

trated into the police force. The political parties use every kind of tactics to induct their men into the police force. When they use their muscle power, or weapons the police do not take action against them. The arrangement of police should be made in an independent manner so as to ensure that no malpractices take place during elections and no political party secures votes by using muscle power or by exploiting caste feelings.

At certain places, where candidates contest elections on caste basis, the presiding officer belonging to that caste should not be posted there because they encourage castism and influence the polling. It should, therefore, be ensured that in case a candidate belonging to a predominant community in a particular area is contesting election the presiding officer belonging to the same community should not be posted there as there is great likelihood of malpractices there. There is great need to improve this system. These are some of my suggestion.

With these words I request the Hon. Minister to bring about electoral reforms so as to conduct fair elections in the country and strengthen the country by electing the right candidates.

15.58 hrs.

STATEMENT RE : RAILWAY INCIDENT BETWEEN TELLICHERRY AND MAHE STATIONS.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT (SHRI BANSI LAL) ; I deeply regret to apprise the House of an unfortunate incident which occurred at 5.35 hrs. on 28.2.1986 between Tellicherry and Mahe Stations on the Cannanore-Shoranur Broad Gauge single line section of Palghat Division of Southern Railway. While 310 Cannanore-Errakulam Express was running between Tellicherry and Mahe Stations, large crowds, which were attending the annual festival at Jagannath temple, suddenly rushed on to the track. It is reported that there were a lot of fire works in the festival and some crackers fell on to the crowd and the crowd out of panic rushed

towards the track. Consequently, the train ran over a number of persons of whom, 26 were killed on the spot while 9 sustained injuries. The injured have been admitted in the hospitals at Tellicherry and Calicut.

My colleague Shri Madhavrao Scindia and Member Traffic have proceeded to the site and will be visiting the injured in the hospitals. General Manager, Southern Railway and Chief Security Officer have rushed to the spot. Divisional Railway Manager, Palghat and other officers have also rushed to the spot.

This incident will be enquired into by the Commissioner of Railway Safety.

16.00 hrs.

RESOLUTION RE : ELECTORAL REFORMS—Contd.

[Translation]

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA (Pali) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, Hon. Members have expressed their views on the electoral reforms. All the Eight Elections to the Lok Sabha held since 1952 have been free and fair.

16.01 hrs.

[SHRI VAKKOM PURUSHOTHAMAN in the Chair]

Allegations are often made against the party in power that they won the elections because media was in their favour or because of some other unfair practices and these allegations are made by the party which has lost. The Hon. Member, who moved the Resolution, has said that crores of rupees have been spent in h.s constituency. Reddy Sahib has won the election despite crores of rupees spent by the other party in the elections. The people elected the man in whose merit and intelligence they had faith. In the year 1977, the people of India gave a verdict against the Congress party and we accepted it. The electoral process has been functioning since 1952. The winning candidates say that

—Contd.

—Contd.

[Shri Mool Chand Daga]

the election was free and fair and the losing candidates say that power was misused and some bungling had taken place. We have set up tribunals to hear such complaints. They file election petitions in the courts. Actually they are in the habit of making allegations. When elections were held in the Bangalore constituency in Karnataka, there were 300 candidates in the field. God knows what must have been the size of the ballot paper. This Act should be amended because innumerable number of candidates come forward to contest elections. In such cases, the voters get confused and do not know where to put the mark, the ballot paper is very long and much expenditure is incurred on it. The issue of election reforms is raised quite often. When asked about the recommendations made by the Election Commissioner, Shri Trivedi or Shri Shakdhar, one comes to know that they are under consideration of the Cabinet Sub-Committee. Our Minister of state for Law replies in a very simple manner that these are under consideration of the Cabinet sub-committee. Shri Ashok Sen will not say in his reply that these are under consideration. It looks there is something wrong in the Law Department because no one knows the outcome of all the suggestions. Whenever such suggestion are given, it is stated that these are under consideration of the cabinet sub-committee. The Election Commissioner has sent many suggestions between 1982 to 86 and the new Election Commissioner, Shri Peri Shastri has also submitted certain suggestions. Sir, I want to say this much only that it is a very important question. Earlier, a committee was formed during Shri Jai Prakash Babu's time and it had also been asked to suggest electoral reforms. Perhaps, Shri Tarkunde was the chairman of that committee, I do not remember exactly. He had also given some suggestions, One of his suggestions was to fix the minimum age of voters at 18. I do not at all agree with it. Let them be at least 21 year old, let them have some maturity. I do not know on what basis he recommended that the voting right should be given to the persons who have attained the age of 18 years and said that voters' lists should be accordingly amended. We had asked him to suggest reforms in the electoral system and he gave a new type of suggestion. I want that Government must make it mandatory

