

COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO MAKE SWARAJ CONSTITUTION.

All-Parties Conference in Bombay THE NEXT SESSION TO BE HELD AT DELHI.

The All-Parties Conference met in the Swaraj Sabha Hall, Girgaum, Bombay on Saturday afternoon. Although there was a good attendance, many communities were poorly represented and prominent Liberal and Muslim politicians were absent. Pandit Hirdaynath Kunzru, however, was a solitary exception. Mr. Gandhi who had come to Bombay to participate in the deliberations chose to keep away from the Conference.

The proceedings commenced without an agenda or proposals suggesting a solution of the immediate problems. The much expected report on the question of the separation of Sind never saw the light of day; much less the report on the formation of the electorates two subjects over which there would have been considerable controversy. The only concrete proposal was Mrs. Besant's, which to a large extent saved the faces of the organisers. It urged the appointment of a committee to prepare a draft constitution for India.

There was a lot of wrangling over the composition of the committee, and several amendments were moved, one urging the deletion of the names of Sir T. B. Sapru, Sir Ali Imam and Mr. Pradhan of Nagpur and the substitution of the names of Dr. Moonje, Mrs. Naidu and Mr. Nimbkar. The Communist party representatives were much in evidence, and to the last opposed the proposal to form a Committee.

While a section of the Swarajists insisted on the constitution being based on the Independence resolution of the Madras Congress, Mr. Chagla and Mr. F. I. Rahimtoola took their stand on the Delhi Muslim proposals and pressed their acceptance 'in toto'. Finally all amendments were withdrawn, and the resolution requiring the committee to draft a constitution before July 1 next, so that it might be considered by a fresh session of the All-Parties Conference at Delhi early in August, was passed by a majority.

"I am sorry to say we are exactly where we were at Delhi. We have not advanced any farther. I may tell you that much valuable time of the country has been lost—I do not say though anybody's fault. But we must recognise the fact that while we are wrangling among ourselves, our opponents are going ahead and are creating a situation in the country which certainly is very prejudicial and adverse to our cause, and unless to-day, at our Conference we decide to come to some settlement and to frame our constitution on the basis of that settlement, and go to the country and create an opinion in our favour, well we may as well shut up shop and do nothing at all. We may rest assured that the Simon Commission, when it returns in October next, will have an easy walk over, and not a single one of you will escape the odium which the next generation will heap upon you for not doing your duty at a time when opportunity was given to you." These were the words in which Dr. M. A. Ansari, President of the All Parties Conference, lamented the apathy of the party leaders at the meeting of the Conference in Bombay on Saturday.

PARTIES POORLY REPRESENTED.

The Conference was well attended so far as the number went, but the different communities were poorly represented and those who were present frequently crossed swords and betrayed the dissonance in the Congress camp. Except the President and Mr. Mahomed Shafi Dawoodi, there was no prominent Mahomedan leader present. There were some minor lights, such as Mr. Shaikat Ali, Mr. M. C. Chagla, Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtoola and Mr. Mujibar Abdul Rehman, but the Mahomedan representatives were not more than half a dozen all told. There was also not a single prominent Parsi representative. Among the few Parsis that were seen there were Mr. M. K. Patel, Mr. K. K. Sunktoke (who represented the Zoroastrian Association), and Mr. S. H. Jhabwala. The Communist Party, as represented by Messrs. Nimbkar, Dange, Mirajkar, Ghate, Joglekar, etc., made itself conspicuous by giving as much trouble as it could. They were not out for any constitution. They were only out to show that the Conference was all a farce, but fortunately for the Conference their number was so small that their opposition proved totally ineffective. The non-Brahmin Party was not officially represented. One of its members, Mr. B. V. Jadhav, who is the leader of the non-Brahmin Party in the Bombay Legislative Council was, however, present, but only as a visitor and took no part in the proceedings.

THE LIBERALS.

The Liberal Party, on which the Conference had apparently built great hopes and which was respectfully referred to by the Congressmen, had only one representative of note, Mr. Hirdaynath Kunzru. There were, however, messages of sympathy from Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. C. Y. Chintamani. Among the various sympathisers of this kind was also Mr. M. A. Jinnah, who the President announced, had sent a message from the high seas. Dr. B. S. Moonje and Mr. N. C. Kelkar, the chief representatives of the Hindu Mahasabha were also there, but not on the platform. Mr. N. M. Joshi represented the All-India Trades Congress. Mr. M. R. Jayakar and Mr. Aney represented the Republican Party. Mr. Gandhi's absence was particularly noticeable in view of his reported views on the inability of the Conference to come to any satisfactory understanding on the three most important questions which have been before it, namely, the framing of a constitution for the country, the separation of Sind and separate electorate.

