

A. REASONS FOR SUBMITTING THIS NOTE AS A MINORITY REPORT

I have affixed my signature to the Report as a participant in the work of the Commission merely as a matter of form, and my signing it has been subject to this Note which may be taken as a Minority Report.

I regret I cannot accept many of the Conclusions and Recommendations as presented in the Report. I feel sad that after so many months of labour I should find myself differing from most of my colleagues in such a vital matter as the Official Language of the Union and its implementation by making such recommendations to the President as will ultimately conduce to the well-being of the Indian Nation. The Chairman and my other colleagues in the Commission have all of them evinced an earnest desire and a sincere concern to do their duty in the best interests of the country. The Commission did an enormous amount of work in getting and sifting evidence and opinion, and I cannot claim to have obtained more facts along the line of enquiry and investigation followed. But in the light of recent happenings and trends of events in India, since the Commission started its work, my point of view has become very different, and consequently my reading of the nature of the linguistic situation and the linguistic problems has unfortunately been profoundly modified in many matters from that finally presented in the Report. I must say that I presented my point of view (along with the points of view presented by other members) before the Commission came to its final conclusions, but my views and suggestions were generally not found acceptable by most of my colleagues, after they had considered them. I would therefore from this basic difference now arrived at prescribe other measures and suggest other recommendations. Those who will have finally to decide the issue should also be informed about the other points of view with regard to the problem and the measures to be followed. This is why I am feeling constrained to present this Note, as a Note of Dissent or as a Minority Report; otherwise I shall be failing in my duty as a Member of the Commission.

I cannot help feeling that the Report is simply trying to suggest certain programmes and lines of procedure from the Centre, without a close consideration either of the general situation in India in the sphere of language or of future reactions and repercussions among large sections of our people. It is also seeking to place as something conclusive before the non-Hindi peoples of India that it will be both an act of patriotic duty and an urgent and necessary reform to replace English by Hindi as quickly as possible, and to take in Hindi to saturation in their judicial and administrative bases, in their educational set up, and consequently even in their most intimate being.

The provisions in the Constitution regarding the use of Hindi as the Official Language of the Union in certain contexts have been

extended in the Report in a manner which will bring about a total revolution in our Education, in the Administration of Law and Justice, in the Central Legislature, and in the Public Services, a revolution which many do not think to be desirable in the best interests of India in her present situation. If the recommendations are sought to be implemented from the Centre, it will bring about immediate chaos in our public life as a whole. It will mean for non-Hindi peoples the starting of a progressive imposition of Hindi in most spheres of life. The Report has been prepared on the assumption (on the basis of the present Constitution, of course) that Hindi has been already voluntarily accepted by the whole of India, that non-Hindi peoples are as much eager for its use in most spheres of our All-India affairs as speakers of Hindi, and that it will be something anti-national not to try to replace English in the entire administrative, legal and political frame of India, and largely in the educational cadre also. The entire outlook is that of the Hindi-speakers in the Indian Union, who alone are to profit immediately, and for a long time to come, if not forever. I fear that in the entire report there is very little evidence of an attempt to understand the feelings and the intellectual approach of the non-Hindi speaking peoples for their own languages, and also for English (as it is sincerely regarded by them to be the most necessary thing for the development of science and letters in India, for the preservation of the Unity of India, and for the maintenance of the pre-eminence of India in the modern world). The attitude is far from democratic—it is just a case of imposition of one kind of mentality over the rest, as the only natural and at the same time politically sound mentality for the whole of India. The fact that India is a polyglot country where people have now become or are becoming aggressively proud of their own languages is ignored. A particular language has been sought to be given priority over everything else in our national life. As it strikes us, Uniformity through Hindi is sought to be brought about as quickly as possible, even at the risk of jeopardising the Unity of India through the English language.

The Recommendations will, in my opinion, bring about the immediate creation, without intending to do so, of Two Classes of Citizens in India—Class I Citizens with Hindi as their language, obtaining an immense amount of special privileges by virtue of their language only, and Class II Citizens who will be suffering from permanent disabilities by reason also of their language. This is bound to be the situation so long as non-Hindi speakers like the Assam, Bengal, Orissa, Andhra, Madras, Maharashtra and other peoples do not acquire a command over Hindi which can compare favorably with that of those persons who have Hindi as their only language of education, either along with or to the exclusion of English. As the Government of Kashmir has said in its Reply to the Commission's *Questionnaire*: "The residents of non-Hindi speaking areas will be at a considerable, even more or less a permanent disadvantage compared to persons from Hindi areas if English is replaced by Hindi as the medium of the Union Public Service Commission Examinations". Elsewhere it says: "It is difficult to foresee how fast non-Hindi speaking peoples can take to Hindi so as to possess equal competitive ability". With English as a neutral language affecting all equally, and as the liaison language not only between India and

the World but also among the various linguistic areas and States within India, it was a question of no special favour for any language at the expense of the rest. Now the Indian public as a whole (from the South, North, West and East) must pay for the development of Hindi, which as yet has no intellectual significance or value for the rest of India. It must pay not only in money but also, as people in non-Hindi areas feel, in a huge waste of time and energy and temper in trying to acquire and master a language not yet distinguished in any way above their own, and a language which is still in the making. Whatever concern or solicitude or good will might be outwardly shown for them, the languages of India other than Hindi will ultimately come, as a result of these far-reaching Recommendations, to have but a secondary position even in their own areas. That is an eventuality which cannot be gladly accepted by their speakers. They will feel that most of the Recommendations, particularly under Education and Public Services Examinations, and the Administration of Justice, consciously or unconsciously will bring about a fastening of the tentacles of Hindi on the public life and culture of the non-Hindi peoples in a manner which will make them helpless for ever.

The Recommendations appear to ignore the consequences which may result from them. The Report evinces a subdued but desperate haste to bring in Hindi for the whole of India: 1965 still remains with the Report a target date, although it ruefully admits that "it has not been possible for us to furnish a regular time-table by dates and stages as to how Hindi should be introduced into the business of the Union so as to accomplish the general change-over within the period fixed by the Constitution". I submit the situation now is hardly ripe for bringing in this revolutionary change-over in Indian affairs, while Hindi is not yet ready on the one hand, and the non-Hindi peoples too are not ready either on their part. As one who has devoted over 40 years of his life to the study and teaching of Indian Linguistics and to the consideration of linguistic problems, I am definitely of opinion that the linguistic question is not at all so very urgent for India, as many persons, ardent patriots most of them, seem to think. I therefore cannot be a party to the Recommendations suggested in the Report; nor can I accept the views and arguments and conclusions set forth in it.

I do not say anything without knowledge and experience and thought. I have been advocating the use of Hindi as one of the official languages of India (side by side with English) for quite a long period. But I have always insisted upon the retention of English in our higher education, and law and administration, pending the time that Hindi and other Indian languages would be able to take over from English. The use of Hindi I have suggested for "decorative purposes", in the first instance, and then, if suitable, for inter-provincial communication; but never to the complete exclusion of the regional languages and English. I wanted people in non-Hindi States *voluntarily* to learn Hindi, just as I have always advocated Hindi-speaking students learning one other language of Modern India. I have been actively occupied in propagating Hindi among Bengali people on a voluntary basis, and for over a decade I have been President of the West Bengal Branch of the *Rashtra-Bhasha Prachar Samiti* of Wardha. For this, I was misunderstood by my

