

to introduce a Bill to provide for the repeal of the Lepers Act, 1898, as in force in the Union territories of Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakhadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Chandigarh.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

“That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for the repeal of the Lepers Act, 1898, as in force in the Union Territories of Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Chandigarh.”

The Motion was adopted.

SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI : I introduce the Bill.

ELECTRICITY (SUPPLY) AMENDMENT BILL*

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH) : Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : The question is :

“That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Electricity (Supply) Act, 1948.”

The Motion was adopted.

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH : Sir, I introduce the Bill.

14.54 hrs.

MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

- (i) Re : Article published in ‘Caravan, under the Caption “Did the Army Chief blackmail the Prime Minister.”

SHRI R.S. SPARROW (Jullundur) : Sir, I was shocked to go through an article which has appeared in the April issue of Caravan under the caption ‘Did the Army Chief Blackmail the Prime Minister ?’ The House is well aware of the fact that on the 25th January, 1983, the Defence Minister made an announcement about new concessions to the Armed Forces amounting to over Rs. 30 crores, particularly with reference to free rations, educational facilities, separation allowance, etc., which has been welcomed by the Armed Forces personnel, as well as by all Members of Parliament during the course of discussions on the Demands for Grants pertaining to the Ministry of Defence. However, all these appreciations by the Armed Forces personnel and the representatives of the people have been totally ignored and the journal has now come forward with an article, which has painted the Army Chief in the darkest hue, inasmuch as it has tried to show that the Army Chief had gone to blackmail the Prime Minister on the 25th January, 1983. The article further states that the Army Chief told the Prime Minister that, “if all the demandr already sent to her were not conceded, his resignation be kindly accepted after the Republic Day function.”

As an ex-General Rank officer, I can assert that no Chief of Army Staff will lower either his own dignity or that of the armed forces by making such an unpatriotic statement. I shall be happy if the Defence Minister will take the House and the country into confidence and let us know the facts.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI R. VENKATARAMAN) : May I intervene, Sir ?

On my attention being drawn to the article referred to by the Hon. Member, I have verified the facts from the Chief of Army Staff: