

"IS ANTI-HINDI MOVEMENT DYING?"

MR. E. V. R. NAICKER'S REPLY TO CONGRESS MINISTRY

Madras, Oct. 14

Under the auspices of the North Madras Tamil Sangam, a mass meeting was held to protest against the introduction of compulsory Hindi on Thursday (13-10-38) evening at the maidan adjacent to Robinson Park, Washermanpet.

Pandit Thirugnanasambandan proposed Mr. Albert Jesudasan to the chair and the proposition was duly seconded.

The meeting commenced with Anti-Hindi songs by Mr. M. S. Balasundara Pavalar.

Mr. Albert Jesudasan presided. In the course of his introductory remarks he said that of late the Congress Ministry and the Congress Journals had been discrediting the anti Hindi movement by saying that the movement was dead. This meeting was convened to dispel such false and vicious propaganda and to signify once more their disapproval of the Hindi policy pursued by the Congress Ministry. The huge gathering that had assembled there bore ample testimony to the fact that the anti-Hindi movement was not dying as Congressmen sought to make, but was growing from strength to strength.

MR. E. V. RAMASWAMI

NAICKER

Mr. E. V. Ramaswami Naicker who was given a tremendous ovation on rising to speak, said:—

"The Anti-Hindi agitation is not dead, though its death has been wished for more than once by the Congress Government. The fact that arrests are being made daily and heavy sentences are being passed on volunteers whose only crime, is, if it is really a crime, the love of their language, and the torturous treatment they are subjected to at the hands of the Ministry gives the lie direct to the statement of Mr. Achariar and his henchmen that the anti-Hindi agitation is dead. It is for you who have mustered in your thousands to decide whether it is dead or alive. The Printer and publisher and the editor of "Viduthalai", have been arrested and thrust into gaol. Even now the Congress Ministers are not satisfied and they have set their eyes on others. They are waiting for an opportunity as to whom else they should arrest. They are still undecided. This is neither the time nor the occasion to discuss the merits or demerits of Hindi. Suffice it for me to say that the very sponsors of the Hindi measure are still unsettled as to its merits, and it has been proved, if proof were needed, by the recent A.I.C.C. meeting in Delhi. Those of you assembled here, I take it, had followed the proceedings of the A.I.C.C. meeting. The Committee had realised that the Hindi-Hindustani question, over which much ink was spilt, created not only unrest, but racial antagonism and antipathy. It is a matter for regret that the Committee has not thought over the matter as to who was the real author of this unrest. I wish they had turned the searchlight on themselves.

Mr. Achariar said on the floor of the Assembly that the agitation was carried on by me and other enemies of the country's progress. I ask Mr. Achariar why we should become

enemies of the country's progress? Have not our ancestors ruled over this country? Have we no right to govern the affairs of this country? Is it the sole monopoly of Mr. Achariar and his tribe? Is the heritage of governing a country theirs and not ours? Are we not entitled to call a spade a spade? Are we not worthy of carrying on the administration of this country? What is it that you are capable of doing and we are not? What business have you to interfere with our rights and privileges?

We have tilled, sown and reaped, we have built temples, we have dug tanks, we have constructed choultries and charity-houses, only to be treated with contempt and scorn. We have been deceived and duped in the name of religion and nationalism. Ungrateful for all that we have done to them, they now attempt to crush our culture, to kill our civilisation, and characterise us as traitors.

Real "Gulams"

I am prepared to lay down my life to drive the Europeans bag and baggage from our country. But it is Mr. Achariar and his tribe who are now retaining the British. We have been called 'gulams'. We have been called as those blacking the shoes of the British Imperialists. I ask Congressmen whether they are not the real 'gulams' and whether they are not blacking the shoes of the Britishers? Have they not called the Governor their 'friend, philosopher and guide'? Have they not sworn allegiance to His Majesty and to his successors? Are they not working the Constitution which they have sworn by their sacred thread that they would wreck, uproot and demolish, at the time of the elections?

Have you not secured the votes of persons by holding out to them large promises? Have you not promised the dawn of a new era? Have you not promised them a new haven of happiness? And have not the electorate believed you and plumped their votes into the yellow boxes, only to be deceived? May I ask how came Dr. Rajan to be a Minister? May I ask what constituency does he represent in the Legislature? The Rajan episode is still green in the minds of those who have been following the Congress politics. Has not Dr. Rajan rebelled against the Congress? Has he not revolted against Mr. Achariar? Has he not stated that there was no place for an honest man in the Congress? What action has the Congress taken against him? Such a person was brought in by the backdoor and given a place in the Ministry not under any constitutional law, but under the code of Varnashrama Dharma and Manu Smriti. Has the Congress asked Dr. Rajan to tender an apology for what he said and did? But, he has not. Had any other person done it, immediately, there would have been protests, condemnations and what not. Our monopolist friends will not hesitate to characterise us as communalists. There can be no greater illustration of rank and rabid communalism than the one which the Congress Ministry has done.

