

crimination could be thought of against them. If a power like India will not take care of the interests of the people of Indian origin who else will do that. I would, therefore, like to request the hon. Minister of External Affairs to consider these issues especially the question of the people of Indian origin in Surinam more seriously and more effectively. This is what I would like to submit to him.

SHRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, first of all, I would like to express my thanks to Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra for raising a meaningful point. I would like to inform him that we have all along been receiving message from our Ambassador in that country. We had talks on telephone even today in the morning. The ousted dignitaries, the President, the Ministers and the Speaker of the National Assembly are, now fully secure and there is no threat of any kind to them. Information has also been received that National Assembly has not been dissolved. It may be that some people would be re-elected and entrusted with the work. Nothing can clearly be said in this regard now. We are trying to collect the factual information. Our Ambassador in the country is very vigilant and doing his work very well. As far as possible and practicable, we are doing our best for the welfare and the progress of the people of Indian origin living in different countries. We are also trying to ensure that they come closer to us without any detriment to the sovereignty of other countries. A separate division has been opened in the Ministry of External Affairs which is taking care of this aspect. If necessary, we will expand it and strengthen the unit further. Shri Vijay Kumar ji has rightly said that while the creoles and other people are there in the army and police, the Hindustani people have been engaged in cultivation. The sequel has been what was scheduled to take place. While Hindustanis are totally engaged in agriculture and other people are in army and in police, this sort of anomaly was bound to take place what we see in Surinam. We are trying to find out the ways and means to help them. Our Parliamentarians and other people who take interest in such matters will consider further

action to be taken about it. We do not want that there should be an allegation against us that we are interfering in their work or sovereignty. So far as the question of Surinam is concerned, it has limited usefulness. We cannot ensure that justice is done to the people of the country for all time to come. A number of complications may arise. At the moment, there is no much more to take up the issue in the U. N. O. If considered necessary, it could be taken into consideration. If any such incident takes place there, it is necessary to inform the House about it and I shall immediately make a statement in this regard.

SHRI YADVENDRA DATT (Jaunpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, is it a fact that Lt. Col. Bouterse who engineered the coup by one of his assistants was staying in Holland at that time. How far the Government of Halland is involved in it. Is it not a fact that the southern part of Surinam is the largest mineral-rich country in the world? Was this coup not carried out for that purpose. Has the hon. Minister's attention gone to this point or does he know about it?

SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is not like that. That Dutch people had no hand in it. The Government of Halland opposed the coup and condemned it. Secondly, as it is being alleged that the Colonel was staying in Holland at the time of coup resulting the ouster of the President, is not correct. It is also not a fact that any other powers are involved in the coup or all this happened due to the discrimination prevalent in the country.

14.45 hrs.

CANTONMENTS (AMENDMENT) BILL

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, we take up the Cantonments (Amendment) Bill, for consideration.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI LALIT VIJAY SINGH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Cantonments Act, 1924, be taken into consideration."

At present, there are 62 Cantonments and equal number of Cantonment Boards in the country. These are administered under the Cantonments Act, 1924. The Act regulates measures to provide appropriate accommodation for the members of the Armed Forces and their families to ensure their health, welfare and security on the lines of municipalities or a notified area. Besides the Armed Forces and their families, there is a substantial civilian population also in most of the Cantonments.

The civic administration of the Cantonment areas is managed by the Cantonment Boards constituted under the Cantonments Act, 1924. The Boards are statutory bodies and their main functions are similar to those of Municipal Committees/Corporations etc. The Boards consist partly of elected members and partly of nominated and ex-officio members. The term of the elected members of the Board is five years. They are elected on the basis of adult franchise.

The necessity for amending the Act arose because, according to Section 27(1) of the Cantonments Act, the qualifying age of enrollment as an elector to vote at the election of members of the Cantonment Boards is 21 years. Article 326 of the Constitution has been amended by the Constitution (61st Amendment) Act, 1988 with effect from 28th March 1989, to reduce the voting age from 21 years to 18 years for the elections to the House of People and the Legislative Assembly of every State. Some of the State Governments have also adopted 18 years of age for election to the local authorities.

