

Equal Opportunities For Employment

CONSTITUENT BODY DECISION

From Our Special Representative
NEW DELHI, Nov. 30.

The Constituent Assembly to-day approved an article in the Draft Constitution, as amended by Messrs. K. M. Munshi and Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar, providing for equality of opportunity for all classes of citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to office under the State, with a specific clause stipulating reservation for Backward Classes who are not adequately represented in the services.

A battle royal which raged at the Congress Party meeting yesterday and in a more subdued form in the House today centred on the word "Backward," which epithet, curiously enough, a majority community in South India sought to apply to itself in order to gain certain economic and political advantages.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Chairman of the Drafting Committee, who replied to the debate, explained the exact import, significance and necessity of the term in the Constitution. He pointed out that it had been left to the Governments concerned to determine which sections of the local population belonged to the Backward Class.

An amendment moved by Pandit Hridayanath Kunzru limiting the period of such reservation to ten years from the commencement of the Constitution was rejected by the House.

GORKHAS' LOYALTY TO INDIA

In view of its importance to the Backward Classes, the Chairman permitted a good number of their spokesmen to put forward their viewpoints. Speaking on behalf of the three million Gorkhas domiciled in India, Mr. Arun Bahadur Gurung received loud cheers from the House when he declared that they owed allegiance to India in defence of whom they would shed their last drop of blood. Even in the limited period of India's freedom, he said, the Government had already made a gesture of their generosity by throwing open the Commissioned ranks of the Army to the Gorkhas. He appealed for employment of Gorkhas in civil services as well.

Mr. Mchamed Ismail (Muslim League) said that reservation should be applicable to all minorities, including Muslims.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari said that the chapter on "Fundamental Rights" was "a paradise for lawyers" but Dr. Ambedkar retorted that this was the fate of almost all constitutions.

The House had not concluded its debate on non-conferment of titles by the State when it adjourned till tomorrow.

That sedition, as it has been understood hitherto, shall not be an offence under India's new constitution is one of the important amendments which the Congress Party proposes to incorporate in the article on freedom of speech and expression in the Draft Constitution, which will come up for consideration in the course of this week.

(Details on page 3)