

Mithila cannot compete with students of comparatively developed regions of India.

In order to do away with the Regional imbalance in education, it is requested that the Union Government should convert the Lalit Narain Mithila University into a Central University, as there is no Central University in Bihar.

If Lalit Narain Mithila University is recognised as a Central University, a long-felt demand of the people of this area would be met and the poor and resourcess students would be able to compete with other students of the country.

12.24 hrs.

DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

[English]

Situation arising out of agitation for a separate State launched by all Bodo Students' Union Contd.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We shall now take up further discussion on the situation arising out of the agitation for a separate State launched by the All Bodo Students' Union and the action taken by the Government in that regard, raised by Shri Chintamani Jena, on 19th April, 1989. Dr. G.S. Rajhans. Please be brief.

[Translation]

DR. G.S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will not take much time and conclude in five minutes. The Bodo agitation is being discussed in the House since yesterday and many new things have come up. I have thoroughly travelled Assam and also visited its rural areas. One thing that I can say definitely, is that the Bodo community or Bodo tribals are entirely different from other tribals of the country. Their features are similar to that of Mongoloid whereas the tribals in other parts of the country have

entirely different features. There is no doubt and it has been proved that Bodo community came to Assam about 5000 years ago. After that *Aham* came to India. It is said that *Aham* community came from Thailand. The composition of Assam is very heterogeneous and the Bodo tribal has a major contribution in it. They have their own language, culture and civilization which is found very rare among other tribals but even then they bound not get any kind of recognition. It is absolutely wrong to say that the Central Government or the congress Party has incited them. In the real sense, the Bodo agitation had been strengthening its roots since 1967. Gradually, it has taken a violent turn. One of my friends has rightly said that during the Assam agitation, the AASU got fully support from the Bodo community. Now, when Bodo has started agitation, the people of AASU or the A.G.P. are shedding tears. Let the Bodo do the same what was done by the AASU and A.G.P.

The people, who still remember the days of Assam agitation, are very well aware as to what happened during the agitation. However, I may make it very clear that I do not favour the agitation or violence and I fully oppose it. But I want merely to recall the days of Assam agitation. The non-Assamese had suffered a lot. The Assamese and non-Assamese people, who did not support them, had become the victims of bombs and bullets. All kinds of atrocities were inflicted on them. I know each and everything but do not want to repeat them here. Whatever, you have taught to the Bodoes, they are doing the same, so what for the tears are being shed?

It Bodo's representative want that the Central Government's representative should also be present in the negotiations then what is objectionable to it? During G.N.L.F. movement, the West Bengal Government, itself called the representative of the Central Government. This agitation is becoming more violent than the GNLf movement and it will adversely affect all the North-east States. This is good that Bodo agitators have again stopped their movement otherwise it had disrupted the supplies

[Dr. G. S. Rajhans]

to the entire North-Eastern region. Monsoons are about to set in and in case this movement continues, it would effect the entire North-Eastern region. Therefore, we should understand the reality of the situation. Hence there is nothing like prestige issue in it. A.B.S.U. had taken its shape.

Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi has stated that he would not let Assam be divided in any way. He has said a great thing. Our party says that no state will be divided, but the sentiments of the people will have to be given a regard. You cannot crush the minorities for the majority. Land belonging to Bodo tribals has been forcibly occupied by the non-tribals and there is no one to hear their grievances. When you expect justice from others, what difficulty you have in giving justice to others, I would like to submit that I am talking in the interests of the A.G.P. I should not be misunderstood. The way forests trees are being cut in Assam, is nowhere seen in any other part of the country and it is a matter of grave concern. A time will come when the entire forests will be wiped off from Assam. You may say that the tribals are cutting the trees. But I can say that tribals are not doing it. In fact you should try to find out the truth by visiting the place. Otherwise the representatives of that area must be knowing the reality. The fact is that forest officers are themselves busy in getting the forests trees fell off. This is not causing a damage to the tribals alone. Instead, the interests of the entire region of Assam are being harmed. Assam was known for its mineral wealth in the whole country and, the moment is not far off when there will be no rains in Assam which will result in the climatic in balance and all sorts of difficulties are bound to ensue.

Bodo Movement is a significant movement in itself and you cannot ignore it with these words that the centre or any other particular group is encouraging it. Since last many years, discontentment had been permeating among the Bodo tribals and it is still spreading. You will have to admit the facts

and go in for negotiation with them in view of the present situation. If they want that they will talk in presence of the representatives of the centre then it is your helplessness but you must accept the truth and talk in the presence of the representatives of the centre, only that will solve the problem.

[English]

SHRI PARAG CHALIHA (Jorhat): Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Assam is a meeting place of varied races which no other State of India can perhaps acknowledge. Assam has been the habitat of the people from Paleolithic age like Austrics, Negridos and Mongoloids. And Bodos constitute only one group of Mongoloids. It was the habitat of the Nagas, the Khasis and the Garos, the Mishings, the Karbis, Laloongs and others. So, as I come from that region I want to make it clear that it will be wrong to say that Assam is inhabited only by the Bodos who constitute a group of Mongoloids. There are Ahoms and many other people coming from different areas which make Assam. Assam is the one State which has faced the maximum number of divisions and bifurcations. Nagaland was carved out of Assam. Mizoram has become a new State. Meghalaya also has been carved out of Assam. Therefore, Assam has been divided just to facilitate the process of identification of tribals about which one colleague of mine, Mr. Brahma Choudhury, said yesterday.

Another thing is, it is certainly very incorrect to say that the Bodo problem has emerged only just now and it will definitely be more incorrect to say that it is the outcome of the AGP regime. Yesterday Mr. Brahma Choudhury stated that their main aim is to preserve and also to establish their identity. It is not the concern of the Bodo tribals alone, it is the concern of all the tribals here. We have so many representatives of tribals and Sir, during the regime of the Congress with such national leaders, such stalwarts as Nehru, Patel and others, these tribals are dubbed as plains tribals, they were not in-

cluded in the Sixth Schedule and not even in the Fifth Schedule, about which Mr. Brahma Choudhury stated yesterday. Therefore, this problem has been there for the last 30-40 years and one should not forget that Assam and most of India was ruled by the Congress for 36 years after attaining Independence. Then the Assamese language about which Mr. Brahma Choudhury stated in not a language coming out of Bodos. I am a student of Linguistics, so I know that Assamese language is not something to be dreaded. It has in its stock words, phrases, and vocabulary from different tribal dialects. Even now we have got not only vocabulary but we have got a number of words from Bodos, number of words from Mishings, from Khasis etc. therefore, Assamese language is not to be equated with just coming out of Assamese race, and certainly not out of so-called high born society as many others have said. Even the land which Mr. Sontosh Mohan Dev represents now, Cachar, derives its name from Kacharis. It was the kingdom of Kacharis a Bodo group. He cannot deny at least this thing although he denies many things. Therefore, the problem of Bodos has to be dealt with in a broader way. The Bodos problem cannot be solved in isolation. It has got all-India impact and the tribal impact.

It is the legacy of the British policy of divide and rule by which a wedge was created between tribals like Kacharis, Mishings, Lalongs, Karvis, Tiwas and non-tribals. It is not that suddenly they felt that were neglected. I will be second to none in saying that they despite 42 years of independence, in Assam, the Kacharis, one stock of Bodos and the Mishings, another tribal are in the worst position of exploitation. This exploitation is not related only to the AGP regime. This exploitation was going on for decades of Congress rule or misrule. It cannot be taken in isolation. Some of us seem to have said that violence is the natural outcome of this long, long neglect. If we accept violence as the method for achieving our objectives, this will have far-reaching repercussions. In Assam itself, Mishings are there. Some areas are inhabited by Karvis. Therefore, it will open flood-gates of agitations not only in

Assam but in other parts of the country like Jharkhand movement and in Orissa and Bihar. Now if we accept demand from Bodos, we cannot escape from the problem of Jharkhand, Uttarkhand etc. All these things will come up. Therefore, it has to be tackled in that line.

Now, Mr. Sammar Brahma Chaudhary has said, the tribals wanted to identify themselves. They do not want mixing of non-tribals in solving their problems. Then, why should ACKSU (all Assam Cachar Karimgunj Students Union) join hand with ABSU? It has got nothing to do with the Bodos. Why should they support it? That is a big question. ACKSU happens to be from the constituency from where our hon. Minister, Mr. Sontosh Mohan Dev comes. What is this conglomeration between ABSU and AKSU? There is absolutely nothing at all, except, may be in hidden manouvres.

Some of the Members criticised yesterday about some actions of AGP. They seem to have forgotten in the last Assam movement, the killings known as Panka killing where 7 youth were butchered by police with their hands and feet tied. Why did you forget about that thing? Only recently Naga extremists, people from Nagaland encroached upon the Assam territory and killed a number of local people.

Among the victims were Muslims are some were Bodo tribal people. Are there committed by AGP? It is certainly not by them.

Somebody has spoken about rape, rape being committed by police. I do not say that no such things happened absolutely. But AGP has the guts to institute a full-fledged court of inquiry into the Dumka rape. My information is that whenever any complaint came to the district authorities or came to the notice of the Government, immediately some inquiry, magisterial inquiry was ordered. Some Members have said that AGP did not want Central Representative to be present in the meeting. Let the hon. Home Minister reply specifically whether this request for Central force has been made con-

[Sh. Parag Chaliha]

tinuously since July, 1988, Assam Government has been asking for Central help to solve this growing situation.

On 7-10-1988 by wireless transmission message No. 172, the Assam Government requested our hon. Home Minister who is now present here to supply them adequate forces. They said "If you do not supply us adequate forces right now, then a time might come when even more forces will be of no avail." This message was transmitted on the 7th of October and first reinforcement of police came in mid-February and all the damage was done between the period October-February. These are facts which the hon. Home Minister cannot deny and we are speaking as if AGP Government has been putting all the blocks. In a meeting held some 15 or 20 days ago in which Congress-I and ABSU were represented and where the man who was behind all the news, and other Bodo tribal leaders was present, it was decided unanimously that even the Centre's participation can be decided in a meeting. It was absolutely wrong to say that the AGP Government or authorities are absolutely averse to any Central assistance. It is not that. They only said "Let us have preliminary discussion. We request Central Government participation."

One hon. Member said that the supply of foodgrains to all the North-Eastern States has been very badly affected. I have a record on authority that on the 5th or 6th April, at the instance of the Home Affairs of the State, a Conference of high officials of all the States of the region was held. It was held only 10 or 15 days back. They made it absolutely clear that they may be having some difficulties but those difficulties are certainly not due to any so called inefficiency or inability to on the part of the State Government in extending help. If there is any shortage anywhere, may be in Manipur, it is due to the local situation. They made it clear and I stand by it. The Chief Secretary of Assam Government held another discussion immediately thereafter to know if there is any shortage of food

supplies and they categorically said that there is no such shortage at the moment. These are facts. We all want a settlement. But the saddest part of all is that not a single man from the Congress-I Circles or from the high authority at the Centre, at any time condemned the violence that is going on. Yesterday only one or two speakers were categorical and we welcomed it. How can the hon. Home Minister try to bring about a settlement without first condemning violence?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat): Is Home Minister also not condemning it?

SHRI PARAG CHALIHA: No. We want a solution. We are wedded to democracy. We simply cannot advocate any violent method. Far from it. But one thing is certain that if they continue to harbour evil and if they continue to hold meetings in some big hotels in Calcutta or Darjeeling or at some other places, there will be no settlement. It will open floodgates in which many people might find themselves submerged. Therefore, we want a settlement. My appeal to the hon. Home Minister is let him not try to become another leader like he became in Tripura.

Let him be the leader the Assam not through guns and bullets but by offering a good heart to all the people. I want a humane approach to solve this problem. I do not want to approach this problem with bullets. I do not want to have an approach of conspiracy and manoeuvre. Therefore, I stand to appeal to all of us to have a humane approach in solving this matter. I join my leader and other colleagues who are here in asking and praying to all concerned and particularly the one or two persons here sitting in Delhi dancing to the tunes of some ideas of some people which have already done some harm not only to us but to them also, to join the round table conference to sort out the difficulties. I feel the sooner it is done the better not only for Assam, not only for the Bodos but for the good of the whole of the country, including these people who are now ruling it.

SHRI HAREN BHUMIJ (Dibrugarh): Mr.

