

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I do not allow the proceedings to be interrupted.

**Shri Chattopadhyaya:** Sir, it is a very important and urgent matter....

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** It is wrong. Hon. Members should kindly intimate to me earlier. I cannot allow anything to interrupt the proceedings of the House. Shri U. M. Trivedi.

**Sardar Hukam Singh:** Am I authorised to put the question, Sir?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Yes.

#### Short Notice Questions and Answers

##### LATHI CHARGE BY POLICE IN DELHI

**Sardar Hukam Singh** (on behalf of Shri U. M. Trivedi): Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that about 63 persons excluding satyagrahis were injured by lathi charges by the Delhi Police on the 12th May, 1953 at 7-45 P. M. near the Dewan Hall;

(b) whether it is a fact that no medical assistance was rendered to any of the injured persons;

(c) whether it is a fact that the shoppers in the area in Lajpatral Market were lathi charged and driven out by the Police;

(d) whether it is a fact that one Lekhraj a bystander was beaten till he lost consciousness on the road adjoining the Dewan Hall;

(e) whether it is a fact that a story was circulated of acid bottle and/or acid bomb and/or brickbats being thrown on the Police or the Magistrate to cover the police excesses;

(f) whether it is a fact that Dr. Satyawati, a Lady of Etawah aged 80 years was beaten by the police till she became unconscious; and

(g) whether it is a fact that Shri Amolak Singh and his younger brother the owners of the National Hotel were dragged out and beaten?

**The Minister of Home Affairs and States (Dr. Katju):** I feel that the House will get a clearer and more connected picture if, instead of answering each part of the question separately, I give an answer in the form of a narrative.

A public meeting was organised at the Dewan Hall at 6-30 P.M. on 12th 149 P.S.D.

May, 1953 by the Jan Sangh and allied organisations. A number of excited speeches, inciting people to break the law, was delivered at the meeting by a large number of gentlemen including several M.P.'s. It was announced by Shri V. P. Joshi that the ban on meetings and processions would be defied and that he would lead a procession to the residence of the Prime Minister for staging a demonstration. On the conclusion of the meeting the audience came out and formed into a procession equipped with black flags. The Magistrate on duty called on them to disperse and to refrain from violating the District Magistrate's prohibitory order. This was the signal for violence by the demonstrators, some of whom snatched the turbans of the Sub-Inspectors of Police while others commenced throwing brick bats. A number of bottles was also thrown. One of these hit the back of the Magistrate and then dropped to the ground and broke, whereupon its contents burst into flames. Another bottle was picked up intact. When the Magistrate found that the processionists were not prepared to disperse and were continuing their attack on the Police, he ordered a lathi charge. Some of the demonstrators ran away but the rest continued their attack on the Police. The women demonstrators took a particularly active part. They formed a cordon round Shri V. P. Joshi and grappled with the women Police who were employed to reach Shri Joshi. A woman Sub-Inspector had her hand bitten while other women demonstrators also assaulted the women constables. The number of persons arrested at the end of the lathi charge included 14 women and 46 men. Four Policemen received injuries caused by brickbats. All the injuries whether on the side of the Police or on the side of demonstrators were of a simple nature.

2. I now come to the specific points mentioned in the question. It is not possible to say how many persons in all from among the public were injured. Among the 60 persons who were arrested by the Police, 7 were found to have injuries and all of them received medical attention either from a doctor or, in two cases, at a Hospital. It can be affirmed that the lathi charge was made only on persons who were actually taking part in violent demonstrations and had refused to disperse; whether or not they were so called Satyagrahis is more than I can say.

3. It is not correct that persons who were shopping in the Lajpatral Market were lathi charged. Some of the

fleeing demonstrators attempted to hide inside the shops but were pushed out by the owners of the shops. It has not been possible to locate any person named Lekh Raj among those who are known by the Government to have been lathi charged. Similarly, neither Dr. Satyawati nor Shri Amolak Singh or his brother is among the persons arrested. It is therefore not possible to say whether they were in the crowd that was lathi charged. No lady was however beaten into unconsciousness nor was any person dragged out from the National Hotel and beaten by the Police. No such complaint was made to the Magistrate who remained on the spot for more than an hour after the occurrence.

4. Finally it is not correct that the reports of throwing brick-bats and of bottles containing inflammable liquid are unfounded. One of the bottles that was retrieved intact is still in the possession of the Police and its contents are being analysed. Finally I regret to say that violence is being preached in the name of Satyagraha.

**Sardar Hukam Singh:** Could I know, Sir, how long after the actual arrest were persons who had injuries on them medically examined?

**Dr. Katju:** I have answered that. The injuries were simple and 7 were attended to either by a doctor or, in two cases, they were admitted into a hospital. Four policemen and 7 others were injured.

**Sardar Hukam Singh:** That was not my question.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** How long after the incident were they medically treated?

**Dr. Katju:** I could not give you, Sir, the answer by hours and minutes. I imagine, very soon.

**Sardar Hukam Singh:** Could I know, if out of the total number of persons arrested at that time, some were released since then?

**Dr. Katju:** I should require notice, Sir. Some may have been released afterwards.

**Sardar Hukam Singh:** Is this the first statement of the Government that is being given in Parliament or has the Government made any statement of its version previously also.

