

he was not aware of any legal disability, and even the political disability that existed in the matter of the exercise of the franchise does not apply to all Indians, because the federal law relating to the franchise lays it down that any Indian who served with His Majesty's military, naval, or air forces is entitled to the franchise. He explained the present difficulties in conceding the franchise to Indians generally in British Columbia, which are due not to distinction of colour but to economic and complex political considerations, and he reiterated what he had already said to Mr. Sastri on the occasion of the latter's visit to Canada in 1922—namely, that the question whether natives of India resident in Canada should be granted a Dominion parliamentary franchise on terms and conditions identical with those which govern the exercise of that right by Canadian citizens generally was necessarily one which Parliament alone could determine, and that the matter would be submitted to Parliament for consideration when the franchise law comes up for revision.

Mr. Mackenzie King added that he was somewhat doubtful whether the visit of a committee appointed by the Government of India would make it easier to deal with this problem in Canada, but that, should it be desired to send a committee, the Canadian Government would readily appoint a committee to confer with the committee from India.

The Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia explained the principles underlying the present attitude of Australia on this question. He stated that the representatives of every shade of political thought in Australia had shown sympathy with the claim that lawfully domiciled Indians should enjoy full citizen rights, and that he believed that public opinion was ready to welcome, so far as concerned the position of such Indians, any measure conceived in the interests of the Empire as a whole. The Commonwealth had the right to control the admission to its territories of new citizens, and its immigration policy was founded on economic considerations. He felt that, in view of the position which existed in Australia, there was no necessity for a committee, but assured the Indian representatives that he would consult his colleagues on his return to Australia as to what action should be taken in connection with the resolution of the 1921 Conference.

The Prime Minister of New Zealand said that the New Zealand Government would welcome the visit of a committee from India such as had been suggested, should this be desired; New Zealand practically gave the natives of India now resident in the Dominion the same privileges as were enjoyed by people of the Anglo-Saxon race who were settled there.

The Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa intimated that, so far as South Africa was concerned, it was not a question of colour, but that a different principle was involved. He stated that the attitude of thinking men in South Africa was not that the Indian was inferior because of his colour or on any other ground—he might be their superior—but the question had to be considered from the point of view of economic competition. In other words, the white community in South Africa felt that the whole question of the continuance of western civilization in South Africa was involved. General Smuts could hold out no hope of any further extension of the political rights of Indians in South Africa, and, so far as the Union was concerned, he could not accept Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's proposal.

The Secretary of State for the Colonies, on behalf of the British Government, cordially accepted the proposal of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru that there should be full consultation and discussion between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and a committee appointed by the Government of India upon all questions affecting British Indians domiciled in British colonies, protectorates, and mandated territories. At the same time the Duke of Devonshire was careful to explain that, before decisions were taken as a result of discussions with the committee, consultations with the local colonial Governments concerned, and in some cases local inquiry, would be necessary. Further, while welcoming the proposal, the Duke reminded the Conference that the British Government had recently come to certain decisions as to Kenya, which represented in their considered view the very best that could be done in all the circumstances. While he saw no prospect of these decisions being modified, he would give careful attention to such representations as the committee appointed by the Government of India might desire to make to him.