Bengali-speaking friends, and I came in for a good deal of uninformed criticism, even abuse, for supporting, as they thought, Hindi as against Bengali. I remain a confirmed advocate of the Roman script for all Indian languages, and I feel certain that in our own interest sooner or later we shall do what I consider to be a most sensible thing—viz., adopt a modified Roman alphabet for all our Indian languages. I occasionally write in Hindi—I have four books in Hindi, besides a number of articles. I have intimate friends among writers and scholars of Hindi everywhere. One of my books obtained from the U.P. Government one of its highest prizes—this is my *Bharatiya Arya-Bhasha Aur Hindi*. For another book (on the Rajasthani Language) I received from the *Hindi Sahitya Sammelan* the Ratnakar Prize as the best book in Hindi on a linguistic subject for the year of its award. I have been made an Honorary Member of the *Nagari Pracharini Sabha* of Banaras, and the *Hindi Sahitya Sammelan* gave me the title of *Sahitya-Vachaspati* for my services to Hindi. In 1948 at an International Conference of Linguistic Scholars in Paris, as a member of the Permanent International Council of Linguists (CIPL), I had suggested that as the third language of the world in point of numbers speaking or understanding it, and as the representative language of Modern India, Hindi should be recognised as one of the official languages of the United Nations Organisation (UNO), taking its place beside English, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese. I have a great love for Hindi, not, of course, to the exclusion of Bengali and English and Sanskrit, but as a great and a growing language, which, when voluntarily accepted, will be a most desirable thing for the whole of India. Thus I welcome the way in which Hindi is being given a prominent place in the facade of our All-India national life, side by side with English, and with the regional languages in our non-Hindi States (e.g. in public sign-boards and notices as in the railway and the post office, and in the state documents with a foreign context), as this will help people all over the country to familiarise themselves with Hindi and induce them to be drawn favourably to it as a great Symbol and Bond of Union for our United States of India.

With all this background, I feel that the direction that recent events have been taking in India, after the Commission started to function, makes it imperatively necessary, to keep intact our most precious heritage of Indian Unity, to revise our views about the extent to which we should push Hindi and the speed with which we should try to make it the *Rashtra-Bhasha*, or State or Official Language of India, and to reorient our official attitude towards both Hindi and English (particularly in the Centre and the Hindi States, and among Congress circles). I honestly feel that I am seeing an incipient "Hindi Imperialism", which will be all the more anti-national as Hindi has not yet acquired any pre-eminence over the other languages of India except its weight of numbers. The cultured intelligentsia in the Hindi States are of course generally free from it, and some of them have shown the greatest concern over it. But the half-educated and uneducated people are bound to have a different reaction, and it is the common men—the masses—who really count in a matter like this, where a universal attitude of understanding and tolerance is so very vital. The Hindi-speaking people, like all human beings, are not free from Linguism, and their expectations have been

raised very high. This is also my conviction, after careful observation and thinking, that the relegation of English to a secondary place in our education and public life will ultimately not be for the good of the country. Hence I beg to differ from the findings and recommendations of the Commission's Report.

What I consider just and proper I am stating below in my proposals for Recommendations to the President. I am also giving in brief my reasons for making these proposals. They should be before the Governments, the Legislatures and the People, in all the parts of the Country. It is only in this way that more points of view than one may be considered by persons who deal with the destiny of the people.

B. THE RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the terms of reference indicating "the duty of the Commission to make recommendations to the President" on the five items mentioned in Article 344 of the Constitution of India, while having "due regard to the industrial, cultural and scientific advancement of India and the just claims and interests of persons belonging to non-Hindi speaking areas in regard to public services"—

I beg respectfully to make the following Recommendations to the President:

(a) Considering that the Hindi-speaking people will have a natural and permanent advantage over non-Hindi speakers, if Hindi, which is the regional language and mother-tongue of the former, comes to be used for all the official purposes of the Union; and that as a consequence India will have a privileged class of Hindi-speakers in all the departments of public life and administration;

Considering also the fact that as an immediate consequence the fundamental rights of the non-Hindi speakers in the matter of their language are sure to be profoundly affected both in a pan-Indian setting as well as within their States:

Considering further that the present political situation in the various States of India is at present quite abnormal and full of ferment through the working of linguistic and territorial jealousies and oppositions, and is not in the least propitious for any far-reaching change which may be taken to affect or modify the linguistic and other rights of various sections of the Indian people, particularly when they are outside of the Hindi orbit;

the question of the progressive use of the Hindi language for the official purposes of the Union be kept in abeyance for the time being, as it may otherwise bring in other grave complications unnecessarily within the Union; and the Committee to be appointed under Section (4) of Article 344 of the Constitution be also directed to take cognizance of the situation in the country regarding the progress of education, administrative efficiency and the wishes of the non-Hindi speaking peoples of India in this connexion, while making their recommendations. The President is also respectfully