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Justice

SATURDAY AUG. 20 1938.

A HASTY DECISION

THE DECISION OF SIR Mahomed Usman to sit as an Independent member in the Legislative Council comes to us as a shocking surprise, because we have always felt that Sir Mahomed Usman is one of the staunchest of Partymen, and he would place always the interests of the Party above his personal considerations. The decision seems to have been arrived at on account of difference of opinion between himself and the majority of the Justice Party in the legislature in regard to the Hindi issue and the use of Criminal Law Amendment Act by the Government.

Sir Mohamed is an orthodox constitutionalist and as such, he should have respected the majority view and led the Party in the Council instead of seceding from it. We are pained at this decision of Sir Mohamed, because he is one of the early builders of the Justice movement in this province. He was in close association with the twin founders of the Party, the late Dr. T. M. Nair and the late Sir P. Theogaroya Chettiar and such a gentleman should think of sitting as an Independent has really given a shock to the Party. This is a time when we cannot afford to have dissensions or divisions within the Party. The one thing that we need at present, is unity for the preservation of the Party. We are informed that an appeal was made by the Kumararajah of Chettinad to Sir Mohamed to defer his decision till the arrival of the Rajah Sahib of Bobbili, the leader of the Party. But, that appeal seems to have had no effect on Sir Mohamed.

We hope that even now, it is not too late for Sir Mohamed to reconsider his decision, a decision arrived at, we venture to think, rather hastily.

(a) :

WHAT IS REPRESSION ?

THE HON'BLE THE PRIME Minister has taken some trouble in explaining as to what is meant by "Repression." According to him, the application of the Criminal Law Amendment Act towards the

Anti-Hindi agitators is not repression. Because he says, "There is a regular proceedings in the Law courts with trials, lawyers, legal process, appeals and other legal arrangements." This according to him cannot be described as "repression." In the case of Congressmen, he says that they had not the legal process, that there were no regular proceedings in the Courts, that there were no regular trials in law courts and they were subjected to lathi charge and therefore it was repression. Opinions differ. We admit. But, facts cannot differ. When Congressmen called "repression", the same Criminal Law Amendment Act was applied and people were sent to prison, of course, with this difference, that better treatment was given to them at that time according to alphabetical classes. But, now in the case of Anti-Hindi prisoners, it is not so. The Hon'ble the Prime Minister must have known about it. He must have read at least of how the magistrates refused to give rice diet to certain prisoners when they said that they were accustomed to rice diet only even outside. All the prisoners were given the ordinary last class with the possible exception of Mr. K. M. Balasubramaniam, in whose case, the Court was liberal enough to put him in "A" class, and to give him simple imprisonment. To that extent, the Anti-Hindi leaders say : "Thanks for the small mercies." With regard to the numerous persons, prominent or otherwise the treatment was severe and the sentences were harsh. This fact, does not the Prime Minister know? Is he ignorant of it? We know that he knows that his limbs, the magistracy and the police are trying to be as harsh as possible to repress the growing feeling of the people against the Congress Ministry. With regard to repression, we beg leave to point out to the Hon'ble the Prime Minister that in their election manifesto the Congress Party promised to repeal all repressive laws. What are the repressive laws, may we ask the Hon'ble the Premier? If the Criminal Law Amendment Act is not a repressive law, what else it is? Why should the Hon'ble Mr. Rajagopalachari feel so much at the wording of the resolution brought forward by Mr. Abdul Hameed Khan. The resolution is worded in the most dignified manner. All that the resolution says is: "This Assembly recommends to the Government of Madras to stop its policy of repression against persons who take part in the Anti-Hindi agitation." The resolution does not condemn the Government as it is usual with the opposition to frame resolutions in a condemnatory language in the legislatures. All that it does is a recommendation to the Government for its consideration the stopping of its present policy.

It may be that the Hon'ble Mr. Rajagopalachari may not feel that what he is doing, is repression. But the outside world feels that it is repression. His

actions have been subjected to severe criticisms even by Congressmen. The "Indian Express" which is not an Anti-Congress journal, which has not got any feeling of grouse with or disappointment at the Ministry has not approved of the action of the Hon'ble Mr. Rajagopalachari when he opposed the bill of Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari. We take this opportunity of submitting to the Hon'ble the Prime Minister one fact, viz., that he should consider other people also intelligent enough to understand ordinary things. He gives us an impression—perhaps we may be wrong—that he considers himself most intelligent and that he can interpret anything according to his own view by indulging in parables. That is not the correct way to run an administration. Public opinion must be conciliated, and it is not a new thing for the Hon'ble the Prime Minister. He has done it in the case of the Viswabrahmanas and allayed the fears of that community. He can do it in the case of Hindi also. It is wrong to suppose that the Anti-Hindi agitation is engineered by the

RAJAH SAHIB OF BOBBILI

Madras, Aug. 20.

The Rajah Sahib of Bobbili, Leader of the Justice Party will arrive in Madras, to-day by Bombay Express at 5-40 p. m.

opponents of Mr. Rajagopalachari. The fact of the matter is that the Anti-Hindi agitation was started not by a Justicite but by a Congressman, Mr. Somasundara Bharathiar. People who have opposed the introduction of compulsory Hindi are men like Swami Vedachalam, Mahamahopadhyaya Swami-natha Iyer and other eminent scholars of Tamil, who cannot, by any stretch of imagination, be described as the enemies of the Congress. It is true that some of the prominent leaders of the Justice Party have identified themselves with the Anti-Hindi movement, not because they consider that they could behead the Congress Ministry, but because they feel that the cause of the people should be supported. Now that the Hon'ble Mr. Rajagopalachari has been able to defeat the bill brought forward by Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari to repeal the Criminal Law Amendment Act and the resolution moved by Mr. Hameed Khan, he has at last established his prestige as a firm administrator and he can now afford to be generous to the people by giving up Hindi as a compulsory subject, so that the unnecessary agitation over so small a matter may cease.