

[Shri A. Charles]

I would request the Minister to make enquiries, why these requisitions are cancelled after the process of selection is over.

Then, there are a number of delayed appointments. One of my hon. friend has already pointed this out. I would not, therefore, go into that in detail, but it is shocking to note that in the case of a number of selections made as early as 1978, appointments have not been given to the candidates so far. The reason is that verification of character and antecedents of the candidates was pending. It is most unfortunate.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The Home Minister has to make a statement. You may please continue your speech after the statement.

16.05 hrs.

STATEMENT *Re* : ANTI-RESERVATION
AGITATION AND COMMUNAL
INCIDENTS IN GUJARAT

[English]

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. B. CHAVAN) : As the House is already aware, an agreement was reached on 18th July, 1985 between the Akhil Gujarat Vali Mahamandal and Akhil Gujarat Navrachna Samiti on the one hand, and the State Government of Gujarat on the other hand, as a result of which the five month old anti-reservation agitation in Gujarat was withdrawn by these organisations. Earlier, after the induction of the new Government in Gujarat on 6th July, 1985, State Government had taken series of measures to defuse the situation in Gujarat. As a result of the State Government's initiative, the above mentioned agreement was arrived at.

2. As the House is aware, the agitation started from the middle of February 1985 on a peaceful note. By the end of April, this agitation took a complex turn with caste and communal factors completely overshadowing the stir. Since the beginning of the agitation till 23rd July, a total of 237 persons have lost their lives so far including 93 in Police/Army firing. Of these 201 persons were killed in communal or communally related incidents. Nearly 1801 persons have been injured in over 1230 violent incidents

connected with the anti-reservation/communal agitation. The main concentration of the agitation, however, remained confined to the urban sectors like Ahmedabad, Baroda, Surat and pockets of Kaira and Mehsana districts. Upto the end of May 1985, in Ahmedabad alone, Rs. 58 lakhs have been spent on relief and rehabilitation measures.

3. While during the months of May and June, the anti-reservation agitation had been intensified and 'Jail Bharo Andolan' and 'No Tax campaigns' were announced, there was no let up in the incidents of mob violence by the communal and caste forces which got intertwined with anti-reservation stir. Police had to intervene with heavy hand to control the disturbances with frequent bursting of teargas shells.

4. The new Ministry which took over on July 6, initiated some fresh steps towards negotiated settlement with the agitation leaders as also with the striking employees. Simultaneously, the schools throughout the State were opened on July 7 and holding of the postponed Secondary and Higher examinations for the last academic year was also announced. In view of the easing of the situation, the State Government also decided to withdraw the Arms w.e.f. 16th July from Ahmedabad and Baroda. Favour additional companies of C.R.P.F. were inducted to take over the law and order duties from the Army in Ahmedabad and Baroda.

5. On July 18, the leaders of Vali Mahamandal and Navrachana Samiti reached a settlement with the Cabinet Sub-Committee of the Gujarat Government. It was agreed that :

- (i) 18% enhanced reservation quota would not be implemented under any circumstances till a national consensus is reached;
- (ii) The existing 10% quota for B.Cs due to expire in March 1988 would be reviewed by a Commission consisting of one sitting and 2 retired High Court Judges by 1987; and
- (iii) A Judicial Commission would enquire into the violence and other disturbances in the State since February 1985 and submit its report within a period of 6 months.

6. The agreement, however, has evoked a sharp reaction from some hardliner student leaders. The hardliners have formed a new Vali Mahamandal and are continuing their agitational approach. Their calls for Bandhs in Ahmedabad, Bhavanagar and Sabarkantha on July 22 and 24 were not particularly successful. The State Government employees also have not withdrawn their strike yet. The situation in districts like Baroda, Bhavanager, Kaira and Mehsana has started showing some improvement though Baroda and Ahmedabad have continued to be affected by communal violence.

7. In fact, in Ahmedabad, situation took a turn for the worst on July 17 with the outbreak of communal violence and frequent attacks on Police by violent mobs in Kolupur and Dhariapur police station areas which gradually spread to Jamalpur and Shahpur areas also. Fire-rags, crude bombs, stones, were freely used and there were many incidents of stabbings. Curfew was imposed in these areas and police patrolling intensified. The situation continued to remain disturbed till 21st July though thereafter reports of stray incidents of stabbings and bombing have come in. In this latest spell of violence, 34 persons lost their lives till 23rd July, 1935. 14 persons were killed due to police firing while 9 were killed due to stabbing and 11 persons due to other reasons. 124 persons were injured. The police fired 208 rounds and burst 254 to areas shells during this period.

8. The communal situation in the State has remained disturbed since March this year. It is still fragile. The communal violence has been mostly witnessed in Ahmedabad and Baroda. The continuing clashes have accentuated mutual distrust between the two communities as a result of which petty incidents have often led to mob reaction on communal lines resulting in serious incidents. Apart from the traditionally communally sensitive areas of the walled city, the outer limits of the Ahmedabad were also affected by communal trouble causing extensive damage to property. Baroda city was another endemic centre of communal violence during the last two months particularly since June 28. Other districts affected by communal

virus were Jamnagar, Rajkot, Panchmahal, Sabarkantha, Broach, Kaira, Junagadh, Surat, Gandhinagar and Mehsana.

9. The State Govt. is fully seized of the situation and is taking necessary steps to bring the State back to normalcy. The State Govt. has started combing up operations, intensive searches and preventive arrests of anti-social and criminal elements etc. The State Govt. is contemplating a series of measures to bring the situation under control and in this connection the Chief Minister has already announced the possibility of imposing a punitive tax in the areas habitually prone to communal violence. The situation has been considerably brought under control. However, because of the intense distrust between the communities, the situation is still sensitive and needs constant watch.

10. In the past also, this House has shared our feelings that all violence must be condemned. All sections of the society and all political parties must act in a way to contribute to the restoration of the normalcy. After the agreement there is no cause for any further protest. The conciliatory moves by State Govt. need to be appreciated. I am sure, House will join me in making a fervent appeal to all sections of the society to eschew violence, shed distrust and work wholeheartedly for the restoration of normalcy.

DR. A. T. PATIL (Mehsana) : I would like to know from the Home Minister as to who was found responsible for these agitations and riots.

MR. CHAIRMAN : No questions on this.

DR. A. T. PATIL : **

MR. CHAIRMAN : Nothing of what you say will go on record.

(Interruptions)**