It was decided, therefore, to amend Section 27(1) of the Cantonments Act, 1924 to bring down the voting age from 21 years to

18 years for the election of the members of the Cantonment Boards. A Bill for the purpose was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 20th August, 1990. A copy each of the draft Bill, Statement of Objects and Reasons and Financial Memorandum have already been circulated.

All the 62 Cantonments at present have regular Boards. Elections in 49 Cantonments are due in the months of December, 1990/January, 1991, in nine Cantonments on different dates in 1991 and in four Cantonments in 1992. It has been decided, therefore, to defer elections in such Cantonment Boards upto 30th November, 1991 where elections are due in 1990/1991, so that we are able to revise the electoral rolls in accordance with the decision taken by the House to reduce the voting age from 21 years to 18 years. Therefore, I request the hon. House to give approval to this Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mohan moved:

"That the Bill further to amend the cantonments Act 1924, be taken into consideration."

There is one amendment to the motion for consideration. Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava.

[*Translation*]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur): I beg to move:

"That the Bill be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon by the 2nd April, 1991." (1)

MR. CHAIRMAN: You will be given time to speak later on.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT (Almora): Mr. Chairman, Sir while welcoming the Bill I would like to request the hon. Minister that the efforts should be made to make the functioning of Cantonment Boards more democratic. There are certain cantonments areas where civilians were allotted shops or allowed to operate their business with a view

to provide facilities to the Army personnel and now the civilian population has considerably increased in these cantonment areas, but according to the rules and regulation the Army officers who are in majority, have veto power. Therefore, taking all these difficulties into consideration the Government have to think over it seriously because democratic expectations and sentiments of the people cannot be suppressed for long. This is the main reason for the wide spread discontentment among the civilians living in every cantonment Board area and sometimes it leads to an undesirable situation. Sometimes demonstrations or protests put the Army officers in embarrassing position.

Therefore, Sir, I would request that the Government should consider to amend the Cantonment Board Act, 1924. Once it was amended but that could not fulfil the expectations of the people. Therefore, I would like to request that a comprehensive Bill should be brought about it. Secondly, I would give a suggestion to the hon. Minister that in the cantonment areas where the civilian population has exceeded 5000, Municipal Boards, Notified areas or Town Areas should be constituted in Consultation with the concerned State Government. That would also reduce the burden of the Central Government because basically it is the responsibility of the State Government to provide civil amenities and carryout other development works. You can provide facilities to cater the needs of the Army personnel only but civilian population is ignored in the process. It is well known that the Civilian population living in Cantonment area pay taxes to the State Government but when the question of providing civic amenities arise, they do not get them for which they are entitled.

Therefore, I would request that the Government should pay attention towards the constitution of Municipal Boards, Notified areas or town areas in consultation with the State Government in those cantonment Areas where civilian population is more than 5,000. Cantonments Boards are also there in my constituency and I have observed there that people are facing lot of difficulties

there. The amount of grant given by the Centre to the cantonment board is too meagre for the maintenance of the existing roads drinking water supply etc. Similarly it is very difficult to implement health education and other schemes. The amount of their grants is being reduced gradually whereas keeping in view the increase in population the amount of grant should have been increased.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, what I want to say is that the Government should consider ways and means to raise the amount of grant to the Cantonment Board to provide more amenities to the people. If I ask the hon. Defence Minister to provide more facilities or sanction drinking water scheme for the people of a particular cantonment area, he may express his inability to do so on the plea of non-availability of funds or less provision in the annual Budget. Besides, the number of employees entrusted with the job of maintaining sanitation in the cantonment areas is also being curtailed. In 1982, I had demanded an additional water supply scheme for Ranikhet Cantonment Board which was totally ignored. Whereas a meeting was held under the Chairmanship of Shri K. P. Singh Deo, the then Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence in which it was decided that a water supply scheme would be prepared but till now no fund has been granted for the scheme. The scheme which we have proposed will cost Rs. 50 lakh but the Government is unable to provide fund for that. I would like to make a humble submission that in Ranikhet Cantonment areas there is no playground for the public and they have to live at the mercy of the Army authorities. Whenever, there is no Army function, only in that case they allow other people to use the playground. This has caused great frustration among the sportsmen. Therefore, the Government should consider the question of construction of an open stadium as well as an indoor stadium in Ranikhet. In addition to that, other grants agreed to by the Government in respect of Cantonment area, Ranikhet should also be sanctioned. With these words, I once again request that the functioning of the Cantonment Boards should be made more democratic and for the civilian

