

ROUSING CALL TO NATION

Authentication Of New Constitution

From Our Special Representative

NEW DELHI, November 27.

WITH the presidential authentication of India's new Constitution yesterday, the Constituent Assembly completed the historic task on which it embarked three years ago.

Parliamentary circles hailed the occasion as the proudest moment of the present generation but the joy was subdued by the thought of the responsibilities and dangers of the task which lie ahead of the country. The day of speech-making and splitting of legal and constitutional arguments has given place to that of action for implementing the new Constitution of the Indian Republic from now on, as parts of it have already come into operation.

Among the speeches made at the concluding stage of the constitutional deliberations, those of Dr. Ambedkar, the main architect of the new Constitution, and of the President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, came into bold relief because they not only assessed its merits with authority, having been most intimately connected with its evolution but also because they made no secret of the inherent dangers and risks if the country does not remain eternally vigilant to protect its hard-won liberty.

RESPONSIBILITY

Dr. Ambedkar in concluding his valedictory address which eclipsed his previous performances, reminded the people that "by independence, we have lost the excuse of blaming the British for anything going wrong. If hereafter things go wrong, we will have nobody to blame except ourselves." He proceeded to point out that in the fast-changing times, when people, including our own, are being attracted by new ideologies and appear tired of Government by the people, "there is a great danger of things going wrong." The only way to serve the country was, in his view, to show initiative and courage to recognise and remove the evils that lie across their path and which alone could induce in people a preference for democratic rule. Many members of the House agreed with his diagnosis when he said that Indians should place country above creed lest their independence were "put in jeopardy a second time and probably lost for ever."

The second point in Dr. Ambedkar's speech of which members took note was his plea that "we must hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives and must abandon the bloody methods of revolution. It means that we must abandon the method of civil disobedience non-cooperation and satyagraha." He added that there might have been justification for "the grammar of anarchy" in the past, but not now when constitutional methods were open to the people. The warning was stated to be directed more against some Congressmen who indulge in such tactics and Socialists and Communists than against the common people.

DANGEROUS ROAD

Dr. Ambedkar also deplored hero worship "which is a sure road to degradation and eventual dictatorship" as also the life of contradiction involved in having achieved political equality while still being subjected to social and economic inequalities. While every one agreed that the in-

equalities should be removed at the earliest possible moment lest those who suffer from them blow up the whole structure of political democracy which the Assembly had so laboriously built up", some Congressmen felt that Dr. Ambedkar had exaggerated them, because of his alleged prejudices against Congressmen in general and, caste Hindus in particular.

There was however, no objection from any quarter to his observation that the political power, which he alleged had too long been the monopoly of a few, should be shared under the new Constitution by many "who are not only beasts of burden but also beasts of prey." It is presumed that Dr. Ambedkar had the future of the Depressed Classes particularly in his mind when he said that "these down-trodden classes are tired of being governed and are impatient to govern themselves."

VITAL TASKS

A much more important question, according to political circles here, was emphasised by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of the Constituent Assembly. Dr. Prasad pointed out that the work which confronted India today was much more difficult than that which presented itself before the British withdrawal. We had now to reconcile many conflicting claims, bring about a satisfactory distribution of the loaves and fishes of office and an equitable balance of power. Indian leaders should have the wisdom and the strength to rise above temptations and serve the country which they succeeded in liberating.

Dr. Prasad reminded the House of the stress laid by Mahatma Gandhi on the purity of the methods which had to be pursued for attaining their objectives. "I shall only hope," he added pointedly, "that all those whose good fortune it may be to work this Constitution in future, will remember that it is up to us to preserve and protect our independence and make it really bear fruit for the man in the street." What India needed today was nothing more than, "a set of honest men" who would "put the interests of the country before everything else."

ENERGETIC ACTION

Many members of the Constituent Assembly feel that this is the most important injunction which all political leaders should remember today. These circles suggest that the Congress Party which has shown such remarkable unity of thought and action in achieving independence and passing the new Constitution, should display equal energy and courage in bringing about more efficient and effective co-ordination of administration both at the Centre and in the provinces, in rooting out corruption, black marketing and nepotism and in securing a more equitable distribution of the essentials of life, such as food, clothing and housing. Another direction in which they expect Congressmen in power to strain themselves is in seeing that the integrity of the services is maintained. The services, it is urged, should be able to advise ministers without fear or favour and not reduce themselves to mere "yes-men" while the ministers on their part, should see that policies, once decided are implicitly implemented by the officers concerned.