**Dr. Katju:** We considered whether a Press Note should be issued or not. When I got notice of the short notice question, I thought it better to give an answer here.

**Sardar Hukam Singh:** Is it a fact, Sir, that some of the persons who were injured in that incident have been arrested yesterday from their homes?

**Dr. Katju:** I do not know.

**Sardar Hukam Singh:** Is it a fact that one of them was suspected of having a spine fracture and has he been examined?

**Dr. Katju:** If that is so, I shall make enquiries and see that the man is examined.

**Sardar Hukam Singh:** Is it a fact that one V. P. Joshi, of whom mention has been made, has been removed to the *kotwali* with an under-wear and a banian because his shirt and dhoti had been torn to pieces?

**Dr. Katju:** That is all imagination: all sorts of exaggerated reports are being spread.

**Sardar Hukam Singh:** Is it a fact that some police *dandas* and *lathis* have been left on the spot because they have been broken by excessive and violent use of them?

**Dr. Katju:** This is also a question of imagination.

**Sardar Hukam Singh:** Have the authorities taken stock of the police *dandas* and *lathis* that were taken back by the police officers, because I still maintain that I am in possession of a *danda* that has been passed on to me which shows government ownership?

**Dr. Katju:** May I enquire in my turn whether my hon. friend was there?

**Sardar Hukam Singh:** I have not been understood, Sir. I just now said that this has been passed on to me when I was asked to put that question. This question was not given notice of by me; and because this question has been entrusted to me, that *danda* was also entrusted to me. That shows that it is government property.

**Pandit K. C. Sharma:** Is any hon. Member entitled to bring a *danda* into the House?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Nobody showed the *danda* here.

**Shri Punnoose:** The hon. Minister said that a large number of gentlemen including some M.Ps. called upon the people to break the law. May I know how many cases have been filed against them?

**Dr. Katju:** I shall have to consider that question very carefully, because so far we have been following a policy of—shall I say—a little indulgence in this matter.

**Kumari Annie Mascarene rose—**

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I have allowed a number of questions.

**Kumari Annie Mascarene:** But questions about ladies have not been asked.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I am afraid the hon. lady member is a little late in this matter. I will proceed to the next Short Notice Question.

**Kumari Annie Mascarene:** I protest against this treatment of me.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** There is no ill treatment of ladies either here or there.

#### RISE IN PRICES OF RICE IN WEST BENGAL.

**Shri T. K. Chaudhuri:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the report of sharp rise of rice prices in all the districts of the State of West Bengal outside Calcutta Rationing Area and of the prevalence of acute famine conditions in the Sunderbans in the district of 24 Parganas and in the district of Howrah;

(b) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the statements of the Food Minister of the Government of West Bengal and the Chief Minister of that State on the floor of the West Bengal State Assembly last week to the effect that an area of 3,060 sq. miles, involving a population of nearly seven lakhs in the Sunderbans is in the grip of famine and that the West Bengal Government is prevented from undertaking any comprehensive relief and rehabilitation measures in this area by the non-sanction of an allotment of Rs. 1½ crores which they asked from the Central Government for relief;

(c) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the large influx of destitute people from the adjacent famine and scarcity stricken areas of 24 Parganas and Howrah into Calcutta;

(d) what steps have been taken by Government so far to check these alarming shooting up of rice prices in the Muffasail district of Bengal just before the monsoons; and

(e) whether Government have received any reports from the West Bengal Government to the effect that the

so-called Kidwai Plan of Food Procurement which was put into effect since January, 1953 has practically broken down and whether they have asked the Central Government to exempt West Bengal from contributing 2 lakh tons of rice to the Central Rice Pool and a further increased allotment of rice quota for West Bengal?

**The Minister of Agriculture (Dr. P. S. Deshmukh):** (a) There has been some rise in the prices of rice in Bengal, which is a seasonal phenomenon at this time of the year. Scarcity has been reported in some parts of Basihour Sub-Division and Diamond Harbour Sub-Division of the Sunderbans area and the District of 24 Parganas. There is no scarcity in the district of Howrah.

(b) No official report has been received. We have however seen a press report of the Statement of the West Bengal Food Minister on the subject.

(c) No. The report received from the Bengal Government makes no mention of this.

(d) There is no alarming rise in the prices of rice. The question of taking any steps does not therefore arise.

(e) No such report or request has so far been received from the West Bengal Government.

**Dr. P. S. Deshmukh:** If you will permit me, I would like to give some details obtained from the West Bengal Government which cover about 26 lines.

In accordance with the report received from the West Bengal Government today there is partial distress in P. S. Hasanabad Haroa and Sandeshkhali in Basirhat sub-division and in P. S. Mathurapur in Diamond-Harbour sub-division of the Sunderbans area. In the district of 24 Parganas also, there is partial distress due to Aman Paddy crop damage caused by insects and pests and inundation of saline water through breaches in embankments. The total area affected in the Sunderbans is 1,460 sq. miles and the population affected is about 5 lakhs. The State Government have already undertaken test relief works in the distressed areas for which they have sanctioned a sum of Rs. 85,000/- for the Sunderbans area. They are proposing to sanction an additional amount of Rs. 6,63,698/-. This is under the consideration of the State Government. The State Government have also sanc-