Deputy-Speaker, Sir, the State of Assam has been experiencing this agitation for a long time. This Bodos Students' Union agitation has badly stirred the State of Assam. While analysing this problem, we have to make an indepth study as to what are the causes and reasons for the resentment coming out in the minds of the backward and tribal community people there. Shri Kaka Kalelkar, the eminent educationist once said that Assam is a miniature India inhabited by people from every corner of this country. Besides that, Assam is such a State inhabited by different types of tribals and most backward communities. It has been expressed by these tribals and backward community people that because of the utter indifferent attitude of the Assamese people towards the backward and tribal communities, the whole of Assam which was earlier covering from Arunachal to Tripura has been fragmented the after another into Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram and Meghalaya. Such a big hill area of Assam has been fragmented into such States and now the State of Assam has been reduced in size to that of the State of Kerala. As I will not be having much time to speak, I will be brief. I do not want to reiterate the topics or points which my honourable colleagues have already touched upon. But I would only like to cite some of the instances which have occurred. Why is this callous, utter indifferent attitude of the AGP Government towards these tribal and backward communities? Last year, about 500 youths were recruited in police. I would like to know what is the number of youths recruited in the police by the Assam Government from this Tea Tribe. What is the number of youths recruited from other tribes? Of course, I do not know about other tribes. But I am sure that out of those 500, not a single youth from the Tea Community had been recruited in the police. They have no figures to produce. There are various examples. There were two Ministers in the present State Government coming from Tea Tribe. Suddenly, one of the Ministers has been dropped without any charge. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI (Guwahati):

Are we going to discuss the Cabinet reshuffle? Ministers are not dropped because of charges. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI HAREN BHUMIJ: There were other Minister who were dropped because of corruption charges. But one Minister from the Tea Tribes was dropped without any charge. They could not establish any corruption charge against this Minister. He was dropped because he belonged to the Tea Tribe. He was not from a Bodo Tribe. This Tea Tribe is the most backward and illiterate community in Assam. The number of graduates and post-graduates from this Tea Tribe can be counted in fingers. There will be, hardly ten to fifteen out of the total population of fifty lakhs in the State, which tribes constitutes one-fourth of the total population of Assam. What type of attitude is this towards these tribes?

There was a move, and a request was made to the Assam Sahitya Sabha which is the sole media of propagating the Assamese language. The request was made to the Assam Sahitya Sabha to move a resolution requesting the universities and the Secondary Education Board in Assam to give concessions to those youths in schools, colleges and universities while publishing the examination results particularly in the Assamese subject.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your point? Come to the point?

SHRI HAREN BHUMIJ: I am stating one example. These Tea tribals speak in their own dialect 'Sadni' amongst themselves and they have adopted this Assamese language.

While projecting their studies in schools, colleges and universities, they adopt this Assamese language. You will very easily imagine the difficulties these youths face in learning a new language. But this request, this move which was made to the Assam Sahitya Sabha was not responded. (*Interruptions*)

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SHRIDINESH GOSWAMI: Why did the hon. Member not pursue with his own Government to accept all the demands which he has been making now during these 38 years up to 1985? (*Interruptions*)

AN HON. MEMBER: You were the Controller of Examinations.

SHRI HAREN BHUMIJ: Yes, it was none other than I myself. While I was the Controller of Examinations, one student who boasted of being a true Assamee came to me and said that he failed in Akhambia. I immediately told him, yes, that is why he was failed. He could not understand. It is because he could not pronounce the word Ashamia correctly. That is why I told him that he has failed because he could not pronounce the word of his own language.

If this the fate of Assamee students learning through their own language and yet are not able to pronounce the word of their own language, what would be the fate of other backward and tribal community people who have to adopt Assamese language? This is the utter indifferent attitude towards them.

These Tea and Ex-tea tribes consisting of 50 lakhs people in Assam have been demanding their constitutional right to include them in the list of Scheduled Tribes. But till today the Government has not recommended their case.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: You are now complaining against the Central Government and the Home Ministry. This is the job of Mr. Sontosh Mohan Dev.

SHRI HAREN BHUMIJ: Not only that, three years ago the Secondary Education Board of Assam issued a circular making it compulsory to learn Assamese language both in the Barak Valley and other tribal schools and colleges where the majority of the people speak Bengali and other languages.

The heart of the people cannot be won by oppression and suppression. The heart of the people can be won only by heart. We are proceeding towards 21st century. So the AGP Government should realise that and should come forward for a negotiated settlement for these problems without any further division of the State of Assam.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO (Parvathipuram): Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, we have been discussing the situation arising out of the Bodo movement in Assam. In our country there are several small ethnic groups and minorities. People who have been feeling insecure have been pressing for this demand. This has been going on now for a very long time. Several constitutional provisions were made by our founding fathers only because there were certain groups in our country which deserved certain special benefits and reservations.

It is unfortunate that several Members from either side have indulged in levelling political allegations against one another in a debate like this which should be looked in a much greater depth.

Certain members yesterday from the other side said that this demand for Bodo land came only after the AGP Government came to power and questioned why there were no such demands before that. I would like to only mention that the first demand came for the State called Udyachal in the year 1967. Considering the complexities of the north-eastern region, in 1967- if I remember right, on the 15th of February the then Prime Minister late Mrs. Indira Gandhi had said that Assam would be reorganised on the basis of a federal structure.

13.00 hrs.

It was within a fortnight after that this All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) was formed and within a short while after that the PTCA was formed. So for the first time, sometime in the middle of 1987, I do not know the exact date, they submitted a Memorandum to the then President, asking for Udayachal. So

this was when the first demand for this kind of State within a State was made, 20 years before.

Now unfortunately it has turned into a violent movement. This violence is not there only in this particular movement that has been going on in Assam. Unfortunately, this trend towards violence has been accentuated during the last 3, 4, or 5 years. I will come to those details later. But what I would like to mention is that as far back as 1976, a unanimous resolution was passed in the State Assembly of Assam, if I am right. The Minister of State for Home, who comes from that State is here, he will correct me, if I am wrong. That resolution said that jobs and assignments should be given proportionate to population or some such basis. But unfortunately though these good intentions were there by various Governments, these were not implemented.

Myself, Shri. Sontosh Mohan Dev and Shri. Dinesh Goswami were in the same party. Though the intentions of the Government were there to do something for this class, though unanimous resolution was passed, nothing effective could be done in that respect. So this has not suddenly come to light as the AGP Government came to power. It is not right to attribute the entire situation to the AGP Government. It is not proper to politicise the issue like this. This is like a volcano and it can erupt any moment. *(Interruptions)*

Well, Members from your side have started this assault. You do not attend the House. I am not to be blamed for that. You please listen to what I said or you go through the record if you like, later on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there have been several reasons why these tribals have been left out. For example, there is a 10% reservation for a particular job and there are only less than 10 vacancies. Then how can you give one or two to tribals? I am citing an example where there are less than 10 vacancies. Now deliberately only five vacancies would be announced. So if only 5 vacan-

cies are announced, then we cannot appoint half a person. So naturally people from these categories would not get employment. This is something which is happening from those days, not because the Government's intentions were bad. I do not also blame the bureaucracy entirely for this. But this is because of certain social problems that existed then. But these tribals were not actually accepted as a part of the society at large. There was a certain kind of alien attitude towards these Bodos and other tribes who live in this State and therefore they suffered not only in respect of their legitimate right and demands which were promised to them but also they suffered when it came to other instances like getting contracts. Even in business and in several other aspects even economically they were discriminated against. This is what is happening in several other regions also. We are all aware of it. This is not a phenomenon that came in after the AGP Government came to power. This was there all along. We are all responsible for it. This is something where we have to go deep and sustained efforts will have to be made to bring these people back on the rails.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, basically what we need today is integration of these tribals not only the Bodos but also other tribals like Mishings, Lalong other tribes, into the mainstream of society. This is something which we are not able to do properly.

As far as the demands of Bodos are concerned, I am sure that none of us either from this side or that side are going to support them for their demand of a separate State of Bodoland. I would expect the hon. Minister for Home in his reply to categorically state that Central Government is against any such demand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, then another problem in Assam is that only hilly regions are covered by the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. The plain areas of Assam are not covered by the Fifth Schedule. I am mentioning this because several hon. Members mentioned about the land problem with respect to the tribals. Annihilation of

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land transfer cannot be implemented because it is not covered by Fifth Schedule. Fifth Schedule says Assam will not be covered by it. So the only grants that the tribals in Assam today get are the grants which they get through Article 272 of the Constitution. You have a sub plain area. This entire thing is created under the gamut of Article 275. Now I am told that there are advisory bodies. I do not know whether it is mandatory on the part of the authorities to implement what advisory committees decide. You cannot have the kind of autonomous district councils in Assam like you have in some other North-Eastern regions because Bodos are scattered over various districts. If you take an area of five-six districts and there you give a Bodoland the population of Bodos will be only 10-12 per cent. Then you cannot restrict voting rights to 10-12 per cent. I do not think it is practical to have that kind of autonomous district councils that you have in Tripura or other parts of North-East. But probably some provision could be made—and this is where the Central Government will have to intervene to see that more legitimate status is given to those these bodies which already exist vis-a-vis and as, sub plan areas. You could also probably think of the possibilities of including these plain areas belonging to tribals in the 'Fifth Schedule of the Constitution. I do not know whether it is possible but you can consult some legal expert. This is one way out as far as the problem of land transfer is concerned.

If you have to succeed in coming to some kind of a solution it will have to be through negotiation. I am really sorry that ABSU has refused to come to the negotiating table. Violence cannot be a prelude to any talks of negotiations. I am sure the entire House with one voice will deplore the violent activities that have gone on in this part of the country. I would appeal from this august House to the office bearers of ABSU first to take part in the negotiations and thrash it out with the State Government and after they come to a certain agreement and if intervention of the Central Government is necessary

then certainly somebody from Central Government will have to go and intervene in the matter.

I would also like to warn this Government against Army intervention in this area. Time and again on the Floor of the House we have said that Army should not be used to quell civilian riots. Unfortunately there have been statements coming from Chief Ministers of neighbouring States asking for Central intervention and asking for sacking of the Assam Government and so on and so forth. There is also the demand of ABSU that Central observer should be present even when the initial talks are going on. All this only lends credence to suspicions that Centre is hand in glove with ABSU or they are encouraging them. It may not be true but this is the kind of impression that one gets and suspicions are fuelled by these kinds of statements that come from your own Ministers. What kind of a party is this if you cannot control your own Chief Minister from a neighbouring State who makes these kinds of demands which are also unconstitutional? What actually led to this violence is a different reasons altogether. After Shri Rajiv Gandhi became the Prime Minister and came to power, he ushered in a new area of accords, accords that sowed seeds of discord and after that somehow the impression gained ground that the only way to get something out of the Central Government or to have an accord was to first start indulging in some kind of violence. Once you start violence, there is no end to it. All this precisely happened in Gorkhaland and this is what happened in Punjab and even in Tamil Nadu before the elections were held, something like Vanniyar Movement came up and in Andhra Pradesh also there was some kind of a caste movement. These are all very very dangerous games to play. These things may boomerang and backfire on you... (Interruptions)... That happened even in Tamil Nadu, namely, the Vanniyar Movement. You Ministers were going from here and talking to the Vanniyars. Some friends like Dr. Rajhans said that AASU also took on an agitational path. I am not here to prove or disprove what AASU did. But does that

mean that the Bodos should also do that, just because those people did it? Is that an answer? Therefore, this not an issue to make political capital. This is a much more serious issue. Today it is the Bodos and tomorrow it may be somebody else. Mr. D.P. Yadav, you have your Jharkhand Movement in Bihar which has also been hanging over your head like the Sword of Damocles for a long time... (Interruptions)... Whatever the case may be, once you let these tendencies to grow, then there is no end to it and tomorrow you may reach such a situation when volcano will erupt. And this will even threaten the integrity of the country. Therefore, while condemning the violence that has taken place in that area and while appealing to the Central Government not to look at it from the point of view of political gains. I may say that it will be ultimately against the interest of our country and especially since this is a very sensitive region. I also appeal to this House, to the leaders of the AASU to go in for negotiations with the State Government. I hope that there will be an amicable solution to this problem at an early date and also that the hon. Ministers and all sections of this House will condemn the violence that has taken place resulting in several deaths and loss of property in that part of the country.

[Translation]

KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE (Jadavpur): First of all, I rise to condemn the incidents of killings which have taken place in Assam during Bodo agitation. I also express my condolence for the 159 aggrieved families whose members have been killed in the meanwhile. It is a matter of great regret and grief that even after 40 years of independence, some small movements emerge to take the shape of big movements in some parts of our country and indulge in terrorist activities. There are no two opinions about it that every body in the country will condemn the incidents of violence. Tribals have got their own ethnic problems. In fact the preserve Bodo movement had emerged in Assam, as 'Shri Kishore Chandra has stated, with the very demand of Udayachal in 1967 but later on it did not have its way

because the Congress Government was taking care of the tribal problems in Assam. Thereafter when A.G.P. Movement started, Bodo people also sided with them who are still supporting them. The people who were the part of Bodo agitation are still with the A.G.P. Since yesterday, I have been listening to the speeches of the A.G.P. Members in this House. Dinesh Bhai has just left the House, I also had the opportunity to listen to him. I would like to know from him about the steps which have been taken by their Government to check the current Bodo Movement in Assam. What has been done to solve their problems. Instead of solving their problem, you are taking political advantage of this agitation. Since long you have been abusing Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev, Congress party and many other people. I would like to know from the Home Minister in plain words if they have called a press conference to condemn the incident of violence being practised in Assam which has resulted in the killings of thousands of people in that State. If not, the reasons for it? But I am sure and also I have seen it too that the Home Minister has released a press statement to condemn this movement. I would like the Home Minister to clarify the position while giving his reply. It is a fact that I do not support the Bodo Movement in Assam but there are some varied type of ethnic problems of the tribals of that State that require attention of the Government because it is also one of the major reasons of this Bodo Movement that the Assam Government has been treating the tribals as the second grade citizens. They have many other problems. Assam Government had published a notification in 1986, in which it was stated that only Assamese were eligible to appear in the test for L.D.C. It was also compulsory for the candidate that they must be knowing Assamese where as the Bodo tribals do not know Assamese and are thus being meted out injustice even though they have been living in Assam since long. Why are they not provided with employment opportunities. It is true that Assam Government had issued a circular in 1986, wherein it was stated clearly that knowledge of Assamese language is compulsory even in the course of education.

[Kumari Mamata Banerjee]

Assam has been the State of varied races of people including minorities like Bengalis, Muslims, Biharis and tribals too. Being it so, the above proposition is indicative of male fide intentions of the A.G.P. Government. A.G.P. Government must think over it as to why Bodo agitation is going on there. They have only one demand i.e. Assam for Assamese but such things are not happening in any other state of India as it is happening today in Assam. When Mr. Hiteshwara Sakia was the Chief Minister of Assam, he too was not in favour of Assam accord. But our Prime Minister removed him and the Assam accord was signed. The reason is that the Prime Minister stands for the development of Assam and the Assamese people. It for this reason that Shri Hiteshwar Sakia was removed. But what is going on there at present. Members of A.G.P. are busy with finding fault with others. You must know whose brain child is the Bodo Movement. It is the brain child of A.G.P. itself. Without knowing the facts, you are simply blaming the congress. You are not condemning the violence (*Interruptions*) I want to tell you the factual position. Due to this Bodo Movement thousands of our fellow countrymen which include Muslims and Minorities are being killed in Assam. Mr. Phukein in blaming the Congress for extending support to violence, but Congress has never done it and will never do it. Bodo Movement is your brain child. I did not interrupt you in your speech, then why are interrupting me? Sir, even today, I have a fellow feeling for all-be it Assamese, Bengalis, Hindus or Muslims. We have never discriminated any one on the basis of caste or state but it is a matter of regret that tribals are being meted out with injustice and atrocities are being committed on them and some others are facing tortures. I want to convey it to the Chief Minister of Assam that Assam does not belong to him only. It belongs to all. Therefore, he should take care to every body living in Assam. That is his responsibility. About one and half year ago an unemployed youth from my constituency had gone to Assam for employment in Dibrugarh but he was beaten up there. I took

to get him admitted in the Calcutta hospital. We never behave like that. If you come to our state, we will not harass you. We cannot do that. But non-Assamese are being harassed in Assam because the Government in that State is quite inefficient. Sir, I do not support the Bodo Movement. But I would definitely like to mention it that the 60 percent of Bodoes are landless and it is an ethnic problem of these people that they are being treated as second grade citizens by the Assam Government. Instead Bodos should also be provided with opportunities of development like the tribals of Nagaland and Mizoram. I do not want to be given all these facilities to them as it has been laid down in the Sixth Schedule. However, the Government should accept all the genuine demands of these people. I am not supporting the people who are going on with the Bodo Movement and killing innocent people. I am not supporting the activities of the police that is committing rapes on the women. There is lack of communication between the people and the administration of that state which is resulting in all these disturbances. No Assamese has confidence in the Assam Government. Whether Central Government intervenes or not, Bodo Movement should come to an end. In the beginning of the G.N.L.F. movement, the Chief Minister had no confidence in the Central Government but later on he realised that they should not make it a prestige issue and they should settle it. Then the Central Government and the State Government and G.N.L.F. sat together and settled it. Similarly, a solution will have to be found out in respect of the Bodo Movement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that though the Bodo agitation appears to be small one, yet at times small agitations prove to be dangerous for the country. I, therefore, request you to pay attention to it.

In Assam, it is not only the question of AASU or the Bodos. There are a number of other minorities, on whom atrocities are being committed and discrimination made against them. The Government of the State is adopting coercive tactics to suppress their movement. For how long will they continue

to be suppressed? When the AGP people were launching their movement, these people were following them as their younger brother. Now when they are in power and are indulging in fighting, the Bodos, the younger brother is also resorting to movement. They had never thought that their younger brother could resort to movement one day. The Government of Assam is not able to solve the Bodo problem. Yesterday, one of our hon. Members, Shri Shantaram Naik rightly called the AGP as **. We have seen the situation prevailing in the State of Assam. The State Government has turned bankrupt. They are not in a position to pay salary to its employees. The situation of price rise in the State has gone so bad that the common man is not able to purchase even a small item. The Government of Assam and the Chief Minister of the State know pretty well that they cannot help in such a situation. They can only launch agitations, commit murders, spearhead movements and resort to arson. But they cannot do anything to restore peace in Assam. I would like to request you to ask the Government of Assam to restore peace in the State.

I would like to request the august House, the hon. Minister and also the State Government to do something for the rehabilitation of the families of those Government officers and innocent people who were murdered during Bodo agitation.

I would like to congratulate Shri Madhavrao Scindia for immediately providing a job to the wife of the Station Master who was murdered. But nothing of this kind is being done for the family members of the people who were murdered in Assam. Jobs should be provided either to the wife or the son of every deceased person. The Central Government will provide help to its employees. The State Government should also extend necessary help to its employees.
(Interruptions)

I would like to call upon you as well as the Central Government not to view this movement from a political outlook and solve the issue by adopting humanitarian ap-

proach.

[English]

SHRI V.S. KRISHNA IYER (Bangalore South): Mr. Deputy Speaker Sir, yesterday I was not here. But today, I have listened to some of the speeches. It really pains me to see that this issue has taken a political turn. This Bodo agitation is a national problem and very dangerous implications are involved in this agitation. Instead of outrightly condemning this agitation and the violence of the agitators, this forum has been used for accusing the performance of the AGP Government in the State of Assam. Sir, this is the supreme legislature of our country. Whenever there is violence in any part of the country, it is our first and foremost duty that we must condemn the violence. This House is aware that more than 160 innocent lives have been lost in the agitation. Hundreds of government buildings have been burnt down by the agitators and there are hundreds of arson and looting cases. Our first and foremost duty is to condemn this violence.

I know very well that if this agitation is encouraged, it will be opening the floodgates to similar agitations in all the States. If you concede the demand for a separate State in one part of a State, then there will be similar demands in all the States. It is possible that the tribals do have some problems which may be very genuine. I am aware of the problems, though I am not as well-conversant as Shri Goswami and Shri Chaliha. Not only the Bodos, but other tribals in Assam too have certain grievances. They want to maintain their own culture. There are economic problems also because the forests on which they depend for their livelihood have been destroyed. But the solution is not in demanding a separate State. That should never be encouraged. But here, what I find is that instead of condemning the agitation and finding out a solution, the AGP Government is blamed. If you go on accusing the AGP Government it will not solve the problem. I do not believe that this agitation is the brainchild of the AGP movement. It cannot be because it has not started now. It has been in exis-

**Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

[Sh. V.S. Krishna Iyer]

tence as long as 20 years ago. This type of agitation for a separate State in any part of the country should be nipped in the bud. Whenever there is regional imbalance or if any part of a State has certain problems peculiar to that part, it is the duty of the State Government to see that the grievances of that area are resolved. I admit that. These people may have certain grievances. But they should not be encouraged to demand a separate State. Sir, we should categorically and outrightly condemn violence. The House should appeal to the Students Union to come to the negotiating table. I have seen some of their demands in the newspaper. They have got 80 to 90 demands. It is possible for the State Government to sit along with them on the negotiating table and find out the solution to at least some of their demands. One thing I do not understand is this. Why do the Students Union want a Central representative to be present? Mr. Sontosh Mohan Dev should explain this. What impression does it give? It gives an impression that there is a nexus between the higher-ups in the ruling party or the Government and the agitators. Why are they insisting on that? Let them first of all come to the negotiating table and discuss it and if necessary the State Government will naturally ask for Central intervention. But instead of that, if they put some conditions to come to a negotiating table, that should never be conceded.

Now I want to make an appeal to the Members of the ruling party. What I find from the discussions that we had is that the target of attack is the AGP Government. The AGP Government is an elected Government. If the people are dissatisfied, they would dislodge them.

If they are not happy, if they are not satisfied with the performance of the AGP Government, naturally in one or two years the elections will come and they will throw them away. As a humble Member of this House, I appeal particularly to the Central Leaders that they must outrightly condemn

this violence. That is the first and foremost thing. The Minister while replying should condemn this violence. You should advise the Student leaders that they should respond to the invitation and ask them to negotiate with them. Let them go to the negotiating table for negotiation. At the same time some of the leaders particularly, the Chief Ministers of the neighbouring States who are issuing statements by encouraging such movements should be discouraged. The AGP Government takes objection to the statements. The genuine fear of the AGP Government is that there has been some sort of help being given by the Central Government. So the genuine fear is there. That should be allayed. That can be allayed by a statement. Through this House, I want first of all to condemn this violence. Under no circumstances, we should recognise violence. At any cost we should never encourage such violence in any part of the country.

Secondly, at least this House should send a message to the Bodo Students Union that they should go to the negotiating table and discuss with the State Government their problems. Then only, if necessary, they can ask for the Central intervention. These two things are important. Instead of that, if you go on accusing the AGP Government, the things will not be solved. It will only lead to a political conflict. It is not a political issue. Though I am an Opposition Member, I don't look at it from the political angle. Because, it is a very dangerous thing. If you concede this demand for one separate State in one area, then similar demands will come from other States.

With these few words, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak here.

[Translation]

SHRI HARISH RAWAT (Almora): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, when Shri Parag Chaliha was speaking I was wondering whether he was participating in the debate or the Bodo students agitation or was pleading a case against Shri Sontosh Mohan Dev, the

hon. Minister of State for Home Affairs. From his speeches it appeared to me that he was trying to view the whole issue from a political angle or even more than that from a party angle.

Violence has no place in democracy and all types of violence, whether it is done by the extremist elements of the Bodo students union or by the Assam police on the Bodo people, must be condemned. We must deprecate both types of violence. If we do not do so, we cannot manage the affairs of the country. Our party has not been understood properly. Our party has made it clear that we want a unified and strong Assam and it is also in the interest of the whole country. That is why the Hon. Prime Minister has said categorically that no further division of Assam will be allowed. Even after this, if the party in power, i.e. Assam Gan Parishad, is suspicious of the intentions of the Central Government, it will be presumed that it is not trying to go deep into the matter. Instead, it is looking after its party interest and creating rifts between different groups of the people just to cover up its own failures in economic and development fields and is, thus, diverting the attention of the people.

This august House very well remembers that when the Darjeeling agitation was going on, the Hon. Prime Minister as well as the Central Government advised the Government of West Bengal to hold talks with the Gorkha agitation leaders and try to sort out their genuine problems and find some solution to the problem through negotiations. Today the Government of Assam is accusing the Central Government of interference in their affairs. They term it as their internal affair and try to keep the Central Government aloof. But the Bodo agitators want that they will join the talks in the presence of representatives from the Central Government. The Government of West Bengal had adopted the same attitude during the Gorkha agitation and that resulted in large scale violence in Darjeeling. Finally, the Government of West Bengal had to agree to the stand taken by the Central Government and in this way peace was restored in Darjeeling. It is a question of faith. The Bodo agitators do not reply on the Government of Assam for some reason but have faith in the Central Government. The Congress party is not to be blamed for it. All the parties con-

cerned, the Government of Assam, the Bodo agitators, the people of the P.T.C.A. and the Central Government want a solution to the problem. When our objectives are the same, it is meaningless to involve or not to involve somebody in it or to keep some other party out of the talks. It will be totally unfair if we view the problem from a law and order angle. It is a very sensitive issue. Bodo agitation is not new. They have been raising their demands right from 1967. It is not correct to say that the Central Government is tendering this piece of advice only because the AGP Government is in power in the State. Even before that, the Central Government advised the then Government of the State to hold talks with the Bodo agitators. Today when we see that the Bodo people have taken to violence, we come to a definite conclusion that something has hurt deep in the minds of these otherwise peace loving people. They have taken recourse to agitation. I, therefore, request the hon. Minister of Home Affairs to go deep into the matter. The Government of Assam should also delve deep into the matter and find out the reasons as to why the peace loving Bodo people turned violent. (*Interruptions*) Keeping four Ministers in the Government is not going to help. The question is how sensitive, how vigilant the Government is towards the basic problem of the Bodo people. How far is it sympathetic to their problems. If a feeling gains ground in the minds of the Bodo people that no Government, no political party is vigilant to their interests and nobody wants to do good to them, they will lose faith. It hardly matters if 4 to 6 Minister are included in the Government to represent them. As such I would like to request the hon. Minister of Home Affairs to go deep into the matter in spite of the fact that the AGP Government did not try to find out why the Bodo agitators turned violent all of a sudden. I feel that the AGP Government should know who are the Bodo agitators and what is the Bodo union. When the Assam agitation was going on, it used to be a part and parcel of the AASU. It was with them. These people have received training from one another. They can understand the Bodos better than us. But it is unfortunate that instead of going into the matter deeply the AGP is trying to give a political colour to it.