IN A DILEMMA.

The proceedings started an hour later than the appointed time, and when the leaders appeared on the platform it transpired that they were on the horns of a dilemma as to how to meet the audience as they had no proposals suggesting the solution of the problems they had met to consider, and that the whole thing was going to end in smoke. In fact, they had only one resolution in hand, and that too, was drafted by Mrs. Annie Besant in consultation with Mr. Gandhi in the morning, but it went a great way to save the faces of the organisers of the Conference. It urged the appointment of a committee to prepare a draft constitution for India. Simple though the resolution was, there was considerable wrangling as to the constitution of the committee, and several amendments were moved in that connection. One of these urged the removal of the names of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Ali Imam and Mr. Pradhan from the Committee and substituting the names of Dr. Moonje, Mrs. Naidu and Mr. Nimbkar instead. A section of the Swarajists insisted on the constitution being based on the independence resolution of the Madras Congress only. Mr. Chagla and Mr. Fazal I. Rahimtoola insisted upon the acceptance of the proposals of the Muslim League and expressed the fear

unless to-day at this conference we decide to come to some settlement and frame our constitution on the basis of that settlement, and go to the country and create an opinion in our favour,—well, we may as well shut up shop and do nothing at all. We may rest assured that the Simon Commission, when it returns in October next, will have an easy walk-over and not a single one of you will escape the odium which the next generation will heap upon you for not doing your duty at the time when the opportunity was given to you. That is not the only thing. We the Congressmen, are thinking of doing something further to strengthen our campaign against the Simon Commission. But this is not the time to talk about it. We are chafing under this undue delay that has been caused, perhaps by unavoidable circumstances. We are anxious and we beg you to sit to-day and to come to something clear and something definite, and give the country a lead which would be followed and which would be able to bring our object nearer. Therefore, after the Secretary has read to you the telegrams and also the report of the Sind Committee, etc., a resolution will be placed before you which, I hope, will be the basis of our work in future—a work which will be fruitful and constructive and which will lead us speedily to our desired object."

NO REPORTS PRESENTED.

A number of messages were read which included from Dr. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. C. Y. Chintamani, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant of Allahabad and Mr. M. A. Jinnah from the high seas. The Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Sabha in a telegram repudiated the claims of any other organisation than the Mahasabha to settle the claims of the Hindus. The Sikh Association of the Punjab which sent another message wanted special representation for minority communities.

The Secretary, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru then read a statement of Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Chairman of the Sind Sub-Committee appointed at the Delhi session of the All Parties Conference. It was to the effect that Sir Purshotamdas could not usefully submit a report of the work as the members did not sit together and discuss the subject.

In regard to the Sub-Committee on the formation of electorates, it was stated amidst laughter in which even the Secretary, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru heartily partook, that the Committee could not discuss the question as they were themselves not familiar with it. The Pandit added that probably they had to study text-books before they could sit together to discuss the subject. Besides the chairman of that Committee Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar was away on the high seas and his statement was expected.

A DRAFT CONSTITUTION.

COMMITTEE APPOINTED.

Mrs. Besant then moved the following resolution:

"This meeting of the All Parties' Conference resolves that a committee consisting of Pandit Motilal Nehru (Chairman), Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Ali Imam, Mr. G. R. Pradhan, Mr. Shuabih Qureshi, Mr. S. C. Bose, and Mr. Madhavrao S. Aney be appointed to draft the constitution of the country and report by July 1, the Committee to circulate the draft constitution amongst the various associations of the country. "This Committee shall give the fullest consideration to the resolutions of the Madras Congress on communal unity in conjunction with the suggestions made by the other political parties represented at the All-Parties' Conference at Delhi and the suggestions made hereafter will be received by it. The Committee will give due weight to the recommendations made by the various Sub-Committees of the All-Parties' Conference at Delhi. "The All Parties Conference will meet again at Delhi on August 1 to consider the draft constitution."

Mrs. Besant in moving the resolution thought that there should be no divergence about the drafting of a constitution. She assured the audience that the drafting was not for presentation to Sir John Simon and his colleagues on the Statutory Commission, but for making known to the world what the national demands of India were. She took it for granted that no one desired to have anything to do with the Simon Commission. She hoped to explain in England where she was shortly going, how much misrepresentation there had been as to the boycott of the Commission. Mrs. Besant also thought that a special session of the Congress should be convened early in September to consider the draft report of the Committee before the Simon Commission returned from England.