[Sh. Harish Rawat]

population where it has reached a certain point, Municipal Boards or similar bodies should be constituted. With this submission, I once again welcome the Bill.

[*English*]

SHRI LOKANATH CHOUDHURY (Jagatsinghpur): I am on a point of order. The House has no quorum.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have heard you I will ring the bell. Quorum bell will be rung.

[*Translation*]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to congratulate the Central Government for bringing Amendment to the Cantonment Board Act for lowering the voting age from 21 to 18 years as has been done in respect of the Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha and Municipal Councils. As the hon. Minister has himself admitted here that besides Army personnel, civilians also reside in the Cantonment areas, therefore, I would request that it is equally necessary to pay full attention towards providing facilities to them also. Secondly, I would like to say that the Voter List....(Interruptions)

[*English*]

SHRI LOKNATH CHOUDHURY: There is no quorum.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have checked. The quorum is complete now. Please continue.

[*Translation*]

SHRIGIRDHARILAL BHARGAVA: The hon. Minister has stated that elections are due to be held in December. Elections have been postponed at some places, therefore, I would like to say that voter-list should be completed as early as possible and elections should be conducted on time. Thirdly I would like to say that elections should be held as

per Schedule and should not be postponed. Generally it is observed that elections to Municipal bodies are postponed and are not conducted for 14 or 17 years. Therefore, at least leave the Municipal Corporations alone and let the elections be held in their case on time. The elections in respect of the Cantonment Boards should be held on time because military personnel live there who are quite disciplined people. If we postpone the elections at such places then the same tendency will follow as in the case of elections to Municipal Corporations and Municipal Councils. Therefore, I would request that at least elections to Cantonment Boards should be conducted on time. I would also like to submit that since civilians also reside in cantonment areas, they should be granted permission to purchase land, construction of houses and clearance to their plots under Urban Development Laws should be given expeditiously. I also demand that the retired Army personnel should be allotted shops in the Cantonment areas so that they may get an opportunity to start their own business. After the election, the administration of the cantonment should be made more efficient. The Government should also pay attention towards beautification and sanitation of the Cantonment areas. The Central and the State Government should think about the problems of ex-servicemen and civilians living in Cantonment areas. I support the provision for reducing the voting age from 21 to 18 years. There should be a separate provision in the Budget for the cantonment areas.

15.00 hrs.

The Central Government should make allocation in the Budget for the development of the cantonments where the military personnel as well as the civilians live. I request that the Government should provide maximum funds for the civilians living in those cantonments. With these words, I thank you.

SHRI HAMENDRA SINGH BANERA (Bhilwara): Sir, I rise to support the Bill moved by the hon. Minister of State in the Ministry of Defence. First of all, I would like to thank him for introducing this Bill with regard to

