

The Simon Commission

The Indian politics had become dull after the failure of the Non-cooperation movement. There was a general apathy among the people towards politics. Besides, Hindu-Muslim riots were taking place in different cities of India which again was creating an ugly situation in the country. At that time, the British government itself provided an opportunity to the Indians for the revival of political agitation in the country. The British government announced the appointment of a Statutory Commission on November 8, 1927 and the constitution of the Commission revived the political agitation in India.

In November, 1927, the British Prime Minister announced the decision of the Government to constitute the Commission. Outwardly, India was in the grip of the Hindu-Muslim riots at that time. The British government felt it to be an opportune time for presenting a dismal picture of Indian politics. The Commission consisted of seven members of the British Parliament, with Sir John Simon as its Chairman. It was an all-White Commission. Not

Page No. _____
Date: / /

Report was published in May 1930 after a labour of two years. It suggested that provincial autonomy should not be established in the North-West Frontier Province. But the Indian scholars have expressed the view that the report did not take into account the changed political atmosphere of India. They pointed out that the Report did not accept the demand of the Indians for granting Dominion Status for India; it did not provide responsible government at Centre; and, though it recommended for creating responsible government in the provinces, rendered the provision infructuous by providing special powers to governors. However, the Report of the Simon Commission was almost shelved before its publication because the British government put forward some new proposals before the Report of the Commission could be considered by the Parliament.

a single Indian was included in it. The Indians could understand it and thereby felt humiliated. It became the reason of protest by the Indians against the Commission. The Viceroy, therefore, made it clear that the British Government would permit the Indians to present their case before the British Parliament as declared by the Prime Minister.

The Commission worked under hostile circumstances. Its composition was taken to be an insult to the dignity and national self-respect of India. Leaders of almost all the Indian political parties decided to boycott the Commission. The Congress was the first one to reject it. Excepting some minor organisations like the Justice Party, All-India Depressed Class Federation etc; all important political parties and their leaders refused to cooperate with the Commission and most of them decided to boycott it. Probably after the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy no other action of the British government was attacked so bitterly by the Indians as the appointment of this Commission. Lala Lajpat Rai received lathi blows while leading a procession in Punjab and died after some weeks. The Simon Commission's