present stage but to discuss it when the relevant clause is the constitution was taken up.

(Details on pages 4 and 5)