lowering the voting age from 21 years to 18 years in respect of cantonment Boards, as has been done in respect of Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies. Although the scope of this Bill is very limited, but through you, I would like to invite the attention of the hon. Minister towards a couple of important points. Mr. Chairman, Sir, as you are aware, that during the period of British regime, the cantonments in our country symbolised their own grandeur. They had a different world altogether and the purpose, for which they had been set up, were totally different. But after the country achieved independence, the people living in the cantonments were provided all the rights according to the democratic set up. I welcome this Bill and would like to say that it is a welcome step to provide the civilians living there with maximum rights so that they may improve their living standard. Besides this, I regret to say something about the miserable condition in which these cantonments had been after the independence. It has a story of its own. Mr. Chairman, Sir, you had also been a defence personnel. You are aware of the problems that defence personnel had to face in these cantonments regarding housing. There is acute scarcity of houses for officers, JCOs and soldiers in our cantonments and this gives rise to the resentment among our forces. The officers, in particular, are in great distress. Mr. Chairman, Sir, you can just imagine the salary and other facilities provided to the officers of Indian forces and the arrangements for their housing. We feel pained, when we see the salaries and the facilities provided to the defence personnel in our neighbouring country Pakistan. Whenever an officer is transferred, his family members had to face a lot of difficulties. School facilities for education of their children are quite inadequate in cantonment areas. They had to run from pillar to post to get admission in the schools. It is sorry state of affairs that at the time of transfer, the family members of the officers had to depend on the mass. Demand that although our resources are limited, economic situation is quite unsatisfactory and we cannot allocate more funds for them in the Budget, attention should be paid towards their problems. The

unused land in these cantonments should be developed and shops and markets should be constructed there. Although these shops cannot be sold they should be given on lease to the ex-servicemen so that they may get employment and our cantonments may also become beautiful place. The Nasirabad cantonment in Rajasthan had once a glory of its own. It was about 20-25 years ago, when I used to go to my school and pass through that cantonment. I used to feel very proud of it. But today, that cantonment is in such a miserable condition, that no one could imagine that once it was meant to provide facilities to the officers. Therefore, I request that an all round development should be carried out in the Nasirabad cantonment. Besides this, there is Udaipur cantonment also, which is being developed as a sub-cantonment. That cantonment is situated in Ekling-garh area. But full compensation has not been paid so far to those persons whose land had been acquired. I request the hon. Minister of Defence to pay attention toward this matter and I hope compensation will be paid to them at the earliest.

With these words, I welcome this Bill.

SHRI MANDHATA SINGH (Lucknow): Sir, Shri Harish Rawat has stated that the democratic process cannot be completed by only lowering the voting age to 18 years. As I represent Lucknow I may state that there has been a big cantonment area in Lucknow I would like to quote two instances in this regard and if we are sensitive to the problems of others, we shall feel concerned about these issues. Right from the rule of Queen Victoria, there was a plot of land allotted to the Church in the Lucknow cantonment area. I have seen documents, in which "on perpetual lease." Words have been written. I have seen lease of 99 years in my life time. No doubt lease for 30-40 years are also taking place these days. But that land was given on perpetual lease which means lease forever. After the country became independent, the lease was renewed under the signature of the first President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Again the same word 'perpetual' was used. But the Army authorities demol-

[Sh. Mandhata Singh]

ished the boundary wall of the Church and constructed a building in the compound of the Church by illegally occupying it. I sent a detailed complaint to the then Minister of Defence under whom this department was functioning. He replied that necessary enquiries are being made and action is being taken but the present situation is that a multistoreyed building has been constructed there and two-three defence personnel are guarding the place. The situation has come to such a pass that the Christians are not even allowed to offer prayer there on the Sunday. A lot is being said about the temples and mosques here, but there is not mention of the church. I hope, the hon. Minister will get the matter investigated.

The second thing is related with the democratic process. I had written several times to the Government that the army officers had removed the elected representatives from the cantonment Board, Lucknow, despite the fact that they had been elected by the people living in cantonment area. I don't know whether an officer is authorised under the Cantonment Board Act to remove the elected representatives from the cantonment Board. It is just like that as if an IAS officer may remove us from the Parliament.

I call the attention of the Government towards these two points viz the injustice done to the Christians, who are in minority here and to the elected representatives and request that justice should be done to them immediately. Otherwise, simply lowering the voting age will not serve any purpose.

[English]

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA (Tamluk): Mr. Chairman, the main objective of this Bill is to reduce the voting age of the youth living in the interior area to 18 years. This is in consistence with the 61st Constitution amendment. I support this Bill. While supporting this Bill I must express my views that for a long time we the Left were demanding that the voting age should be reduced to 18 years; ultimately that took place.

