

India's Draft Constitution

THIRD READING BY NOVEMBER 26

From Our Special Representative

NEW DELHI, October 13.

The President of the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, announced in the Constituent Assembly today that the third reading of the Draft Constitution would be completed by November 26, 1949.

Amidst cheers, he added that the "historic event" would be commemorated by members signing their names in the first official copy of the constitution. He observed that the second reading should be completed before adjournment for "Diwali". Any consequential amendments which are considered necessary as a result of close scrutiny by legal and constitutional experts of the Government of India would be made at the third reading stage which would commence on November 14. The necessary powers would be taken by amending the rules in order to facilitate the step.

PRINTED COPIES

The President hoped that the printed copies of the Constitution, as read for the second time, would be circulated among members by November 4 or 5. He indicated that all provisions of the constitution had been adopted except the preamble, an Article relating to financial emergency and the question of Kashmir and allocation of seats in the Council of States.

On the question of the National Anthem, Dr. Prasad stated that it was intended to be adopted in the form of a resolution. He suggested the appointment of a committee of experts to evolve an agreed version of the National Anthem.

After adopting the provisions relating to Indian States, the Constituent Assembly today proceeded to tie the loose ends in the Draft Constitution by taking into consideration stray clauses left over here and there.

TRIBUTE TO SARDAR

Spontaneous and warm appreciation was expressed by several spokesmen of the Indian States for the "phenomenal" achievements of Sardar Patel who made it possible for the Indian States to march steadily towards the status of provinces.

While there was enthusiastic support for the general principles of the provisions, criticisms by State leaders centred round the Article providing for central control over State administration in the next ten years. Mr. K. C. Heddy, of Mysore, Praeger, and Mr. Govind Menon, of Cochin, welcomed Sardar Patel's assurance that this provision was not intended to be applied to advanced and progressive States like Mysore, Travancore and Cochin where democratic institutions had been in existence for a longer period than in some provinces.

Replying to the debate, Mr. K. M. Munshi reiterated that advanced States would not attract the precautionary provisions unless the administration there deteriorated in future. He did not share the fear of some members that the princes who would be Governors in the States, would capture power and work democratic institutions in an autocratic manner.

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