for the voters to exercise their voting right. The voter can be exempted in special circumstances but if it is made mandatory, he will definitely come to vote on the polling day. That will solve all the problems. Then Opposition will not be able to complain that vehicles are used for securing votes. I fail to understand what do they want to convey by saying such things. If vehicles ply then what is the objection in voters using them but at places like Rajasthan, where vehicles do not ply, people go on foot for casting votes. Sir, reform to the effect must be made in the electoral system that it will be compulsory for every voter to cast his/her vote because we have faith in the wisdom of the people of the country. We have seen that they are intelligent and understand the need of the hour. They know about every candidate and give an unbiased verdict. Every one knows why Congress gets more votes. Therefore, the allegations made here are not correct.

A suggestion has been given that we should use electronic machines in the elections. I also agree that it is a sophisticated and proper method and every one will benefit from it but at the same time all the parties had prepared a code of conduct and agreed to abide by it. I want that if someone does not abide by it he should be declared an offender. I would request the Law Minister that the code of conduct should not remain on paper only and it should be provided that if someone violates it, he will be debarred from contesting elections in future. People who commit moral offence, fall in the esteem of the people. People committing moral offence should not have the right to fight elections in our country. You should fix some criteria so that every person fighting elections should have unblemished character and should be worker. You should take into consideration all the aspects. If some Pandits living on the bank of the Ganga. Pujaris or Maulvis enter the field, you should look to that.

So far as expenditure in elections is concerned, earlier there was a law that a person cannot spend beyond a certain limit. After that some judgements to this effect were delivered that expenditure by candidate's friend or party will not be included in the election expenditure. It is a very good law.

I may not incur expenditure or I may incur it within the limits but if my friend spends or my party spends then that expenditure will not be included in the election expenditure is not a correct argument. Therefore, one method should be that Government should bear the election expenditure. Even today there are many countries in the world where the Government bear the election expenditure. Therefore, Government should provide some funds to the candidates for fighting election.

(Interruptions)

SHRI HARISH RAWAT (Almora) : Where from the money will come ?

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA : Money will be given by our country, our public... (Interruptions).

SHRI HARISH RAWAT : Money can come from Pali district.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MOOL CHAND DAGA : Yes, it can come. If someone asks for money from our moneylender, he will not go disappointed. He will definitely get money. If you ask for money you will definitely get it but if you decline it then do not blame us. The business community knows only to give.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, what I wanted to say, they are not allowing me to say, they want to detract my attention but I am still not detracted. I want to say that we submit affidavit about the election expenses but it should also be seen that cost of electioneering has skyrocketed. Accordingly, ceiling on our election expenses should also be increased.

Sir, in addition the area and the population of the constituency should also be taken into consideration. My constituency has a population of 15 lakhs in which there are about 2000 villages. It takes considerable time to visit such a large number of villages for canvassing because the villages are situated at a long distance from each other. It results in more expenditure and the limit within which you permit the expenditure, no one can ever render one's accounts. I, therefore, feel that there should be a system for this,

Secondly, I want that there should be delimitation of the constituencies. Somewhere the number of voters is less and somewhere it is large. Somewhere area is less and somewhere it is more. Therefore, the present system requires immediate change. Without this we cannot get justice. If delimitation is done we shall be benefited. I, therefore, want that your attention should go to delimitation also.