Coming to this Bill, I must say that it has become necessary to review the parent Bill because you know our Defence people live in the cantonment area. Therefore the infrastructure and development has become very much necessary. For that the parent Bill should be reviewed and a comprehensive Bill should come.

I must express my strong objection to the views expressed by the hon. Minister for the postponement of the election to some cantonment boards in different parts of the country. This should take place. The whole responsibility should lie with the then Congress-I Government because they forgot to bring such a Bill when the 61st Constitution Amendment Bill was presented in the House. At that time this type of Bill should have come and the postponement of the election to the cantonment boards should have been avoided.

With these words, I support this Bill.

[Translation]

SHRI TEJ NARAYAN SINGH (Buxar): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I whole-heartedly support this Bill, but would like to say that many Bills are passed by the Parliament, but they are not implemented. I would like that the Bill as should be implemented with the same spirit, with which it is passed. Some of our friends have demanded that along with passing of this Bill, elections should be left to the Cantonment Boards. The decision to reduce the voting age from 21 years to 18 years, is indeed a welcome step, but along with it, tight security arrangements should be made for the elections. Although elaborate paper work has been done in this direction, but still many people, especially the poor are not allowed to exercise this franchise. Therefore, I would like to say that we are supporting this Bill with the hope that it will be implemented in letter and spirit, so as to ensure proper development of the cantonments and that they get such facilities, from Government as are due to them.

The Relief Code Act was enacted in this regard, but unfortunately, it remained on

papers. New Delhi is the seat of the Central Government, yet in West Delhi, about 300 huts belonging to the Harijans were gutted. I had raised this issue during the Zero hour also and it came in the newspapers too, but so far the Government has not provided any kind of relief to the poor people living along the railway tracks. Their houses were razed to the ground yet they have been left to fend for themselves. Therefore, the laws which are enacted must be implemented.

With these hopes I support this Bill. It is a very welcome step, and it should be implemented in letter and spirit.

With these words, I conclude.

[*English*]

SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM (Salem): Mr. Chairman, we had brought in the Constitution amendment to reduce the voting age from 21 to 18 years essentially to involve the youth in the national fabric; to make them a part of the decision making process; to ensure that they are in total understanding of the developmental process and would really have the future in their hands and be a part of their own moulding also.

It may be a part of moulding their own future also. Unfortunately, all that we have managed to achieve is literally to give them the right to vote by reducing the voting age limitation from 21 years to 18 years.

This Bill in itself only seeks to implement the fundamental decision of reducing the voting age. But the issue that is most important and I think the whole House should address itself, is whether or not the youth are ineffective today. They are taking to various roads and paths, whereby we notice that they indulge in violence of various forms and indulging in various other activities—which one could only say, ‘unhealthy.’ All of us are aware that with the advancement of information technology, today, knowledge is available in the hands of the youth, rightly so in unlimited amount. They do realise that it is possible for any Government, any State, any

Assembly, any legislature to look into their fundamental problems which are essentially their future and their security, in terms of employment. We see throughout the nation today that youngsters are coming out on the streets in protest, raising various issues. If at all, there is tremendous communalism today, the fundamental reason for that, is that they do not have any security for the future. They are seeking various alternative routes with the hope that some other route would lead them to secure a future. Are we going to address ourselves to this problem or not? While the hon. Minister and the Government have brought forward this Bill to reduce the voting age, I think, it is relevant that they also address themselves to the problems of the Cantonments, which at one time, was a major source of employment. But today not only that it is not a source of employment, but also those who are there, employed for a decade as casual workers, continue to be casual workers. They are doing permanent jobs; they are doing jobs of permanent nature, but they are treated as casual workers and every six months we notice that they are put off for 15 to 20 days and again they are taken on, to the Rolls, just to keep the law safe. I would request, through you, Sir, that the hon. Minister take this matter seriously and do consider the question of regularising the casual employees. I understand that they go not in hundreds, not in thousands, but in tens of thousands throughout the country, in various Cantonments where casual employees remain as casual employees for long periods of time.

Another important point for which I would like to draw the attention of the Minister, through you, Sir, is the issue of land grabbing, that is taking place in the Cantonments. We have noticed that very important political personalities, persons in the officialdom have resorted to using the Cantonments as one very neat, convenient manner, by which they can enter into land grabbing techniques. Whenever they get allotted land to themselves, using the Cantonment Boards, if necessary using the authorities, they ensure that they get very highly priced land, often in urban areas, at the extremely cheap rates. There has to be an amendment in the law

[Sh. P.R. Kumaramangalam]

which should ensure that whatever land is there with the Cantonment areas, is not allotted either out-of-turn or in any manner on priority basis, to any person who is in authority. Let the land be allotted only to the Cantonment itself. Let it be a public property. If it is going to be treated as private property for any individual, then, there would soon come, a situation where it will be an accepted fact if one wants to get land from the back-door at cheap rates, occupying various positions in Government and public life, the best way to do it is, to do it through Cantonments.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I Support the Bill; but at the same time, through you, I would like to request the hon. Minister of State for Defence that he should look at the Act in full. It is a very old Act which needs amendment, considering the fact that a lot of time has passed and lot of water has flown under the bridge. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

SHRI DAU DAYAL JOSHI (Kota): Mr. Chairman, Sir, there cannot be two opinions on the need to bring about amendments in the cantonment Act. We have arrived at this decision in a most democratic way and in complete agreement with Shri Kumaramangalam that the Act has become quite obsolete and that it is necessary to make amendments in it.

I would like to submit that we should bring a comprehensive amendment, to provide for holding regular elections to the Cantonment Boards. Unfortunately, it has been a long time since elections were held to the Nasirabad Cantonment Board. People there are not even aware that elections are held to the Cantonment Board. Similarly, there is also a controversy on the status of the Civilian representatives and representatives of the armed forces in the Cantonment Boards. The State Governments are not able to contribute to development of the areas under the jurisdiction of the Cantonment Boards and as a result, these areas

remain totally dependent on the Cantonment Boards for their development. I would like to submit that adequate assistance should be provided for the progress, development and upliftment of the civilian population residing in these areas. Today, the civilian population has grown to such an extent that the Cantonment Areas seem to be on the verge of losing this separate identity and this is going contrary to our objective of demarcation of civilian and Military areas. This can sometimes help the enemy to get hold of highly confidential information.

One more submission that I would like to make here is that provisions should be made for opening Kendriya Vidyalayas' (Central Schools) in these areas. There is no military cantonment in Kota city. But there is a Para-Military base there. The Railways have got one of the biggest factories in Kota and 5-7 categories of Central Government employees are also posted there. The Military personnel face difficulties in getting their wards admitted to the schools located there. Therefore, it is essential to open Kendriya Vidyalayas' (Central Schools) in Cantonment areas.

The third submission I would like to make is that army personnel live in tents in Cantonment areas. Permanent structures should therefore, be built for the conveniences of these personnel. I am sure that the hon. Minister who has assured his charge only recently would get the applause of one and all, if he makes necessary arrangements for providing permanent living structures for the Military personnel, as has been done for the Military officers.

SHRI R. N. RAKESH (Chail): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I supported this amendment to the cantonment Bill, which seeks to reduce the voting age from 21 to 18. Cantonments are very important ones and all efforts should be made to provide them with maximum security. During the British period, the cantonment areas were left distinctly away from the civilian areas, but today, the population has increased to such an extent that the cantonment areas have got completely merged with the civilian residential areas.

Consequently, the cantonment areas are also facing the problems that are being faced by civilian areas. What I want to say is that the cantonment areas should be kept away from the civilian areas. We should think about it afresh. I would like to draw the attention of the House towards the condition of the Allahabad cantonment area. The cantonment area there has got completely merged with the civilian residential areas. A lot of land belonging to the cantonment Board is lying vacant in Padya and Iradatpur areas. Therefore, it is necessary to keep the cantonment area away from civilian areas.