I would like to request the Government of Assam through you that it should talk to

[Sh. Harish Rawat]

the Bodo Students Union in the presence of a representative of the Central Government. The Assam Government should not unnecessarily be touchy about the proposal of the Bodos. If unnecessarily this matter is raised, it will definitely affect the whole North-eastern region. As everyone is aware that Assam is a state which has got affiliation with the rest of the country in every respect right from the days of the freedom struggle. If there is any unrest in the state, the whole of North-East gets affected thereby. Our hon. friend Shri V. Kishore Chandra Deo and others have alleged that the Chief Ministers of some of the North-Eastern States are trying to interfere in the internal matters of Assam and want the Central Government to intervene in this matter. When it is in their interest, why should not they do so? Assam is the gateway to the North-East and all the essential commodities are supplied through Assam to these states. I would in fact, like the hon. Minister of Home Affairs to enlighten the House about the position of the supplies to the different North-Eastern states since of Bodo agitation started in Assam? If the supplies do not reach or reach in less quantities it certainly distresses the hon. Minister. His difficulties are increased and if in the circumstances, he reacts sharply, it cannot be said that it was unjustified on his part to do so irrespective of what the AGP Government may say in this regard.

It is the common knowledge that the tribals are generally quiet and peace-loving people and that believe in non-violence. They grow violent under these types of circumstances. Firstly, if a sense of isolation increased among them, they become violent. Secondly, if they feel that their identity is going to be completely lost, they become violent. The way in which their land is being forcibly occupied by the outsiders threatens their identity. If the Assam Government convey to the Centre the demand of the Bodos that the Sixth Schedule should be extended to cover them, the Centre may direct the State Government to discuss with the Bodos regarding the areas in which the Sixth Schedule could be extended. But the Assam Government is not inclined to talk to the Bodos about this matter. Thirdly, the Bodos become violent when economic neglect and exploitation reaches the ex-

treme. The area from which I hail, there also, demands one being made for a separate state. The reason behind such demands is that the Uttar Pradesh Government is not paying due attention to the development of the hilly areas. It is precisely for this reasons that people are agitating there. The same sort of resentment has developed among the Bodos. Therefore, it is necessary to remove such ill-feelings. I would like to request you to look into this matter.

Again, as per my informations, Assam Tribal Board has become a non-functional Board. No meetings of the Board are held. Even if meetings are held, they are purely a formality. The issue of the development of the Tribals does not figure in such meetings. The entire issue should be looked into deeply. I would request the AGP Government also that it should not look at this issue from a political angle. This issue cannot be treated as a problem of the State Government but it should be treated as a general problems of the tribals. This problem cannot be ignored. This is why Assam Government should take the necessary help of the Central Government to solve this problem.

[English]

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY (Midnapore): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, This Bodo movement is essentially a movement of the tribals and it is a movement for their self-determination. I will come later on to what should be done and what should not be done. Definitely, violence should have to no place here. It should be remembered that today not only the Bodos, but also the tribals of various places are in ferment. The tribals of this country have been neglected for thousands and thousands of years. Sometimes there have been revolts and their revolts have been crushed with bloody weapons of the oppressing classes not once, but more than once, during the British regime, after the British regime—all these things had happened. Who does not know the history of India cur Scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people have been declared as third or fourth grade citizens throughout this country. And even our Sastras have said that they are no equals. And who does not know the story of *Mahabharat*, where Dronacharya had to take the finger of Eklavya because Eklavya had been trying to contest and de-

feat Arjun. Eklavya was a tribal... (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI ATATUR RAHMAN (Barpeta): Is it continuing since then?

[*English*]

SHRI NARAYAN CHOUBEY: If you do not know it, you should learn.

The tribals are demanding Jharkhand. What should be done? The neglected, suppressed and oppressed tribals, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people throughout India will rise. They should all definitely make their own justified demands. Today the tribals are not willing to bear what their forefathers had been bearing. They are going to schools; they are going to Universities; they are becoming Engineers; they are joining Army and their eyes are opening. They are feeling that they have been badly treated. Actually they have been badly treated. So, if the tribals rise, if their demands are justified, then I, as a communist, welcome it. But then, beware if the patriots, honest and democratic people of India do not lead the tribal, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people to get their justified demands, definitely advantage will be taken by those people who are not patriots, who want to divide this country and who want to create troubles here and there. This must also be borne in mind. If we fail to lead them, if we fail to give them justice, then definitely those people, who do not want to give benefit to the tribals of my poor motherland, my India will take advantage of it. It is taking place everywhere.

It should be taken care of. Now what is the problem? Similar problems had arisen in Tripura. Left Front Government of Tripura wanted that the Tribal Council should be there within Tripura. The question of dividing Assam does not arise at all here and now. Assam has been divided not once, it has been divided several times. So, the demand for a separate States for Bodos is not a justified demand. At the same time, whatever justified demands they have got within the framework of Assam, whether something can be solved, as has been solved in Tripura like creating a Council, I think that

should be looked after by the Government of Assam, Central Government and other forces so that Bodos come to the negotiating table shedding violence. Yes, it is a fact that this movement in the Bodo areas and in Assam is leading to a total disruption of the entire North Eastern Region. At the same time it should be understood that the Central Government, which is not very happy with the AGP Government for many reasons, because they have defeated Congress, should not in any way take advantage of the discontent among the Bodos to fan it so that AGP Government in Assam could be taught a lesson. This attitude, if any, should be forsaken for the country's sake, for the nation's sake and for the country's integration sake. You and I may differ. You are trying to take political advantage on this Bodo issue. This is coming in the Press. Hon. Minister of State knows it. It is agog with such reports. Giving support by some Ministers or some other force in the Central Government must stop. The differences of the Central Government with the AGP Government can be solved at Delhi, at Shillong and at Gauhati. But we should not take advantage of the tribal people's demands in order to settle scores with the other Government. This thing should not be done.

Another thing I want to point out here is that chauvinism of all sorts is bad. Bodo chauvinism should not be supported. But remember, Bodos are tribals. They can go astray very easily. These people have been neglected for years and years together. But the nationalities have come up like Bengalis, Assamese, Oriya, Telugus, Tamils. We are the so-called educated people. But one chauvinism cannot fight another chauvinism. We cannot fight Bodo chauvinism with Assamese chauvinism. We cannot fight with Jharkhandi chauvinism with Bengali chauvinism or Bihari chauvinism. I think, our patriots and democrats should think of this. Remember that they were backward for ages ages together. For them to go astray and take a wrong path is very easy. They should be persuaded to forsake violence. They should be asked to come and talk to the Government of AGP at Gauhati and settle the matters. If need be, if the Government of Assam thinks it necessary, they may be called at the Centre. There should be no question of prestige. Enough harm has been done. But then I can say that one chauvinism cannot

[Sh. Narayan Choubey]

fight another chaunism. Chaunism of all sorts should be shun, particularly chauvinism of the bigger section should be shun immediately. This is the major responsibility of the Government of Assam to try to solve this problem. If they need help, they can take the help of the Government of India.

It should be remembered that Assam is a border State, a sensitive State and for that matter if any problem continues there, it will harm the country. There are enough problems in this country like the Punjab problem, Babri Masjid problem, Hindus-Muslim problem. Another problem i.e. this Bodo problem should be settled immediately here and now. We must tell the Bodo brothers also, for God's sake, forsake violence. This bombing, looting, breaking of railway tracks, disrupting communication, does not solve the problem. This has been tried again and again. This should be shun. They must come and talk with the Government of Assam. Now an invitation on behalf of the Government of Assam is there. they should try to take advantage of that. If there is any movement, that movement should be democratic and peaceful. But this type of violent movement must be shun. Any Government or any force, be it Government of India or any other force, should not give them the impression that they should continue their violent agitation to get their demands fulfilled. They should not be give the enthusiasm to continue the violence. They should not be given the impression that Assam is coming to a halt and if they continue this thing for months together, they will get their demands fulfilled. But remember, Government of India is committed not to break Assam. If they are given support and they are asked to go that way, then the division of Assam is bound to be there, which you do not want. Nobody wants that Assam should be divided. At the same time, their justified demands must be met. Parliament must ask them to come to the round table so that the matter can be settled peacefully.

SHRI VJAY N. PATIL (Erandol): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Bodo tribals agitation is not a new one. We have seen this in the form of Plains Tribal council right from 1967 onwards. But it remained dormant because the then State Government in Assam and

the Central Government took care from time to time to look after their problems, their demands and solve them. Then why this spurt in the agitation is there now? It is because of some developments in the State itself. Mr. Dinesh Goswami was yesterday alleging that the Central Government is encouraging the extremists. Of course, in every allegation, they have got political vendetta in mind. Although they have come in power in Assam, it is a very novice government, I should say, not much experienced. As they are not able to run the administration properly, they want to blame others, and this blame is not tenable. Why did the Chief Minister issue the statement? It is reported in the Press that the reservation or the tribals will be withdrawn. This will definitely agitate the tribals, wherever they are. When they start agitation and resort to violence, again the allegation comes that some forces from the Central Government, from Delhi are encouraging them. Was it a fact that somebody was encouraging the AASU movement also from the Centre? No. We condemned it at that time, we are condemning this Bodo agitation also.

Kumari Mamata Banerjee has said that we feel sad over the lives that have been lost. Innocent people, including Central Government employees, fell victims to this agitation. So, all are concerned and feel that this agitation should stop. There should be some solution found out. But why should there be an adamant attitude of the Government saying that it is for the State Government to solve this problem, the Central Government need not intervene. If the Bodo tribals feel; if the students feel that they will not get justice at the hands of the State Government alone and if they want somebody else as arbitrator, it is proper on the part of the Central Government to go and act as an arbitrator. There is no harm in it.

We see some or the other agitation—may not be in such violent form—in many parts of the country. When the State Government take up some development plans, over the years, some regions within the State feel that they are neglected. I would like to give the example of my State. In Maharashtra, people from Vidarbha many times speak out that they are not getting sufficient funds for the development of Vidarbha. There is a lot of backlog. So, there is a regional imbalance.

Community-wise also some people feel that they are being ignored. So, if these Bodos feel that their interests are not being properly looked after by the AGP Government and if they have resorted to agitation, one should not blame the Central Government for that. Mr. Goswami was, of course, giving us credit for maintaining the supplies through railways to the Assam State and to other North-Eastern States. That itself shows that the Government of India has got honest intentions to help the State Governments, whether it is an Opposition-ruled State or a Congress-ruled State. We condemn violence anywhere in India and in whatever form it is, we again feel that the Central Government should be the arbitrator and the Bodos should be made to sit across the table along with the State Government leadership and immediate solution should be found out so that the agitation does not take a violent turn or a serious turn, as it is contemplated, as it is feared. With these words, I once again appeal to the Central Government and the State Government also not to look from the political angle but to look from the angle of solving the problems of tribals, genuine problems which are there over the years and come to a concrete solution. Thank you.

SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY (Alipurduars): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Bodo Movement cannot be considered in isolation, but it is a national movement. All over India, the tribal community has risen and they are asking for their rights. They are not asking for any mercy from anybody but they are asking for their rights. If there is a tribal movement anywhere in the country, the Government says that it is a secessionist movement; foreign hands are there, sometimes missionaries are there, etc. These kinds of blames are put on them and I want to tell this hon. House that patriotism of the tribal community is very great and they have never become communal, they have never thought of secessionist idea and they have never been influenced by any other community. They have accommodated all the communities within their areas. But things have happened that their lands had been annihilated by the contractors, business community and other communities also. The same

thing has happened in Tripura also in Bodoland. Bodos were in majority and they have now become a minority. All their lands have been taken away by the other communities. The tribals attach so much importance to the forests and their lands. Their rights on their land and the forest have been satched away by the Government either by the State Government or the Central Government. So, the Government should think over the problem of the tribals in general. I am not blaming the A.G.P. Government alone, right from the beginning, about 50 lakhs of tribals have been working in the tea gardens and they are ex-tea garden tribes.