During elections, any person forms a party. Several parties join hands which have no common ideology. I want that a provision should be made that a party must have some minimum following which can be calculated by the percentage of its followers to the total population of the country. What happens is that any individual forms a party during the elections like growth of mushrooms. They are like croaking frogs in rains. You should not accord them recognition. You should not permit them to fight elections.

There are so many parties that their existence goes against the very basis of democracy. In democracy we want a strong opposition. If opposition is strong, the Government also becomes strong. But the opposition is scattered and weak. Therefore, we should pay attention towards this.

We want that if government is to be strengthened, the opposition should get united rather than getting divided in small regional parties. The regional parties should not be elected to the Lok Sabha. If there is any danger to democracy and socialism, it is from these regional and the communal parties and from the rightists, reactionary forces and extreme leftists. Such regional parties should remain confined to their own states and should not work on all India level like Desham, Bharat Desham.

[English]

SHRI H. A. DORA (Srikakulam) : Our party is a regional party with national outlook whereas the Congress Party is a national party with regional outlook.

MR. CHAIRMAN : No dialogue please. You can say something if he has said so.



SHRI G. S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur) : I thought I would not get my turn. Just now, Bihar was being discussed, he was speaking all the wrong things. Let me tell you the truth. A candidate belonging to a mafia gang had contested election in Bihar. I am not against independent candidates. But it is a very interesting case, I shall recount it in brief. This mafia candidate belonged to the area near Hajipur. He was an independent candidate. He used to move with a convoy of 100 elephants, 100 camels and 100 jeeps. All the riders used to be armed with guns, swords and revolvers. He died this year. In the election meetings, he used to address the voters with the request that if they were his supporters they should stay indoors and in case they were his opponents they should not venture out to cast votes and if they ventured to the polling booth, they would be shot dead. This is a true story. It is on record that the people were terrorised. None dared to go to the polling booth out of fear and the mafia candidate used to win by a margin of thousands of votes. This is not confined to a single instance of mafia gang.

I was going through the International Herald Tribune the other day. It was reported that election of Marcos was also held in the same way as the elections are held in some places in West Bengal. It should not startle you as it was only to quote an instance. What I want to say is that under the existing electoral process, to contest and to win an election for a non-political figure like me is almost an impossible task. In the climate that prevails today, lathi, money, pistol and gun is important, whereas a non-political person can afford neither money nor lathi, gun, sword or bomb. ...(*Interruptions*) It is also true that such a persons should not enter the political field.

I want to say only one thing. Our Prime Minister had dreamt of cleansing the political parties and he is making efforts in that direction. In this connection Anti-Defection Bill was also passed. Had this Anti-Defection Bill not been passed, I do not know how many governments would have fallen within a year and how many times elections would have been held in the states. The people would have borne the

expenditure on such elections and it would have led to further rise in prices.

The second thing he did was regularisation of donations to political parties. What objection can one have to this? If donation to political parties is given properly through a cheque and you as well as we show it in the accounts correctly and get our accounts audited, there is nothing to hide in it.

But in this process those who get money from foreign countries will experience great difficulty. This is not a secret that many political parties in this country are getting enormous funds from abroad. I feel it is now time to curb and control the inflow of money from abroad. If it is not done, a time will come when these political parties would dance to the tune of foreign powers. I would like to submit in this respect that in many foreign countries political parties are given funds by the state. The recognised political party gets a certain amount - 50 or 75 per cent from the state. This is the practice in many countries. Therefore, efforts should be made to examine whether such a system can be followed in our country as well - wherein the state gives funds to political parties. Otherwise, even if a person is educated and has a clean image but is not a capitalist, he will not be able to contest elections on his own.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Dr. Rajhans, you may continue your speech next time.

As announced earlier, the House stands adjourned to meet at 17.00 hrs.

16.30 hrs,

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned to re-  
assemble at 17.00 hrs.*