Similarly, land-grabbing is also a notable feature in these areas. The cantonment lands are grabbed in two ways. First that land is allotted to influential people. Secondly, they are illegally occupied by some people. Thus, some people are deriving illegal benefit out of it. What I want to say is that the cultivable land under the jurisdiction of the Cantonment Boards should be distributed to the poor and landless farmers, instead of giving them to affluent people, at throw away prices.

Secondly, I would like to say that the cantonment lands belongs to the Government and it would be most unfortunate if people holding high positions in the Government take them over as their personal property. A person belonging to the 38th generation of the traitor, Raja Jaichand got his 12 acre land of the Aish Mahal assessed for Rs. 40,000/- only, which was given to his ancestor, for joining hands with the British and betraying his country. That 12 acre land is in the cantonment area and the Palace built there is worth at least 50 lakh of rupees. Now, on the one hand, that big sht has given this assessment and on the other hand, that land has been separated from the cantonment area. The 12-acre land alongwith the 'Aish Mahal' was given as a reward by the British, to the 38th generation of Raja Jaichand, who betrayed his country. When a person belonging to the 40th generation came in power, he turned the cantonment land into his personal property. Perhaps, it is unprecedented in the history of India, wherein a Prime Minister had turned Government land into his personal property, but the former

Prime Minister, Shri V. P. Singh, has done it. I want an enquiry to be conducted into the whole matter. The Aish Mahal is located in the 12 acre land, belonging to the cantonment area. There are some people who on the one hand, give lofty and high-sounding slogans about social justice and make fall claims of their struggle to achieve that goal, but on the other hand they launch legal proceedings to evict the poor, landless and unemployed. What kind of Social justice is this? I would say that if a person misusing his authority, has illegally grabbed Government land, stern action should be taken against him, irrespective of the social status he enjoys, for it is an act of treachery. The former Prime Minister has committed such a crime. He has done it to grab the land where 'Aish Mahal' more popularly known as 'Manda Kothi' is located. Stringent action should be taken against the guilty in this case.

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer):
Mr. Chairman, Sir, I whole-heartedly welcome the amendment to the cantonment Act, which seeks to reduce the voting age, I would also like to make a submission that it is necessary to make some more amendments in the said Act and the Government should ponder over it. The most important thing is that the elections should be held in time and the areas under the security of cantonments like Nasirabad, should be extended large tracts of land are lying vacant, where quarters for military personnel can be built. Similarly, the civilian population living in these areas too face a lot of problems. I have visited Panchmarhi. Similar problems exist there also. The areas under the jurisdiction of the cantonment boards should be extended. The vacant plots should be allotted to the civilians and civic amenities should be made available to the Military personnel. There should also be more civilian representatives in the cantonment Boards.

SHRI K. MANVENDRA SINGH (Mathura): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I whole-heartedly welcome The Cantonment (Amendment) Bill, 1990, brought forward by the Government, which seeks to reduce the voting age. I do not agree with the view, expressed by some hon. Members that the

[Sh. K. Manvendra Singh]

purpose of the Bill should be limited to reducing the voting age. You may be remembering it very well, as you have been in the army. During our childhood the cantonment areas, markets were similar to present day model towns. However, today these markets are in a miserable condition. As correctly observed by an hon. Member, the land in the cantonment areas has been unlawfully occupied by the civilians. There cannot be two opinions about it. The hon. Minister is present in the House and through you, I would like to make a submission to him that the Act should be further amended. The cantonment Boards must regain the lands that have been unlawfully occupied. Necessary amendments should be made, in the laws and rules to prevent such unauthorised occupation. Secondly, the once reputed markets the cantonment areas are today in a dilapidated condition. Some provision should be made in the Budget, for these markets also. To cater to the needs of the increasing civilian population and the military personnel, additional funds should be sanctioned for the development and expansion of these markets.