14.02 hrs.

[SHRI ZAINUL BASHER *in the Chair*]

Today they are not recognised as tribals. So, what is the use of giving these facilities to the tribals if they are not recognised as tribals.

Sir, we do not know the total number of tribals living in India. So, a legislation should be brought forward before this House and the recognition of the tribals should be given on an all-India basis. At all cost, the recognition should be given to these tribals. If a 'Brahmin' lives in a tribal area, he cannot become a tribal. He will be a 'Brahmin'. Like that one tribal may be living in Assam, but he will have his own identify, his own language, his own dialect. Sir, in the beginning a Province was made according to the language spoken in the area. On the basis of language spoken in a particular area, all the Provinces had been created in India. And what happened? What happened during the reorganisation of the States according to the languages spoken in different regions? A lot of agitations and so much of blood-sheds had taken place. But when the tribals want that their identity should be maintained they are blamed by saying that they are creating secessionist movement, terrorist movement, anti-Indian movement, foreign hands are there, missionaries are there, etc. These kinds of blames are there to suppress the

[Sh. Piyus Tiraky]

movement. Tribals all over the country are not asking for mercy, but I want that they should come forward by demanding their rights. They should have equal rights and equal treatment all over the country and no other people or the Government should try to overpower them or rule them. There are tribals in every nook and corner of the country. Some reservation in the Government services should be made. There is some small reservation for them at present but still the quota is not fulfilled. In trade and commerce also, there should be some reservation for them. They should be given some preference in trade and commerce. The Government should come forward to help in getting remunerative prices for their goods. Otherwise they will be exploited very much and this exploitation should be removed.

Now, I am coming to the Bodo problem. Bodos are the aboriginals of Assam. As far as I know, they have their own identity all along and they have their own way of life and common laws. They have their own way of justice. They do not believe in the justice that is prevalent today, they have no faith in the police administration, they have their panchayat system and they have their own way of justice through the panchayats. Even in Chotanagpur, in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, the tribals have their own laws and customs and they should be respected. If any Government fails to respect, then there will be a move for separation. The Government is thinking that they are second-class citizens of India and they are asked to go where hard work is needed, for instance, to build a big road, to go to the Himalayas where others are unwilling to go, such jobs are reserved for the tribals and the Scheduled Castes and other minorities who have no say in the Government. That is the thing going on after 40 years of Independence. So, it is my demand that not only the Bodos but all over India wherever the tribals are, they must come forward now and assert their rights. The tribals have the right to rule India and their culture, language and identity must be respected by all and specially I want

the Union Government to come forward with a legislation that all the tribals should have their culture and identity. If any State Government fails to protect them, it must face the consequences. If they do not promise to protect the identity, their language and culture, then that State Government has no right to rule the tribals in the State. and if any State is willing to give them equal status in all respects, in trade and commerce, in Services and other ways, then it is Okay. The tribals are no secessionists and they are not communal also. They can accommodate any community. They can live peacefully as others. So, it is time that the Union Government come forward and think over the tribals' problems. There is lot of unrest among them now.

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS (Bhilwara): Several hon. Members have expressed their point of view on the Bodo problem. Those who have affiliations with the A.G.P. Government have supported the stand by AGP and have opposed the Central Government. In view of the fact that the Government of India had agreed to make arrangements as per the demands of the AASU and provide a solution to the Assam problem accordingly, such allegations should not have been made against it. After Assam was divided, the Central Government took keen interest in the creation of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram etc. and it took commendable steps for the protection and development of the tribal areas. No other party other than the Congress has made so much of efforts to protect the tribals and ensure their progress. The other parties are only interested in gaining political mileage, whether it is the CPI, the CPI(M), the Forward Block or any other party and no one is genuinely sympathetic to them or interested in their betterment. Therefore, I would like to submit that they are only shedding crocodile tears which they have shed earlier and will continue to shed in future as well. The Congress Government is committed to the development of the country and it is discharging its responsibility in the

best possible manner. The Congress has never been in favour of bifurcation of States or breaking them into parts and thereby weaken them. Its policy has rather been to ensure that the tribals who have never been able to get proper justice and legitimate powers should get them. It is the duty of the Government to grant them their due and necessary action is being taken in this direction. It is the wrong policy of AASU which have given rise to the Bodo agitation. ABSU is its integral part and has flourished under its guidance. When the Assam Government has reaped all the benefits, it should also pay attention to their problems as well. The Bodos are complaining that their land is being confiscated, development work is not being undertaken and they are being exploited in every way. Educational facilities are not being provided to them and similarly, they are not getting necessary facilities in the field of agriculture, food and supplies, sports, culture, fisheries, water supply, health, irrigation, rural development, roads, Panchayat system, land revenue, land reforms, etc. and consequently they are lagging behind in all these aspects. They have been constantly drawing the attention of the Assam Government to their problem but the State Government has not made any efforts or taken any steps in this regard. When the Bodos observed that the AGP Government is not able to solve their problems, they approached the Central Government and their problem was brought before the hon. Minister of Home Affairs. The hon. Minister entrusted the matter to the State Government without a second thought, so that it may solve their problems properly. A separate Development Authority may be created for the purpose of the development of the tribals and provisions have been made in the Sixth Schedule to provide all kinds of facilities whether of language or some other kind of facilities to the tribals. The State Government was instructed to solve the problem by negotiating with the ABSU leaders and subsequently, the Chief Minister was also directed to take personal interest in finding a solution too. When in spite of all such initiatives, no solution to their problem was being found, the Bodos resorted to the method of

agitation. Thereafter, the sort of agitation which took place resulting in bandhs, killings etc., it can be said that the AGP Government is responsible for such state of affairs because it did not pay attention to the demands of the Bodos and to their problems in time. As a result, unrest is prevailing there today. The Central Government and the hon. Home Minister have categorically stated that they are not in favour of the division of Assam. The State Government should appreciate the clear policy of the Central Government and should make efforts to find a solution to the Bodo problem. Their exploitation should stop and action should be taken for their development. More educational facilities should be provided for them and at the same time reservation facilities and other essential facilities should be made available to them. Due emphasis should be given for their economic development. In brief efforts should be made to satisfy these people which the AGP Government has not done so far. It is an account of this thing that the Bodos have launched their agitation. The wrong policies of the AGP is responsible for whatever is happening there today. The State Government has never paid any attention towards the problems of these people. As a result, they are frustrated and are carrying out their agitation. Some hon. Members have rightly pointed out that states are exerting pressure on the Central Government because the essential commodities to their states are supplied via Assam. Therefore, if there is an agitation going on in Assam, other states have to also suffer the consequences. The adjoining states of Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur and Tripura are affected. Therefore as the Hon. Prime Minister has stated that if the Assam Government is not able to control the Bodo agitation, Central Government will be forced to intervene and take certain steps which will not be good for the State Government. This does not imply that the Central Government wants to put some kind of pressure on the State Government but just this much that the Assam Government should try its level best to control the Bodo agitation.

While pleading for the Bodo agitation in

[Sh. Girdhari Lal Vyas]

Assam, several hon. Members have submitted here that there has been no disruption in the supply of essential commodities and that has reached everywhere properly. It is evident from the violent nature of this agitation as to how much peaceful this agitation has been and whether the essential commodities have reached safely in the North-East. One hon. Member has submitted that the Central Government has constantly paid attention to the requests of the Assam Government and has provided necessary assistance and had also deployed its defence forces there. If it had not done so, it would have been alleged that this agitation has turned violent on account of the Central Government and that it has a hand in it. The Central Government would have been pressurised in this way.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Vyas, you may now conclude. You have taken a lot of time.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL VYAS: As the Assam Government wants to protect its own state because it considers it to be its own region, it should consider the country as its own and extend necessary cooperation accordingly which will ensure an relationship on equal basis and ensure continuous progress of the country. The requirements of these tribals should be fulfilled. It is not necessary to create a separate state for them but their reasonable demands should be accepted. If such measures are taken, the Assam Government will be in a position to solve this problem and the Bodos will also not demand for a separate state. Thank you.

[English]

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN (Cooch Behar): Mr. Chairman, the Bodo agitation and the problems created by it should not be discussed in an isolated manner. It is not only a State problem but national problem, tribal problem. We cannot deny it. The tribal people who are neglected for hundreds of years, even after independence are still being neglected. But, I am sorry to say that

the Central Government in order to gain some political mileage are exploiting this Bodo agitation. I have differences with the AGP members on ideological point of view, on economic point of view. Even then, I cannot say just like like as just now some Members have said that Bodo movement is the outcome of the AGP administration. I cannot say so. Some Members have even said that Bodo movement is the brain-child of the AGP. It is not so. Of course, Bodos are part of the Mongolian origin. They are demanding particularly separate State because they think, they are the original people of Assam and so they should have a separate State. Mr. Sontosh Mohan Dev, the hon. Minister, is here.

The hon. Minister knows very well that I am just on the border of that particular area of the proposed Bodo State which is demanding by Bodo agitators.

If you go through history, you will find that it is the Kamatapur kingdom which was so powerful that it stretched totally from the right side of the Brahmaputra up to the Ganges. Originally, the rules and the people of that area were from the Rajvanshi community to which I also belong. It was ruled by the Rajvanshis in the past that it cannot be the deciding factor to demand Rajvanshi State at present for the purpose of solving problems of the community. But, of course, we cannot deny that these Bodo people are the most neglected. They have got their own culture, language and tradition. But everything has been neglected. It is not only in the regime of AGP Government there. Even in the Congress regime, they were neglected. The tribal people the Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribe people are very much neglected in this country. Yesterday there was a question. I am coming to that. 'How are you treating the tribal people'. It was question No. 468 of the Textile Department and, in answer, the hon. Minister admitted that my Congress friends are there and they should also know this that—in 1987, in Category B, out of 31, none of the Scheduled Tribes were recruited. In C Category, out of 48, only one person was recruited (2.1%). In

D, out of 22, 3 ST were recruited (13.6%).

In 1988, in category B, out of 32, not a single ST was recruited. In C category, out of 42, only one ST was recruited (2.4%).

With all this, do you like to say that you are doing much for the tribals? No. You are not doing justice to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes of the country. Even then I cannot support their demand for Statehood separate Bodo State by dividing Assam let us come to the population of that area.

In 1981, there was no census, But, according to 1971 census, the area which they would like to be put in the proposed Bodo land is about 15,220 Sq. KM for an autonomous State and in that Statehood, if you take the figures of 1971, the percentage of the Bodo speaking people in the Kokrajhar district, the heartland of the tribal-inhabited area, was just 26.87%. The population percentage was 10.87 in the Nalbari district, 4.72 in Barpeta district, 9.55 in Darang district, 2.55 in Lakhimpur district and two in Sonitpur district. The ABSU charges that the figures were "manipulated by a Chauvinist government", and added that a large number of Bodos were excluded from the 1971 census.

I ask the hon. Minister whether this census is wrong or whether it has been manipulated. If that is so, then they are in the wrong because they were in the Government at that time. It is the Congress people who have neglected the Bodo people first.

Through you I ask another question. The Bodo agitation was started in 1950's. At that time, they demanded that they would like to have Bodo as the State language. The Bodo agitators demanded at that time that Bodo language should be the State language with Roman script. But, you said, no it cannot be. The Congress Government at that time said that if they agree to Bodo language with Devanagari script, then only the Government could consider it.

In this context, I do not find if justifiable to have a separate State of Bodoland.

In Udalgiri and Kokrajhar sub-divisions, the Bodo population is about 50% and in other areas their population is only 2%. It is only 50 per cent people live in those sub-divisions only and not in the entire district. So, I cannot support the demand of the Bodo people for a separate Statehood. In this connection, I would like to say that the division or the demand for a separate State cannot solve the problem. Sir, you know that Assam has already been divided. There are seven sister states carved out of the State of Assam. If we again try to divide it, what will be the position of that State? There are so many languages. Even among the Bodos, there will be so many languages. So, if the Government would like to divide the State of Assam on language issue, then India will be having hundreds of States. Just to protect the rights of the Bodo people, to protect the language and culture of the Bodo people, let there be an Autonomous Council under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution just like that of Tripura or the Darjeeling Hill Council.

SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY (Alipurduars): That Hill Council is not a tribal State. You have committed a mistake.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: Let the Bodo language be taken up as the second language or the third language in the State of Assam. Even Bengali language may also be taken up. In West Bengal, Bengali is the first language and the second language is the Nepali language.

SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY: It is because they fought for it.

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: Sir, the Bodo people demand that a Central Government representative should be there. They insist on this. If they have to solve this problem, let them sit together across the conference table. This is my request to the ABSU also. Let them sit across the negotiating table with the Government and sort out this problem. In this connection, I would like

[Sh. Amar Roypradhan]

to emphasize that violence should be condemned by all the people.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN (Kishanganj): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I shall not dilate on the history of the Bodo agitation. But I have had some personal contact with the Bodo people. My brief contact convinced me that they are a civilized people, a cultured people, a disciplined people, a people with a deep sense of identity and a deep sense of honour and dignity. So, their longstanding aspirations simply cannot be brushed aside. I must say that the present agitation is a natural consequence of the Assam agitation. The logic of an ethnic homeland was implicit in the logic of the Assam agitation. That aroused many aspirations and many dreams among ethnic groups. I must say that there are sections of the people of Assam who feel that the AGP Government has done precious little to command the loyalty, the faith, the confidence of many linguistic, religious and ethnic minorities that live in Assam and that have got equal rights over the land of Assam. The result is that the minorities today in Assam are alienated. Not only the Bodo but all of them feel they are being treated as step-children, that they are being subjected to injustice, unfairness, discrimination and sometimes even oppression. There are cases of police atrocities and there are cases of economic discrimination. There are attempts at cultural assimilation and all these together form the environment in which an agitation like that of Bodoland must prosper.

Nobody today in the world accepts ethnic monopoly. In any part of the world, whether it is the USSR or Yugoslavia or whether it is China or France or Canada or whether it is any part of our country, no people who are conscious of their identity can accept the monopoly of power to be exercised by another ethnic group. Therefore, there has to be a *modus vivendi*, a civilised code of existence, a form of Government in which there is sharing of power, sharing of authority, sharing of rights and

responsibilities. therefore, sir, we must look at this problem in a wider perspective. Even in our own country, there is tribal upsurge all over the country. And I would like the hon. Home Minister to deal with the Bodo land problem not as a Assam question, but as a national question because we must deal with tribal upsurge in the whole country. There is a demand for preservation of identity. There is a demand for economic participation. There is a demand for political participation. There is a demand for sharing public employment. This demand is shared by people who form minorities at various levels throughout the country particularly in the tribal areas. And these demands must be satisfied through the evolution of some reasonable nationally acceptable norms.

In the case of tribals, in Assam, over the years, they have been cheated of their land. Forest reserves have been denuded and they have been pauperised. The tribal languages have been treated as undeveloped dialects and not given their due status. In fact, I must say that every child in India has a right to learn his mother-tongue as first language as everyone is equally proud of his mother-tongue. And you cannot simply take away the rights of any tribal child to learn his mother-tongue as the first language and to have his mother-tongue as the medium of instruction at the primary level. And this, in my submission, cannot be limited or should not be limited merely to the tribals or seen in the context of Bodo agitation. This is a national problem and this applies to all our linguistic minorities everywhere.

Similarly, the tribal areas have shown a much slower pace of development. They have been neglected. many cases of discrimination against them even in public employment have been cited on the Floor of the house. Therefore, the agitation has a logic. The agitation has some justification. But one does not condone violence. There is universal condemnation of violence as violence has no place in a democratic polity. I join in this condemnation. But I must say that at the same time, a State violence is no answer to violence by any section of the

people. A State wields much bigger *danda*. A State can cause much higher level of casuality. Therefore, a State, if it is a democratic State, must be very conscious of its responsibility, must be extremely cautious in the use of force against its own people.

Sir, I would like that this agitation should have a peaceful and democratic form and that the problem must be solved through negotiation. And I appeal to both sides to show the highest form of statesmanship. And I would like to make a suggestion here. If the stumbling block in resuming negotiation is just this point, whether at the initial stage the Central Government shall take part or not, may I suggest, in my humble capacity, with my diplomatic experience, a simple formula? Let the Assam Government invite the Central Government and let the Central Government refuse the invitation and say; we shall join you at a suitable stage of negotiation. It can be done. A beautiful solution can be found. There has to be negotiation without any pre-condition and the negotiation must deal with the entire gamut of grievances of Bodo people. I do not accept this idea that all the grievances that were put into their Charter of Demands should be set aside and only the question of formation of a State must be taken up first. I think, that is putting the cart before the horse. That is like giving somebody a high dose of anti-biotic without treating him through the normal medication. I must, however, make it clear that I do not see anything anti-national in the demand for the creation of a new State in our country. It is not. It should not be seen as secession. It should not be seen as separatism. The boundary lines of a State are not dictators of heaven. They are there for consideration of administrative viability. therefore we must not simply push aside his question of a Statehood or the demand for a Statehood as a question of treason which cannot be negotiated. No. We have still to evolve certain norms for a Statehood.

I would like to point out to you that if you take the ratio of population and the ratio of areas between the biggest and the smallest States, you would be amused to know that

the ratio is something of the order of 1:500. It is an absurd proposition. Why cannot we have proper norms which should make every State manageable and every State viable at the same time? Therefore, we should not rule out a question of redefinition or redemarcation of State boundary within the larger framework of India which remains inviolable. Therefore, the demand of a Statehood, I must make it clear, is not per-se anti National because it does not question the sovereignty and independence of India, it does not question the territorial integrity of India and therefore we must look at it as a normal administrative exercise.

The solution lies today in trying to work out not only in the case of Bodo land, but applicable everywhere a certain norm within the essential framework of the Constitution. Cannot we have smaller districts which will give tribal concentration areas a life of their own? Those smaller districts which have a tribal majority can be given the status of a tribal district. Cannot you have within non-tribal districts, tribal concentration areas as tribal blocks, many more of them? And give those tribal blocks an essential personality and an administrative authority of their own. Even within those non-tribal blocks if you find that there are tribal pockets and tribal villages, why cannot you have—you are speaking so much of Panchayati Raj and devolution of powers and Gram Raj and Gram Sarkar and Gandhiji ideals—autonomous tribal villages within the non-tribal blocks and non-tribal districts? Give them a whole pattern of autonomy right from the State to the district, from district to the block and from block to the village level.

Every ethnic group, however small it may be, wherever it may be in an area of concentration, shall feel that it is managing its own affairs. Today even in the tribal areas most of the Government officials sent down—whether from Delhi or Guwahati or Patna—are non-tribals. They don't have any sympathy with the people, they do not have any sense of involvement, they do not have any emotional attachment, they do not see the problems from the locals' point of view.

[Sh. Syed Shahabuddin]

They air conflicts, they create problems. Unless you associate the local people with the administration, unless you give them true authority, unless you give them real power, you cannot avoid this conflict. Therefore, I plead that let us look at the Bodo problem in a larger national perspective and try to evolve certain norms, certain constitutional ideas which shall apply not only to Assam—because if it applies only to Assam, I am sure our friends from Assam will feel unhappy—but throughout the country. Once you have decided to have smaller districts and tribal districts and tribal blocks and tribal villages, then there should be considerable devolution of administrative and financial power and there should be special allocations for development in all these areas at all these levels.

Of course, for coordination purposes in every State why cannot we conceive of a constitutional machinery like an inter-district council within the State which will have statutory authority, which will see to it that the State Government does allocate adequate resources for the development of the tribal districts and the tribal blocks and the tribal villages? That should have all the elected representatives of the people right from MPs, MLAs, down to the village Pradhans. There should be in every State Government, a Special Development Commissioner for these tribal areas.

Finally, once you have got this nationally accepted, I am sure the conflagration, the fire of agitation that is sweeping across the land, that is going to turn into ashes many of our dreams and aspirations shall die away.

That is the solution I would like to submit through you Mr. Chairman to the Central Government as well as to the State Government. Look at it in a larger perspective, as a human problem, as a national problem and try to work out a solution which will safeguard the essential national interests as well as the

dignity, the rights of every ethnic group in our country; not only in Assam.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): Sir, I have heard with rapt attention the deliberation on this subject matter under Rule 193. I am grateful to the hon. Speaker. Originally it came as a Calling Attention motion and then on the demand of some of the Members of this House, this was converted into a discussion under Rule 193. That gave an opportunity to all the political parties to participate and give their views about this burning problem of today not of Assam but also of the whole country.

Sir, during the deliberations I think, the trend of discussion, though it was divested with allegations against Central Ministers, State Ministers and personalities, in respect of solution, yet more or less the House was one, that there should not be further division of Assam. That is number one. Number two is that there must be negotiation; and number three is that within the framework of the present geographical State of Assam, the solution should be reached.

Sir, during the course of the discussion, my good friends, because fortunately or unfortunately we are from the same State—have brought in many allegations. While replying to their allegations with all humbleness at my command, I say that it is my duty to reply. That does not reflect my personal relation and social relation.

One of the complaints put forward by Shri Dinesh Goswami, the respected Parag Chaliha and some of the opposition Members was that Congress as a party, Congress as a Government has never condemned the violence; rather, by their action they have encouraged the Bodo movement.

Sir, first from the party point of view, would like to draw their attention to a Press release which was given in Assam and published in the *Assam Tribune*. The *Sentinel* Paper which is very popular with all of us

in Assam. It says, "Gogoi refutes CM's charges". I do not want to go into all the replies that he has given. That is on 18th February 1989. The PCC (I) Chief admitted that the tribal problem had started during the Congress days, but they were able to contain the situation. Then he said that AGP's charges against the Congress (I) are politically motivated to hide their failure in tackling the problem. He alleged that the AGP is trying to hoodwink the people by making false and baseless charges against the Congress (I). He has also said that we condemn all sorts of violence that is taking place in the regions of Assam. This is the statement of the Congress Chief, the Assam Pradesh Congress (I) Committee Chief. In the Consultative Committee Meeting which was held on February 13, 1989, I myself—where the hon. Members were present—not only condemned the violence but also refuted the charge which has been brought again in this House by the hon. Members against me and my senior colleague, the Home Minister of the country.

Sir, the Prime Minister himself, in his statement in Calcutta during a Press interview has said, "We condemn the violence. We want that the solution should be within the framework of the State Government". Not only that, but he has also said that the Centre is not going to intervene because it is absolutely a matter of the State Government. Sir, these are borne out by facts and these are borne out by records. So the allegation brought forward by Mr. Chaliha and Mr. Dinesh Goswami only shows their inaction of reading the papers or their incapability to understand it or it is being done to politically malign us. But I sincerely believe and take it for granted that Congress as a party, and the Central Government will never encourage violence, be it from any section of people, whatever may be their political background. Secondly, an allegation has been brought that Congress is behind it; the Congress Ministers are behind it. Sir, you have to judge a party by its past activities. May I pose a question to Mr. Goswami, Mr. Parag Chaliha, Mr. Amar Roy Pradhan, Mr. Choubey and others? Is it not

a fact that there was an elected Government in Assam whose tenure was up till 1989 but an accord was signed; the Government was asked to resign and seek the public mandate and Congress Party has suffered. We have lost the State but our Prime Minister, our leader never felt shy of it but he said that we want peace; for that peace party interest is not an important thing but national interest is the important thing. Not only this, we have proved this is Mizoram. We had an elected Government in Mizoram under Mr. Lalthanwala. He resigned and became a Deputy Chief Minister under Mr. Laldenga. Why? It is because 20 years of insurgency had to be brought into a peaceful situation by an Accord. Mr. Kishore Chandra Deo has complained that the Prime Minister is a person of accords. A person who lost his mother in his own house did not hesitate to extend his helping hands when he signed the Longowal Accord. He could have said that he could not do it. Congress is a party which is above petty politics. But while allegations are being made against the Congress Ministers and the Congress Party, there may be a communication gap. I want to make it abundantly clear. To my friends from AGP that we have no axe to grind to gain any political advantage from this Bodo Movement. You can ask your Chief Minister. We made our position clear in our letter dated 26th February, 1987, 6th July, 1988, in our discussion with your Chief Minister by our Home Minister on 15th February, 1989, in my discussion with your Chief Minister in the presence of the Prime Minister at Jorhat Circuit House. Many of the suggestions which came today from many of the Opposition Members, all these alternatives were told to the Chief Minister and also that a solution can be reached in this problem. Fortunately, I was present. The Prime Minister asked me to explain to him. For one hour, I spoke to the Chief Minister and I explained as to what we want and how we want. But we made it abundantly clear that we do not want to intervene and it is up to the State Government to decide. To the credit of the Chief Minister, I will be doing justice to say that there was an address by the Chief Minister and there was a discussion with the Bodo

[Sh. Sontosh Mohan Dev]

People. It is not that there was no discussion. On 17th May, 1988 the then Minister of State, Mr. Chintamani Panigrahi did participate in the discussion at Dispur where the Ministers of the State Government were also present. There was some decision. It was decided to have follow-up action but I do not know why this follow-up action was not being taken. If it is for the reason that the charge of the Minister of Home is the cause of worry for AGP, I vouch to say that if you do not feel happy with Sontosh Mohan Dev or any other Minister and there are many Ministers with whom you feel happy and at home, then we will definitely see that like-minded Ministers will go. But we are not interested to interfere as the Prime Minister has said that it is basically the problem of the State.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: There is nothing personal in our deliberations here.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Unfortunately, I have got two editorials here which have been written in that light. My point is that we are for a lasting peace in Assam.

