

Criticism Of Clauses On Citizenship

CONSTITUENT BODY DEBATE

From Our Special Representative
NEW DELHI, August 11.

Strong and searching criticism of the draft Articles on citizenship in the new Constitution was made by speaker after speaker in the Constituent Assembly today.

Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh, who initiated the debate, said that the provision of the Clause that "anyone who has been ordinarily resident in the territory of India for not less than five years immediately before the commencement of the Constitution" could become a citizen, would make Indian citizenship "the cheapest in the world."

Mr. Jaswantrai Kapur and Mr. Thakurdas Bhargava (both from the Punjab) complained that there were no safeguards against persons with unfriendly intentions taking advantage of the rights under the Clause. Mr. Bhargava asked why India should be solicitous to give permits to persons, who had once migrated to Pakistan, to return and acquire property and citizenship in India when thousands of non-Muslim refugees were still homeless and landless.

RETALIATORY PROVISIONS

Prof. K. T. Shah (Bombay) drew repeated applause from the House when he insisted on retaliatory provisions in regard to the acquisition of Indian citizenship by persons from countries where Indian nationals were under disabilities. The case of South Africa was the most glaring, he said, but the position of Indians in certain other Dominions and in the United States was hardly better.

Today's speeches indicated that all loopholes in the articles on citizenship rights should be removed as far as practicable in the Constituent Assembly itself instead of leaving their rectification to Parliament.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar himself indicated yesterday the difficult nature of the problem, and it is held possible that the Clauses concerned might undergo some change ultimately.