

law by several Acts passed from time to time.

The Rau Committee drew up two Bills, the Hindu Marriage Bill and the Hindu Intestate Succession Bill. These were introduced in the Central Legislature in 1943, but were eventually allowed to lapse because of opposition from the conservative elements amongst the public. But the pressure of public opinion led the Government to reappoint the Committee, which then toured the country, heard evidence given by the progressive and conservative sides and drew up the Hindu Code Bill. That Bill was also introduced in the Central Legislature. Again, it encountered difficulties. Government of India ultimately decided to introduce reforms by separate Bills devoted to various topics. It was only in 1955 that the Hindu Marriage Act could be passed by Parliament. It was soon followed by the Hindu Succession Act, 1956. But B.N. Rau was not there to see that his efforts ultimately yielded some result.

### 9. RESERVE BANK v. PROVINCES (1944)

B.N. Rau's talents were utilised in one more field. In 1944, a dispute arose between the Reserve Bank and some of the Provinces as to which of them should bear the loss incurred by the looting of the government treasuries during the 1942 Struggle. B.N. Rau was asked to decide it. His award ultimately went in favour of the Provinces, a view which had been put forward by Shri M. Hidayatullah as the Advocate-General of the Central Provinces and Berar. Shri M. Hidayatullah, recounting his experience as a lawyer appearing before B.N. Rau, said thus :<sup>13</sup>

Sir B.N. Rau impressed me as a man of sound commonsense and great legal acumen. I had appeared before Judges, including the Judges of the Federal Court, but very few compared with him for sheer stately judicial presence."

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13. M. Hidayatullah, The First B.N. Rau Memorial Lecture, *Judicial Methods*, delivered under the auspices of the Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, (National, Delhi 1970) pp. 18-19.