Peace is very badly needed, as many hon. Members have said, in the North-Eastern State, that being a strategic area. The present situation in Assam is not desirable. Shri Dinesh Goswami has given the correct figures of deaths and murders. No one wants it.

An allegation has been made that we are not giving para-military forces. In this context, I wish to state that on 7.2.1989, ten companies were asked; we gave five and three companies on 9.2.1989 and 11.2.1989. On 22.2.1989 they wanted 20 plus 23 companies, we gave them 18 plus 10 companies. They are all in position.

One pertinent question has been raised by Shri Parag Chaliha and he has quoted dates and he is very much right. On those dates, we could not give because of elections in Nagaland and Mizoram and also we had commitments in Punjab because of

Black Thunder and other things. But it is not that they had no para-military forces with them. In totality, in Assam, today we have 49 para-military forces companies. In your political party, you have got one retired Director General of Police. Let him say what he feels. I have checked up and found that other than Punjab, nowhere in the country, there is not a single State where there are forty-nine companies.

I instructed Secretary, Home and others to have a dialogue with the Assam Government and request them that Para-military forces should not be deployed in Bodo areas in large number. I wanted and it was my personal feeling as a man from Assam that local police should have been deployed there, those who know the local areas, local sentiments, and the para-military forces should be deployed at other strategic places like treasury etc. That was my personal idea as Home Minister of State. It was not acceded. Now, again a question was raised by Shri Kishore Chandra Deo about intervention by military. One nice morning, a signal came that they wanted army. There was total opposition from the Department. But we said that if army help was needed for a standby arrangement, not for deployment, and since we were not able to give the required number of paramilitary forces, we admitted and we agreed. Army was deployed there not for duty but as a standby arrangement. I do not want to give out the number of army companies there for various reasons.

SHRI ATATUR RAHMAN: The Home Minister is pointing out that the situation can be met by unarmed police; he is absolutely wrong. The tribals have been worked up in such a way that if anybody is sent unarmed, he would be finished. That was not, therefore, the proper advice given to the Assam Government.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: I am not Director General, Police, but with my little knowledge of going around the country, I know that the State police are not unarmed, they are armed. And for the information of the hon. Member belonging to AGP, I myself

saw the arms which have been captured from the Bodos; it is not a secret, these were displayed in the Vidya Bhawan during the last CRP day. 12-bore guns had been made by cutting the pipes to size. Let us not go into this because we are not in politics, you must see the reality, not remember your police days.

As many hon. Members have said, it is not a law and order issue that by only paramilitary forces, you cannot solve this problem. It needs a political solution and negotiated settlement. I must make it clear that we are not at all interested to go and make our presence felt there. We have said that this is the State Government problem and the State Government must be helped in this regard. If they want, through this House, we can send a message through the National Press that the ABSU and the Government should enter into a dialogue with the Assam Government. If we are asked to do it, we shall definitely not shy away from our responsibility and our services will always be available to them.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: If you want, I would like this message to go that the preliminary round between the Assam Government and ABSU be.....

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: In any round we do not want.....

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: I must make it clear that we don't stand on prestige that the Central Government should not be involved.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: I fully appreciate his stand, Sir.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Therefore, let the preliminary round of talks between the Government of Assam and ABSU take place and after that the Central Government.....

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Sir, I fully appreciate his stand but I know in the Assam matter his is not the last word. I am from Assam and I know what is happening

there. I know what is the political and economic situation there. But I am one with him and I would say that it is not we who are asking for our presence there; it is somebody also who is asking our presence. Some Opposition Members asked as to why ABSU is asking for the presence of a Central representative. Now, is it not a fact that for 6 years of the Assam agitation, except with Golap Barbra, AASU never bothered to sit with the State Government whether it was Smt. Syeda Anwara Taimur, Shri Keshab Chandra Gogfi, Shri Hiteshwar Saikia or anybody else? Is it not a fact that the ABSU said that all national parties were irrelevant in Assam? Is it not a fact that Shri Morarji Desai as the head of the Janta Government called AASU for a meeting? Is it not a fact that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sent Sh. Shankar Dayal Sharma, Sh. Yashpal Kapoor and others over the head of the State Government? Is it you who taught this lesson not only to Bodos but all over the country. Sir, it is the precedent which they have created. Some Members from the Opposition like Mr. V. Kishore Chandra S. Deo and others said that just because we are insisting for a Central representative, there might be some nexus between the Central Government and ABSU. I am the Minister of State and it is my duty to defuse any difficult situation that arise in our country. What crime have I committed in doing this? Is it not a fact that during the Assam movement many Assam representatives came and met the Central ministers? Did we say that the Central Ministers were instigating? We never said this. In a democratic country we should have different forums for discussing different issues. Their problem is that they are doubting us and our problem is that we are doubting them. There should not be any doubt. As many Members have said, this is a national issue and we must solve it by helping each other.

But what is happening in Assam? In the Assam assembly the demand is to arrest Sontosh Mohan Dev. I have received a letter making allegations against the Minister of Home Affairs I have got the letter with me. If somebody challenges, I can show it. Sir, we are a national party and we have the experi-

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ence of about 100 years. We did not react to the letter and we did not publish it. We do not even want to lay it on the Table of the House. But we want to send a message to the Assam Government not to make it a prestige issue. Take lesson from the GNLFF and West Bengal Government. Here in this House the CPM has made allegations against the Congress (I) Government. Sh. Jyoti Basu used to ring three or four times to S. Buta Singh to solve the problem. As the Prime Minister said in this House, we could have encashed it as an issue in the election by not solving it. But we did not do it and through our good offices, this problem was settled.

Sir, an allegation has been made that the Chief Minister of the North-eastern States are interfering in the internal affairs of the State Governments. An allegation has been made by Sh. Dinesh Goswami that the Prime Minister in N.S.U.I. meeting had threatened the State Government with an intervention. Let it be made clear in this House and let it go on record that the Prime Minister has made it clear that we have no intention to intervene in the affairs of the State Government. Assam is the gateway for all the North-eastern States as all the essential commodities like rice, wheat, mustard oil, onions, potatoes and for that matter everything comes from outside the State.

15.00 hrs.

[SHRI SHARAD DIGHE *in the Chair*]

Shri Dinesh Goswami has given some figures. When he has given some figures, I do not want to dispute his statement but I would like to draw his attention to certain facts which are not known to him. He is taking the situation in Assam into account. What about the total requirements of the North Eastern Region? The stock position from December to April must go on record. On 31.12.1988 the stock position was 1.54 lakh tonnes. On 31.1.89, it was 1.64 lakh tonnes, on 28.2.89 it was 1.58 lakh

tonnes, on 15.3.89 1.34 lakh tonnes and on 8.4.89 the stock position was 1.19 lakh tonnes. But the target for any given months was 2.40 lakh tonnes. As could be seen we could not meet the target. I may also mention here that these figures are for the whole of the North Eastern States and not for Assam alone. These relate to both wheat and rice. When the target could not be fulfilled, question may be asked as to what the Central Government is doing. Well, at the instance of the Prime Minister, there was a meeting at Shillong. Shri Sukh Ram went there. Due to terrific and devastating floods in the North Eastern States and in Assam in particular, people suffer a lot. So, it was decided that a buffer stock of two months must be kept at Gauhati so that people would not suffer if movement of essential commodities was disrupted. Taking these factors into consideration, we arrived at this target. Now unfortunately, the movement of trains has been affected. I have got the details with me about the number of trains that could not go and the requirement that has not been fulfilled. The requirement that could be met was less than 50 per cent. Of course, I do not blame the Government of Assam. Rail service has been affected because of the Bodo movement. Again a question may be asked as to what the Central Government is doing. Well, at my instance, the officials of the State Government have been called. We have suggested in the meeting to declare curfew along the railway line. We have also given 28 companies for protection and we have suggested that while movement of goods trains may be allowed, it is up to the State Government to decide about the movement of the passenger trains. The State Government felt that the passenger trains may be run only at day time. The Railway Ministry, the Central Government and the State Government agreed to it. Now, the fact remains that the people in all the North Eastern States are suffering due to shortage of foodgrains. But Mr. Goswami says that in Assam there is no shortage. I beg to differ with him. I know the situation in my own constituency. I have been there. I have asked the Deputy Commissioner for details and he has told that while there was some rice there was no

wheat. The transportation costs have gone up so high and it has become very difficult for the people to buy things. In this background, the Chief Ministers of the North Eastern States met the Prime Minister in Calcutta and gave him a memorandum requesting the movement of essential commodities. He has given a speech in the NSUI meeting. I have got a copy here. He has never mentioned that we are going to impose President's rule. Nor has he said that we are going to interfere in the State's problems. He has only said that it is our duty to see that the movement of essential commodities is ensured and it is also our duty to see that the State Government of Assam organises the movement. If they fail to organise, we have to see that some arrangement is made. Now, what is wrong with this statement? At times of flood, when you fail in your efforts, you ask us to send the supplies by air. What is 'politics' in it? But the whole opposition blames the Prime Minister and states that he must be careful about his actions. The opposition accuses that he is trying to impose President's Rule in Assam. Shri Dinesh Goswami has mentioned in his speech that Mr. Sontosh Mohan Dev has brought the Government of Tripura into existence by some hotch-potch arrangement and he is trying to do the same in Assam too. In a way he is accepting his defeat. I must say here that if we ever come to Assam, we will come only through the front door and never from the back door. My dear friends from Assam may well note this point. But if you happen to fall down because of your own weight, and because of your own deeds, we will not hold our hand to give you support. We will step over you. That position is coming to your State because I have got with me here a Press statement given by no less a person than one of your Ministers who resigned from your Ministry there.

SHRI ATAUR RAHMAN: After resignation! That is in a different context altogether.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: All right if you agree. I will agree with you that after resignation, that is a bad statement. But what did he say? He is a tribal. He said

something about the tribal people. I know, it is unpalatable.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: This has come out in all the papers.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Then you ask what the tribals feel about you? Some Members here have raised some points about the NC Hills and Karbi Anglong. I do not want to go into all those things because they don't come under the purview of today's discussion. But I want to make it clear today to AGP friends and others our views about Karbi Anglong and NC Hills. They have been expressed in writing as well as verbally to your State Government. Don't say hereafter that again we are creating problems. Because it is your basic duty to counter this problem. It is not our problem. The Prime Minister has said this and we will also say the same thing.

Mr. Dinesh Goswami in his speech referred to two questions. Firstly that there is a training camp being run in Bhutan. I have checked it up. We do not have any information about it. The only information that I have is, Mr. Amar Roy Pradhan is the host of Upen Brahma. He is here for quite a long time and the purpose....

SHRI AMAR ROYPRADHAN: I am not....

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Not personally. I am talking about your area and also the Government that is there. This is your new ally because Shri Prafulla Mohanta and Shri Jyoti Basu are also fighting on the same platform. One Member has raised a question as to whether it is a fact that one Central Intelligence Department met some members of the ABSU while at Calcutta. That also I deny. That is not a fact. Now our point is that.....

SHRI ATAUR RAHMAN: Your denial is not good enough.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: If my denial is not good enough, your coming

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forward with facts and figures is necessary. I called a Press Conference in Silchar and accepted the challenge from your State Government and gave a particular date to come forward but they did not come forward. I am telling you this thing. I am ready to face any consequence if you can give a proof that we from the Central Government anyway have instigated them. We do not believe in that. We will not do that.

SHRI ATAUR RAHMAN: Could you kindly give us some particulars about SSB organisation? What is it doing?

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: When you were the DG Police, you must have misused the SSB. Everyday when he meets me, he asks me what SSB is doing.

SSB today is not the SSB when it was in his days. This is my answer. Another question has been raised....

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Mr. Dev, at that time, there was Congress Government. If SSB is better today, it is because of AGP.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Does not matter. I will answer all your queries today because it is a national forum.

Another question was raised by some friends from the Opposition and that is regarding AKSA nexus with ABSU. It is said that AKSA is an organisation which is blessed by Sontosh Mohan Dev. Sir, we have so much so.....