Mr. Shaikat Ali seconded the resolution and said that like Mrs. Besant he too was in a hurry to see Swaraj before he died. He hoped that all Indians were agreed—irrespective of the communities to which they belonged—on winning "Swaraj."

DRAFTING IN 5 WEEKS.

The President rose to say that the names suggested in the resolution moved by Mrs. Besant were those of gentlemen who were shortly expected to meet somewhere at Allahabad or Mussoorie. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru was for instance unwell and he could not be expected to travel to a far off place. Others mentioned would all conveniently meet. They had all to sit from day to day until actually they hammered some constitution within the short interval of five weeks.

A number of amendments were then sent up to the President and it took some time before they were taken up one after another.

WHY NO AGENDA.

A number of representatives, mostly of labour associations of Bombay insisted on the President to let them know why no agenda was placed in their hands and why more important and controversial questions like the separation of Sind and reservation of seats were shelved. They desired that these questions should first be discussed before they thought of 'constitution-making.'

One of the representatives complained that the Working Committee of the Congress had not taken them into their confidence, and it appeared to him that there was something behind this sudden departure.

Mr. K. Narayan then addressed the House. He said that the best time for the production of a scheme would be after the Simon Commission's report was published. Otherwise he thought that others might sit in judgment over the constitution prepared under the auspices of the Conference. Though he personally did not like the boycott of the Simon Commission, yet having been once forced into it, it was the duty of the country to see that the boycott was as effective as possible.

PRESIDENT HECKLED.

Some delegates again pressed for a statement as to why bigger questions were not taken up at all. The President attempted to satisfy the hecklers by saying that no conspiracy was hatched by the Working Committee of the Congress. He also stated that the question of constitution-

making was the only subject for consideration at that sitting of the Conference.

Keen dissatisfaction prevailed among some sections owing to this announcement and two representatives remarked: "Is it for this that we have come here from long distances?"

An acrimonious debate ensued on the amendments sent, which was followed by informal conversations among groups of representatives.

One of the amendments was to the effect that Mr. Pradhan's name should be replaced by that of Mr. Jadhav. But the latter declined to serve on the committee.

Prof. H. L. Chabiani moved an amendment to the effect that the proposed committee should also consider the reports of the sub-committees and that the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Liberals, the Home Rule League, Sind, etc., should have representation on the committee.

INDEPENDENCE AMENDMENT.

Pandit Gowrishanker Misra next moved an amendment for the substitution of Dr. Moonje, Mrs. Naidu and Mr. Nimbkar for Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Ali Imam and Mr. Pradhan on the committee, and for the addition of the words that the committee should "draft a constitution on the principles of complete independence as resolved by the Congress at Madras." He said the attitude taken up by Mr. Jinnah on behalf of the Muslim League at the All Parties Conference was unreasonable, in view of the threat given by him (Mr. Jinnah) that if the demands of the Muslim League were not accepted *in toto*, he and other representatives of the Muslim League would not take any part in drafting the Swaraj constitution. He maintained, on the other hand, that the Hindu Mahasabha had taken the national view, and urged that once the Congress at Madras had declared for complete independence, it was no good joining hands with the Liberals and others who were for a different kind of constitution. He asked Congressmen not to fall into the pit and make a common cause with those who could not see eye to eye with them.

Mr. C. Vijayaraghavachariar suggested a change in regard to the reference to the committee to the effect that the committee should consider and determine the principles of the constitution for India before the 1st July next.

The suggestion was accepted by Mrs. Besant.

At this stage the Conference adjourned for tea.

On the Conference reassembling, the President explained that the original resolution had been placed before them after consulting their friends of the Hindu Mahasabha and those Mussalmans who were present there and who were in the Congress. Now, it was suggested that they should have Mr. Jayakar's name added to the committee. That was cordially accepted, and he hoped in view of that all the amendments would be withdrawn. Then, he said, there was some misunderstanding in regard to the words "political parties," to avoid which it was agreed to substitute the words "all organisations participating in the All Parties Conference." The President also assured the House that all the reports of the sub-committees would be considered by the proposed committee.

ALL AMENDMENTS WITHDRAWN.

