

SPEECH

Speech in the dominion parliament while replying to a debate on recognition of caste and religion

New Delhi, August 11, 1948.

Replying to the debate on Shri R.R. Diwakar's resolution recommending that "for any purposes connected with the State or its services, the Government of India shall not recognise any caste, sub-caste, sect or religion and that in future it shall abolish the mention or entry of caste, sub-caste, sect or religion in any forms supplied by Government or in any records or registers kept by Government", the Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Minister for Home Affairs, said in the Dominion Parliament today that the Government was willing to appoint a Committee to go into the whole question and see how far action could be taken in this matter without creating confusion in the country.

The following is the text of the Home Minister's speech:-

"With the general principle underlying the Resolution, there is a good deal of sympathy and the Government would like to go towards the fulfilment of the object of the Resolution as far as possible. But at the same time it must be remembered that long-established habits are not easily wiped off by either passing a Resolution or forcing the pace against the will of ignorant vast masses of humanity. The members of this House must be aware of what we have done in the Constituent Assembly. We have not been able to wipe out reservations either for Anglo-Indians or Christians or Muslims or Sikhs. Although we are trying as far as possible to remove these major distinctions of community from our Legislatures, we are not able to ignore these facts. So also we have to reckon with the existing state of things which have continued for centuries".

Sardar Patel said, "It is true that since August 15th there can be

pace, because the object of the mover can be served only by educating the people and by taking them with us as well as by allowing the forces of democracy or the impact of democracy to work. We have not had even one election after the 15th of August and we have not had the constitution also passed. We will have to make a tremendous effort in this direction and we are anxious to go as far as possible".

"On behalf of Government I am prepared to say that we are ready to examine this case further and to appoint a Committee to go into the whole question and see how far we can take action in this matter without creating confusion in the country or a conflict or an explosion because it is not so easy as it is supposed to be. It is a good thing to do, but we must not force the pace too much. That is all I can say on behalf of the Government and I hope the Mover of the Resolution will be satisfied by the attitude that Government has taken that a Committee may be appointed to examine the whole thing and Government would as far as possible give effect to the recommendations of the Committee".

The Resolution was subsequently withdrawn by the Mover.