I understand that there have been whispers to the effect that this is an election meeting. I have not come here to carry on an election propaganda, and to support this or that candidate. But I ask you to whomever you vote, vote for honest man. I ask you to vote for those who

have the welfare and interests of the public at their heart, house allowance, and go on tours. Is it written that the Congress, at the expense of the public, Party alone can look after the civic welfare of the masses? It lives in a house for which he is not the monopoly of the Congress party alone. When, during the last elections, the Congress approached the masses did it say that it was going to introduce compulsory Hindi? Did it say that it was going to work the Act? Surely not. Who does not remember the supporters of the Congress having said that the masses should vote for dogs, donkeys, mules and ticket and monkeys if they are set up to stand on the Congress ticket. (laughter) During the short time the Ministry has been in power they have done everything to lower the morale, standard and prestige of all district boards, and municipalities under their sway. Corruption and bribery are running rampant. Who has not heard of the Contractor Raj in the municipalities under the control of Congress? Who has not heard of the Contract Raj in far off Central Provinces? Has not the matter been placed before the Working Committee? Has not the Working Committee shamed it aside by saying that it could not be proved? Have not the Congress leaders recommended jobs for their kinsman? Has not Dr. Khare exposed all the acts of the Congress in their nakedness? Are we not now hearing that the Non-brahmins are being tyrannised at the hands of the Congress. Have we not heard of the dismissal of many Non-Brahmins by the Brahmin "Congressmen"? Can any one here or elsewhere say that they have heard of Brahmins being dismissed from service by the previous parties in power? No, they cannot. Is it for the dismissal of Non-Brahmins from service, the masses have dumped their votes into the yellow box?

No one will be more glad than myself to see the country freed from the fetters of foreign domination. I wish to see more than anyone else that my country is set free. But what will happen to us in the case of a foreign invasion? Are we equal in prowess and military skill to others to defend ourselves? If at all we have been trained in anything, it is only in spinning charkas and taklis. Can Mr. Achariar, Mr. Mu:thurangam Mudaliar and Mr. Satyamurthi, or, for a matter of that, Mr. Gandhi resist foreign invasion by charkas and taklis? (laughter). The Britishers know our weakness and they feel that as long as the charka of Mr. Gandhi is there, they need not worry themselves. I ask who were the persons who fought battles and won victories in the past? Were they not the Non-Brahmins? As long as there are our monopolist friends, the Englishmen will not leave the shores of India. The Brahmins will see that they are not sent out, because they are their cousins. It is they who have been responsible for Englishmen staying here. What relationship have we with them that we want them to stay here for ever?

Continuing, Mr. Naicker said "Lakhs of rupees have been collected in the name of Khadi fund. Where are the funds now and what happened to them? They have been used and utilised for maintaining the congress machinery and doing party propaganda. Today persons employed in the district boards and municipalities are being forced to don in Khadi, otherwise, they are threatened. People spend something like 10 to 12 annas on a Khadi cloth as thick as a sack, when they can afford to get decent, Indian mill cloth for 4 to 6 annas.

The Congress men shouted at the top of their voices that three ministers were said to be unnecessary when the Justice Party was in power. They said they drew fat salaries. Today I ask why should there be ten ministers and ten hangers-on to them? The Congressmen said they would not get a copper coin more than Rs. 500/- To-day they

Audible for miles around, the great bells are many years old, one of them dating back to 1570.

Reims Cathedral was stuck by 287 German shells. In 1918 only 17 buildings were left intact in this city of 100,000 population.

"If to day, any one says that Hindi should not be introduced as a compulsory subject, he is called a Justiceite, and an enemy of the Country's progress. For the mere shouting of "Down with Hindi", the Government are pursuing a repressive policy.

Concluding, Mr. Naicker said:

"Mr. Achariar and others stated that the anti-Hindi volunteers went to jail for a morsel of food. I ask whether the Congressmen have not gone to jails for food. I remember quite well of having presented cheques to many volunteers when I was the President or Secretary of the Madras Provincial Congress Committee. Some time ago, I remember to have seen a cartoon, in the "Ananda Vikatan", of an anti-Hindi volunteer begging for alms in the streets. We are tolerating such things. We have become so servile that the Brahmins mock and scoff at us. Nothing can be achieved until Brahminism is got rid of. (Cheers).

Mr. Paravastu Rajagopalachariar

Mr. Kanchi Parvastu Rajagopalachariar said that the agitation had received an impetus by the introduction of sections 124A and 153A I. P. C. Up to this time, they had not heard of Brahmin-Non-Brahmin differences or class-hatred either in North or South India. If there was class-hatred to-day, it was because of Mr. Achariar. It was he who was responsible for promoting class hatred. Mr. Achariar stated that because his community was ridiculed, he could not tolerate, and so he resorted to the use of the Criminal Law Amendment Act.

How was his community ridiculed and by whom? Was the shouting of "Down with Uchikudimai Raj" and "Down with poonool Raj" an offence. He asked whether all the Brahmins had now 'Uchikudumi'. Many Brahmins had cropped their heads, and as such why should Mr. Achariar, get offended. The speaker for his part did not consider Mr. Achariar as a Brahmin at all, because he (Mr. Achariar) did not possess in him the makings of a Brahmin.

If the Tamilians wanted to live as Tamilians, they should see that persons who were prepared to stand by them for ever should be elected. They had now had a very good opportunity. The elections would take place in a day or two.

Swami Shanmugananda, speaking next said that the cry of every Tamilian should be "Tamil Nad for Tamilians." He appealed to the Hindus and Muslims who were living in Tamil Nad to fight for their language.

Mr. Lurthaswamy, a boy of seven years, then spoke. He said that it was the student community which was asked to read Hindi. Already, they were being taxed with many subjects and this was an addition.

Sri Muvalur Ramamirthamal spoke appealing to the women folk to celebrate without the help of Brahmins the festival of Kedari Gowri Vratham which was to come off next week.

With a few concluding remarks from the chair, the meeting terminated.

Bells, Silent 24 Years' Peal

The bells of ancient Reims Cathedral which have been silent since the building was destroyed by German guns during the Great War, pealed recently for the first time in 24 years to announce ceremonies which culminated in the opening of the rebuilt cathedral.

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