The resolution was then finally settled as follows, all the proposers of amendments agreeing to withdraw their amendments:

"This meeting resolves that a committee consisting of Pandit Motilal Nehru (Chairman), Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Sir Ali Imam, Mr. G. R. Pradhan (Nagpur), Mr. Qureshi, Mr. S. C. Bose, Mr. M. S. Aney, Sardar Mangal Singh, Mr. M. R. Jayakar, and Mr. N. M. Joshi be appointed to consider and determine the principles of the constitution for India before July 1, the committee to circulate the draft amongst the various associations of the country; "This Committee shall give the fullest consideration to the resolutions passed by the Madras Congress on communal unity, in conjunction with those of the Hindu Mahasabha, the Muslim League, the Sikh League, and other organisations represented at the All Parties Conference at Delhi and the suggestions that may be made hereafter shall be received by the Committee; "The Committee will give due weight to the recommendations made by the various sub-committees at the All Parties Conference at Delhi; "This Conference will meet again early in August to consider the report of the Committee."

OBJECT OF NEW COMMITTEE.

Pandit Motilal in commending the resolution for acceptance said that the committee proposed to be appointed would determine the principles of the constitution for the country. In such committees it was not usual to have more than four members. But in this case to meet the wishes of all the parties, it had to make room for more than four. It was not possible for every community to be represented.

The Pandit added that no conference in the world was expected to possess unanimity of opinion on all subjects. What was wanted was maximum attainable unity on any point and when that had been obtained, the labours of the Conference could be considered closed.

Objection was then taken to fixing 1st August for the Conference to consider the report.

Some members suggested "15th August", some "as early as possible", and some "early in August." About an hour was spent on discussing these suggestions.

CHAOS BEFORE COSMOS.

Mr. Moropanth Abhyankar of Nagpur would have nothing else but "1st August." He said he was absolutely against the drafting of a constitution. Why? Because he expected two chaoses, one before they came into their own and the other when they had come into their own. First of all, there would be a chaos when they got rid of British imperialism; and, secondly, when they got swaraj. After that the cosmos would appear. In view of that he declared: "It is no good talking of drafting a constitution." He explained that they had started the idea of drafting a constitution simply to throw it at the face of the Simon Commission, whose scheme of constitution India did not want. In his opinion the drafting of a constitution should not take much time. A constitution could be drafted in 25 lines and in five minutes.

The President then put to the vote the amendment that the Conference should consider the committee's report "early in August."

The amendment was carried by a very large majority, Mr. Abhyankar and the representatives of the Communist party opposing it.

A COMMUNIST FARCE.

The President asked the latter what association they represented, and they declared that they represented the Communist Party.

Mr. Thengade: I represent the All India Trades Congress. On behalf of the All India Trades Congress I will say that the Trades Congress does not vote in this Conference.

Mr. Thengade: I have come here as a representative of the All India Trades Congress but I am not expressing here the views of that Congress. I am expressing my own views.

A discussion then took place on the original resolution as amended.

PUTTING OFF THE EVIL DAY.

Mr. Chagla was of opinion that the resolution before the House was fraught with serious consequences. It seemed to him that by the acceptance of that resolution, they were giving brand to a position that existed at the time of the last session of the All Parties Conference. The Delhi Muslim proposals of 1927 had been ratified by the All-India Congress Committee last year, and they were again ratified by the Madras Congress. The resolution of the Madras

Congress was almost accepted by the Muslim League at Calcutta. At the Delhi session of the All Parties Conference, one of the most important conclusions arrived at was the introduction of reforms in the North-West Frontier Province. As regards reservation of seats, although the Hindu Mahasabha objected to reservation in provinces where Muslims were in a majority as in Bengal and the Punjab, the Congress did not object it at the All Parties Conference.

Pandit Motilal: I rebut that statement.

Continuing, Mr. Chagla said that the resolution before the House meant the reopening of the question and throwing the work already achieved on the scrap heap. He would rather like the Congress or the Hindu Mahasabha, to tell the Muslim League, frankly that they did not approve of the latter's proposals instead of attempting to put off the evil day. He was afraid that the Committee, if constituted would fail absolutely without having the sanction of either the Mahasabha or the League behind it.

Pandit Motilal interrupted to ask whether the Muslim League would abide by the All Parties Conference resolution to which the latter replied that the League was bound by the resolution passed at Calcutta. While he conceded that the League's resolution at Calcutta was badly drafted and that it might have been more graciously worded, it was practically the same as passed by the Madras Congress.

Mr. Abhyankar: If they are the same why do not you agree to the Madras resolution? Why should you refer to your Calcutta resolution?

IT'S ONLY A COMPROMISE.