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: We have not said it.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: There is a letter from your Home Minister here. I will answer all your questions. I would now tell you the friendship of AKSA with me when I became the Tourism Minister of the Union of India for the first time. When I go there, they welcome me with black flags by saying that one Central University and not one Central

Minister. After that, within three days, Shri Prafulla Mohanta called them and had an interview with them. It came in the Guwahati T.V. that here is a man who is the enemy of Sontosh Mohan Dev—a friend of ours. Now you are saying that AKSA nexus is a proof that there is an unholy alliance with certain sections of the people of Assam. This is what Shri Parag Chaliha has said. Is it not a fact that AASU people came to Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta to organise meetings during Assam movement four years back? When you accuse someone, you must know that you would create your own Frankenstein. That Frankenstein is the Bodo Frankenstein.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: There is no Frankenstein.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: This is not Congress (I) There was a time in Assam when people in hundreds and thousands used to come to the streets.

The rule of the then Government never applied; it was the rule of the AGP and the AASU that applied there. Now, you have to pay the penalty for it because Bodo movement has many members from that side. They are your boys. I don't mean any individual. But in Assam movement, other than Bodo movement, it was a total movement. You cannot say today that the tribals did not participate.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: We have not spoken anything against the Bodo movement as such. The tribals have their problems; they are entitled to have a democratic movement. What we have condemned is the violence, not the movement as such.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: I have given my statistics given by the House Ministry. There is a statement of the Congress (I); there is also a statement of mine. How he says that we have not condemned the violence?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: That is not what I am saying.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: You are condemning the violence; you are not condemning the Bodo movement. Fair enough. Then don't say that the Congress (I) is responsible for this movement. Have you till today arrested a single Congress (I) member in this Bodo violence movement? You have not. Either it is an inefficiency of the government or you have to give a concrete statement. But I say that this is not a creation of the AGP; this is not a creation of the Congress I; it is an issue which these boys picked up. Why? Because the PTCA, the more moderate group, when they asked to have a discussion after one discussion, Mr. Samar Brahma Choudhury said, "We did not follow it up." That is why these Bodo students have taken it up. It is our problem; it is your problem; it is a national problem. We must join our hands together to solve it. We must not throw mud at each other; we should not. I am happy that the Chief Minister of Assam had a meeting with all the Opposition parties; I am also happy that the Government of Assam had a closed-door Assembly Session where all the people had been able to express their views about the Bodo movement freely and frankly. I see now that it is going in the right direction; in this right direction, today, let us not create a situation whereby we say that we are trying to make allegations against each other; we should not.

About other things, many things have been said. If I go into all these things, you will be again drawing some conclusion from them. The only one thing I can say is that the Government of India has kept a very close rapport with the State Government on this issue as we did during the GNLf movement. Whenever they wanted any help, we had meetings at the ministerial level, at the HM level and the PM level. We are totally committed to help any State Government whenever they want any help. We have a constraint for the para-military forces; it may not be possible for us to meet this demand; but our advice and good wishes are always available and we shall continue to give them.

We strongly refute the charges made in

this House against the Central Ministers of Congress (I). But, at the same time, I will not say that AGP is responsible for this. I agree with him when he says that it is a culmination of the situation which has been brought up in Assam for the last 42 years. (*Interruptions*) Yes, Congress (I) was there; you were there. It may not have taken a serious turn during Congress time as it has taken in your time. But don't forget this. The Congress Government have tried to strengthen the Tribals Development Board. The Congress Government has tried to encourage the PTCA, which is a moderate body; they should have been encouraged; if they had been asked to come to the negotiating table, things would have been sorted out. We tried; I personally tried; I sent officers; but for some reasons, it did not succeed. Now TULF has been formed; AASU has been formed; ABSU has been formed. Even now, I think, the situation can be controlled. Many members came out with various suggestions. We have an open mind. We do not want to suggest to the State Government what they should do. In this House our views, are known to the State Government. We have got our ideas; we have given our ideas to the State Government. There are various things; there are difficulties. If you do 'A' thing, there is an advantage; if you do 'B' thing, there is a disadvantage. Somewhere tribal people will be happy; somewhere plains people will be unhappy. There must be a meeting ground where you can bring about a solution so that the Assamese people, the Bodos, all are happy. Many suggestions have come during the dialogues with them. As I said, I have tried to answer each and every question. I do not want to take the time of the House with statistics. I have got the figures about the requirement of each and every item in the North-Eastern States. I have got the figures as to what is the requirement of essential commodities. I do not want to go into all that. But let us not misunderstand the Chief Ministers of all the North-Eastern States. Yes, if any Chief Minister has said that there must be President's Rule, he should not have said so. I agree. I do not dispute that. But asking for supply of essential commodities to the Prime Minister of the country and his inter-

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vention is never an intervention in the internal affairs of the State Government. If there is a continuous *Bandh* in Siliguri, the same State Government will come to the Central Government to make some arrangements. That is the spirit with which the Chief Ministers of the North-Eastern States have spoken.

Before I conclude, I want to make certain things very clear because some confusion has arisen on one account or the other. I want to say, one thing first. I want to make it clear that the Central Government is not in favour of any further division of Assam. This has been stated in Parliament six times on various occasions. The stand has been reiterated in the Home Ministry's consultative Committee meeting by me, by my Home Minister and by the Prime Minister in public meetings. I want to put it on record again that we are against any further division of Assam, for that reason any further division of any other State. The Central Government is against practice of violence by any section of the people anywhere irrespective of the cause for which it is resorted to. We always believed and have proved in our actions, as I have explained in the past that all problems, political, economic and social, can be solved by negotiations. To that extent we are not endorsing the violent path which has been taken by the Bodo agitationists. We condemn violence in all spheres. But at the same time, I must make it clear to this House that several memoranda have come to me and to the Home Ministry about the atrocities of Police. I do not know how far they are correct. I do not know. But through my friends here I would like to give a message to the State Government. If there is any *prima facie* case the State Governments should take care that in the name of police action innocent people whether tribal or non-tribal must not be harassed or must not be troubled.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: We also agree with this concept.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Shri Dinesh Goswami himself has said that if this is so, I will request them again, because we have got various allegations with us. And as I said allegations, I do not know how far they are true. I will not say anything. But if these allegations are true, if there is any *prima facie* fact, they should see that this is stopped.

SHRI ATAUR RAHMAN: These allegations will always come.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Let us not enter into any controversy. The spirit with which I am speaking must be understood.

SHRI ATAUR RAHMAN: that is all-right. You cannot say, go, beg and borrow when they see that houses are burning and the lines are being uprooted.....

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Sit down.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Mr. Ataur Rahman, I have got the proceeding of your Assam Assembly which reached me today only, where your MLAs have made certain serious allegations. I do not want to go into them. Please do not drag me into that. I want to conclude on the note on which it was started. As I said, there are allegations. Let them be examined. You can pass on the information and I am sure that the Government of Assam will certainly take appropriate steps in the matter.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: We are opposed to State violence.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: I agree. The Central Government has always made it clear that so far as any dispute which arises between one State and another, within the State or between one group or the other, is concerned, that the Central Government desires that with the willing co-operation of both the parties it should be settled across the table. We have no desire to go on our own and participate either as a

third party or as an observer. We do not want to do it. But we shall not shy away from our responsibility if occasion arises and requests come.

But I must make one thing clear. The Calcutta press has quoted me wrong. I have said that if invitation comes we shall definitely examine. Again, I am saying that if invitations come we shall examine. Mr Goswami is requesting me to send a message. And if I am to send a message, I have to send it through him. Yes, the ABSU and the State Government should sit and discuss, and neither party should make a prestige issue who is the third party whether present or not, I have no objection to that. We want solution.

Sir, allegations have been made by Mr. Goswami and others, both on this side as well as on the other side. Since there may not be any debate on the Home Ministry Budget. I want to make clear the stand of the Congress or the Central Government. N.C. Hills and Karbi Anglong—it is a local issue. We are not in it. But we have received a memorandum from them. We, the Central Government, are willing to give enough power to the Sixth Schedule areas, as has been given in Tripura and Mizoram. The State Government is not willing. And hence by our admitting to give it, if you say that ultimately if trouble comes up we are responsible, it is unfortunate. I want to make it clear that we are willing to give enough power to the Sixth Schedule areas in Karbi Anglong and N.C. Hills.

Sir, Mr. Hiren Bhumij raised a question about the tea-garden people. about the tea-garden people, the Government of India is willing to give them the status of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe provided the State Government agrees to it. I do not know what is the position now. Because even during the Congress time, there was opposition. I say, we opposed during the Congress time. I do not know what is the stand now. The Central Government is now taking a fresh look on it all over the country. Mr. Goswami knows that this has been a subject

matter of the discussion in the House for several times. This is the Central Government's stand....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Have you studied the implications? (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: I know the implications. That is why, I want to make it clear that when implications come, you will again say that Mr. Sontosh Mohan Dev has created the problem....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: I am not saying that. Have you studied the implications?

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: I have studied it. Most people will become scheduled caste. That is only a political implication. I have suggested myself that the economic benefit should be given and political benefit should not be given....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI PIYUS TIRAKY: What are the implications?...(*Interruptions*) Tribal people are not living at the mercy of the State Government....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Another issue which has been agitating in Assam is the Voters' list. Guidelines have been given by the Election Commission. I am sure the State Government will continue to do the work. And there is no difference between the Central Government and the State Government on this issue, and the propaganda which is being carried out by certain papers is wrong. I understand that the work is starting from today. But we shall have to take care that citizens' name should not be excluded from the list. I am sure the guidelines which has been issued are proper.

Lastly, I would like to say that in regard to tribal areas, the Government of India has always taken a lenient view through Tribal Sub Plan and by giving special dispensation. And for Assam, I do not want to say what would be the new formula. I urge upon the Assam Government to activate the Tribal

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Development Board and start work in 45 areas which Mr. Samar Brahma Choudhury has tried to ventilate before us. As Mr. Chaliha has rightly said, if we give too much autonomy, then Lalong, Mishing and other communities may come forward with such demands. So, the development work in various tribal areas should start in Assam. And if the development work starts, I think what Mr. Chaliha has said will not arise. By and large, the tribal people are very good people. We should not take everything from the standard of Shri Piyus Tiraky. He is also a nice man. He fights for the cause of the tribal people and he knows that unless he fights, we will not listen. But generally we know, when we talk to him, that he is a nice man. He feels that putting forward things very strongly will give him more help.

With these words, I again say that I am happy that we have allowed this debate. We say that the State Government's basic responsibility is to see that law and order machinery is used properly to counter the violence. Innocent people should not be affected. At the same time, political activity should start, as it has started, to defuse the situation. It is useless to pinpoint who is instigating whom. This, I think, is not a right political thinking. It is the bankruptcy of the political thinking. I feel that this sort of mud slinging will not help any Government. If any confusion has arisen in the minds of the people, I am sure, now it will be cleared and the State Government will come forward to take steps to solve this problem as the State Government itself is saying that it is capable of solving the problem on its own. I wish them all the best in solving this problem and bringing a lasting peace in Assam.

15.28 hrs.

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS, 1989-90

[English]

Ministry of Agriculture—Contd.

SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI (Bellary): I thank the Chair for having given me an opportunity to participate in the

Demands for Grants relating to the Ministry of Agriculture.

At the outset, I thank the hon. Minister for Agriculture for having arranged a National Agriculture Fair. Many farmers from various parts of the country visited that Fair and learned many things in the field of modern technology and research. I would like to thank the hon. Minister, the Department of Agriculture and other officers, who are very much connected in organising such a big Agriculture Fair.

As stated by our Prime Minister, our farmers are expecting and demanding again and again for arranging international agriculture fair because they are very much interested in taking up modern technology from abroad. I think, the hon. Minister will certainly attempt to this problem and try to arrange an international agriculture fair for the benefit of the farmers as early as possible.

As stated by our Agriculture Minister again and again, though we have faced acute drought during the last three years, our food production is very much encouraging. This shows how much efforts the Government have made to see that the food production target is reached. And also the farmers have responded very well.

On this occasion it will be wrong on my part if I do not mention the name of Shri Jakhar, Chairman of Bharatiya Krishak Samaj, for having given food to lakh of farmers, who have visited this agriculture fair, free of cost. As per the talk of the town, the food was excellent, the arrangements were excellent and the farmers had also cooperated very well. The farmers from all over the rural part of the country have come to participate in this fair.

I am very sorry to inform the House on this occasion that crops worth Rs. 300 to Rs. 400 crores have been damaged in Tungabhadra region. It is not due to the fault of farmers or of the department, it is only due to mismanagement of water supplied to the farmers. In about 4.5 lakh acres, crops of paddy, sugarcane, sunflower and groundnut