It has also been observed over the past few years that only the residents of the Cantonment Areas go to these markets. There was a time, when people living even in the civilian areas, used to visit these markets before going to the main market. Similarly, I would like to suggest that additional facilities should be made available in the markets, schools and Parks in the cantonment areas. Government should allocate more money to these boards through the Union Budget. The cantonment boards have been neglected for a long time now. Elections have not been held to these Boards. There was a time, when the Mathura Cantonment was considered as one of the best in the country. Similarly, the cantonment in the adjacent Agra district also was one of the best. Lastly, I would like to say only this much that funds should be allocated to improve the conditions in the cantonments and to provide better and improved facilities to its residents.

[*English*]

SHRI MANDHATA SINGH (Lucknow): Mr. Chairman, Sir.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: No more please.

SHRI MANDHATA SINGH: It is a very important point.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Howsoever important it may be.

SHRI MANDHATA SINGH: On a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order, because there is no business before the House as yet. I have to take a consent of the House. At 3.30 p. m., Private Members' business has to start. This Bill has not yet been completed. Now it is in this terminal stage; only the Minister has to reply and then we would have voting on it. If the House consents to give another five or seven minutes for this Bill, we can complete the Bill and then take up the Private Members' Business.

MANY HON. MEMBERS: Yes, yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister will reply now.

SHRI MANDHATA SINGH: I wish to give an oral notice for moving a breach of privilege motion against the Member who has misled the House for deliberately giving false information.

SHRI R. N RAKESH: I challenge; I am holding the documentary evidence.

SHRI MANDHATA SINGH: Sir.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can give in writing.

(*Interruptions*)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: This will not go on record. Please take your seat. Nothing is going on record.

*Not recorded.

[*Translation*]

SHRI LALIT VIJOY SINGH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, all the Members have welcomed this Bill and I have got a lot of encouragement. I am grateful to all the Members for their good suggestions regarding the ways through which the cantonments can be made more useful.....(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: May I suggest that if you have any details to give, you can send them in writing?

[*Translation*]

SHRI LALIT VIJOY SINGH: The Members have expressed their concern about the fact that not only the army personnels are living in the cantonments but civilians too are residing there and they are not being properly represented. I simply want to bring this fact to your kind notice that the cantonments have been divided into three categories namely class one, two and three. The board of Class one cantonment comprises of 15 members among whom seven members are elected and they represent civilians also. Army personnels and civilians both are adequately represented in this category. The cantonments are developed with the idea of providing facilities to the personnels of our defence forces and for their welfare. Proper care is taken to ensure that the civilians are duly represented in the cantonment boards. Issues relating to State Government were also mentioned. A Magistrate represents the State Government as a nominated member. It was also mentioned that elections were not held for quite some time. It is true, but the reason behind this was that the voter's list was to be revised and the eligibility age was to be lowered from 21 to 18 years. This was one of the reasons which caused delay. I assure that we will immediately undertake the task of revision of voters list and hold elections as soon as this Bill becomes an Act.

As far as the discussion regarding management of the cantonments is con-

cerned, it cannot be denied that scarcity of resources and paucity of funds are the main difficulties in their smooth functioning. The cantonments have limited powers to impose taxes. However, the Government sanctions grants to the cantonment Boards from time to time. Last year they were sanctioned grants of Rs. 9 crores. I have noted all the suggestions submitted by the hon. Members and I assure you to keep all of them in mind. With these words, I would request Shri Bhargava to withdraw his Amendment. When the minimum age limit for casting vote has been lowered everywhere from 21 to 18 years. We will do it here also.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: I withdraw my amendment after the assurance given by the hon. Minister. I request the hon. Minister to hold the election in time and not to postpone it.

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Has Shri Girdharil Bhargava leave of the House to withdraw his amendment?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

*Amendment No. 1 was, by Leave,
Withdrawn*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, I put the Motion for Consideration of the Bill to the vote of the House.

The question is:

"That the Bill further to amend the cantonments Act, 1924 be taken into consideration."

The Motion was adopted

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House will now take up Clause by Clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is:

"That Clause stands part of the Bill."

The Motion was adopted