When Pandit Motilal rose to reply to Mr. Chagla, Mr. Shaikat Ali observed, "Is he going to make another speech?" The Pandit went on to say that the position of the Congress was to effect a compromise between the warring elements, the Muslim League on the one hand and the Hindu Mahasabha on the other, both of which quoted their Calcutta and Jubbulpore resolutions respectively. The Committee proposed to be set up was to effect a compromise, and if that failed it would be time for the Congress to decide upon the merits of the case. If Mr. Chagla thought that the All Parties Conference should do no more than endorse the resolutions of the Muslim League, there was no reason why the Conference should meet at all. It was open to Mr. Chagla to persuade the Committee to accept the Calcutta resolutions.

Mr. Fazal Ibrahim Rahimtoola, the only representative of the Muslim League present at the Conference said that they should either accept the Delhi Muslim proposals *in toto* or reject them. The League did not wish to hinder the efforts of the Working Committee of the Congress to bring about Hindu-Muslim unity; but as Mr. Jinnah, the President of the League had stated, the whole position rested with the Delhi Muslim proposals.

Mrs. Besant, without addressing herself to the subject at issue, said that each party represented at the Conference had only one vote. Though there were many members of the Congress Party, they had a single vote.

MOTILAL'S BOMBSHELL.

Pandit Motilal at this stage dramatically announced that he was withdrawing from the Committee as he felt that he had not the fullest confidence of the House. There had been, he observed, insinuations made against the Committee and he did not like to serve in such an atmosphere. (Voices of no, no.)

Pandit Hirdaynath Kunzru considered that Mr. Chagla's speech—stand or fall by the Muslim League's resolution at Calcutta—amounted to an ultimatum, although that word was not used. He (Pandit Kunzru) did not know whether Mr. Fazal was more frank and less prudent than Mr. Jinnah. He (the speaker) did not remember Mr. Jinnah having stated that the Calcutta resolution should be the basis of any decision. Those who belong to communal organisations had to see clearly that the responsibility for the failure of the Conference—which meant disgrace before the country and the civilised world—would rest with the communalists, each one of whom thought that it was alone right and others wrong.

Mr. M. N. Talpade stated that, although when the resolution was moved he was against it, yet after he heard Pandit Motilal, he had changed his mind. However, he thought it would not be fair to throw the blame upon the communalists.

IN DEFENCE OF MAHASABHA.

Dr. B. S. Munje recorded his protest against the allegations that the Hindu Mahasabha was against nationalism. He asserted that while in 'domestic' affairs it was communal, it was with the Congress on all national questions.

To a question whether the Mahasabha would disown Raja Narendranath for agreeing to serve on the Committee of the Punjab Legislative Council to co-operate with the Simon Commission, Dr. Munje said that he had been disowned so far as public affairs were concerned. But wherever he agreed with the Mahasabha in 'domestic' affairs, Raja Narendranath could not be disowned.

Mr. Muhammad Shafi Dawoodi (Behar) and Mr. Muhammad Balochi (Karachi) tried to throw oil on troubled waters by asking the delegates to pass the resolution.

Mrs. Besant stated that the resolution as moved by her was drafted by Mr. Gandhi and the Conference ought to be thankful to him.

Mr. T. R. Thengade, (All India Trade Union Congress Committee) desired to move an adjournment of the House. But Mr. Joshi, the Secretary of the A. I. T. Union Congress Committee, stated that his Committee had elected its representatives to be only lookers. Mr. Thengade had no right to take any active part in the proceedings.

The resolution as redrafted was put to the House and carried, the "Indian Communist Party" and the "Workers and Peasants' Party" alone voting against.

The President requested Pandit Motilal to agree to be the Chairman of the Committee in view of the 'vote of confidence', but the Pandit while waving his hand to indicate 'no' remained calm and unruffled.

SERMON OF 'UNITY.'

Before proroguing the session, the President said: "So far we have not been able to arrive at unity or come forward with a united desire to frame a constitution or to carry on the work in the country. As the President of the Congress, I have been impatiently waiting to go to the country and ask the country to do some work. I hope the committee appointed at this Conference will really be able to bring about that much needed unity. In the meantime I beg of you all to go forward and prepare the country for that unity which I am sure is coming soon and, when I am sure, will be the basis of all our work in the future. I do not know what programme the Congress is going to announce. We do not wish to sit idle. We want to do some work and God willing, we are going to create a situation that it will not be possible for any party to prevent us from getting what is due to us."

PANDIT MALAVIYA.

RESPONSE TO TELEGRAMS TO ATTEND.

BENARES, May 19. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya had originally decided to attend the All-Parties Conference, but latterly his health being weak he had postponed his departure for Bombay. Yesterday pressing telegrams were received from Pandit Motilal Nehru and others and Pandit Malaviya left Benares for Bombay this morning.