

SPIRITED DEFENCE OF CONSTITUTION

Dr. Ambedkar's Stirring Call To Guard Freedom

"CENTRE'S OVERRIDING POWERS JUSTIFIED"

From Our Special Representative

NEW DELHI, November 25.

INDIA'S new Constitution will be finally adopted tomorrow, when the Constituent Assembly meets to vote on its third reading after having been at the task of drafting a period of two years, 11 months and 18 days.

The highlight of today's lively proceedings was a 40-minute lucid and eloquent speech, punctuated with cheers from all sides of the House, by the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who outlined the tasks that lay ahead of the people of India after the new Constitution was adopted.

The House listened in pin-drop silence to what many members later described as a graphic and realistic appraisal of the political conditions today in India and abroad.

Reminding the House that independence would bring joy as well as great responsibilities, he declared that in order to maintain democracy, both in form and fact, Indians must hold fast to constitutional methods to achieve all their objectives, avoid hero-worship—"which was the sure road to degradation and eventual dictatorship"—eradicate "the contradiction involved in political equality and social and economic inequality." India, to become a nation in reality, must end all castes, he added.

Dr. Ambedkar urged the people of India to resolutely guard against the even equality of parties placing creed above the country, or else, "Our independence will be put in jeopardy for a second time and probably will be lost for ever. We must be determined to defend our independence to the last drop of our blood."



He compared the time taken over constitution-making in India and other countries, including Australia and Canada, to show that there had been no avoidable delay in framing the Indian Constitution. He pointed out that the House took a little less than three years, while Australia for a constitution of a lesser volume had taken nine.

"EASY TO CHANGE"

He challenged any of the critics of the Constitution to prove that any Constituent Assembly anywhere in the world had provided such "a facile procedure" for the amendment of the Constitution as they had done here. Nor did he agree that there had been too much centralisation, because the essence of federalism, which lay in the partition of the Legislative and Executive authority between the Centre and the units, had been embodied in the new Constitution.

Dr. Ambedkar, however, admitted the charge that the Centre had been given powers to override the States, but hastened to add their use and operation were expressly confined to emergencies only.

Earlier in the day, Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari replied to the debate after the Congress President, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Dr. P. Subbaroyan, Mr. Balkrishna Sharma, Mr. Deshbandhu Gupta and Mr. Tajammul Hussain had participated in it.

A dramatic touch was given to today's proceedings by Mr. Tajammul Hussain who drew a striking contrast between India, which had completed her constitution-making and Pakistan, which had not done so, although both had launched upon the task simultaneously.

(Details on page 4)