

What is the fun in it?

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: All right. Carry on.

(*Interruptions*)\*\*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing goes on record.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY (Calcutta South): 2000 families have crossed Assam and they have come to West Bengal. The Prime Minister should say about this...

MR. SEAKER: No. I cannot allow it now.

(*Interruptions*)\*\*

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप लिख कर दे दीजिए, 377 में ला सकते हैं ।

I will not allow it now.

(*Interruptions*)\*\*

MR. SPEAKER: They are all our concern you write to him.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Santosh Mohan Dev.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): With your permission I want to lay a paper on the Table of the House, because I have to go to the other House.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes. He has to go to the Upper House. He cannot do it later on. That is why I am allowing him to do it now.

††Not recorded.

Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

12.04 hrs.

## PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

### ECONOMIC SURVEY, 1982-83

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the "Economic Survey, 1982-83" (Hindi and English versions). [Placed in Library. See No. LT 5681/83].

12.05 hrs.

### MOTION RE. ASSAM—Contd.

MR. SPEAKER: Now we shall take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Prof. Madhu Dandavate on the 21st February, 1983, namely:—

"That this House do consider the statement made by the Minister of Home Affairs in the House on 21st February, 1983 regarding Assam."

Shri Santosh Mohan Dev.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me a chance to speak on the Assam situation. I was in Assam for the last one month. Unfortunately, I was very much shocked to hear about it and to listen to some of the speeches delivered by some speakers especially Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee. I, as a member elected from Assam, do say with all record in my hand that the present carnage in Assam has been created by no less a person than Mr. Vajpayee who is sitting in this House as a national leader. (*Interruptions*). This is a leaflet which has been published by BJP-printed one. The name is also there. In this leaflet, he has appealed to the people of Assam that, ††I am laying it....(*Interruptions*).

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी (नई दिल्ली) :  
अध्यक्ष महोदय, आप पहले इस  
लीफलेट को देख लीजिए ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मैंने एलाउ नहीं  
किया है ।

एक माननीय सदस्य : वह मेज़  
पर रख रहे हैं ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : अपनी मेज़ पर  
रख रहे हैं ।

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: In  
the Judges Field he delivered a speech.  
In that speech he had openly said  
that\*\*

He has said....(Interruptions)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:|  
No. Here is my speech. I have brou-  
ght it. The speech has been published  
in the Press.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV:  
You have said it. You are denying it.  
(Interruptions) Not only that; he has  
said....(Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: Please. Order.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : मेरा  
ऐसा भाषण हो, तो सरकार मुझ पर मुकदमा  
चलाए । मैं अदालत में जाने के लिए  
तैयार हूँ ।

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV:  
I shall face the consequences. I am  
responsible for what I say. I am pre-  
pared to resign. (Interruptions) I shall  
resign if you have not said. Let there  
be an inquiry. Or, you resign. (Inter-  
ruptions) Not only that. In an open  
meeting—public meeting he has said  
that;\*\*

He has said it in the public meeting.  
I challenge. Let him prove. I will re-  
sign as a Member of Parliament then.  
(Interruptions) These are two docu-  
ments which have been published by  
the AASU and the Assam Gana San-  
gram Parishad, which has been drafted  
by Mr. George Fernandes and Mr.  
Vajpayee in Gauhati in Uzan Bazar  
office of the BJP. (Interruptions) Sir,  
I take responsibility (Interruptions).

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN (Haji-  
pur): I am on a point of order. I am  
on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER: No.

(Interruptions)

श्री राम विलास पासवान : यहां एक  
माननीय सदस्य के नाम का उद्धरण किया जा  
रहा है और आप के पास ऐसा करने के लिए  
प्रायर इण्टीमेशन नहीं है । . . . . (व्यवधान)

. . . .

MR. SPEAKER: I cannot allow. I  
cannot allow.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV:  
I want to say this. In that pamphlet—  
that is in writing—it was asked, “will  
these people compensate the chastity  
of your wife and your grown up dau-  
ghters, if they are raped anywhere and  
everywhere?” That is the wording  
used. This is publicity stated. Not only  
that. The Government has instigated—  
he said—the people of Assam and a  
particular community, by that the  
means the Muslims, were instigated  
in 1962 and 1972 when the Chinese  
and Pakistani attack was celebrated.  
Is it a fact? He said so. Let him say so.

(Interruptions)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:|  
No. I did not say.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV:|  
You are a ††

(Interruptions)

\*\*Expunged as ordered by the chair.



SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV:  
You said it. You are a \*\*

(Interruptions)

श्री मनोराम बागड़ी (हिसार) :  
यह शब्द ये वापस लें।.. (व्यवधान)...

अध्यक्ष महोदय : देखिए, आप  
353 पहले पढ़ लें।

... (व्यवधान)....

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : ये  
बहुत बहादुर हैं।

\*\* और यहां बहादुरी दिखाने  
आए हैं। .. (व्यवधान)।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : देखिए मेरी बात  
सुनिए। आर्डर, आर्डर। आप बैठिये,  
ये जो अनपार्लियामेंटरी वर्ड्स हैं।....  
I do not like.

(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : पहले मेरी बात सुन  
लीजिए। आप पहले ही बोलने लगते  
हैं।

श्री मनोराम बागड़ी : आप मुझे  
धमका रहे हैं, धमकाना तो उन्हें चाहिए।

अध्यक्ष महोदय मुझे धमकाने भी  
दो। बीच में ही मत बोलिए। देखिए,  
मेरी बात सुनिए। मैं एक बात बताना  
चाहता हूं। 353 में यह है कि अगर  
कोई एलीगेशन लगानी है....

श्री जगदीश टाईटलर (दिल्ली  
सदर) : जो सच्चाई है, वही ये बोल  
रहे हैं।

श्री रशीद मसूद (सहारनपुर) :  
सच्चाई है, तो उस के लिए पहले नोटिस  
देना चाहिए।

: [شہید مسعود (سہانپور)  
سچائی ہے تو اسکے لئے پہلے نوٹس  
دینا چاہئے۔]

अध्यक्ष महोदय : देखिए हरेक मेम्बर  
को हक है, जो बात वह कहना चाहता  
है वह रूलों के अनुसार कहे।

(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : कोई अनपार्लिया-  
मेंटरी चीज रिकार्ड पर नहीं जानी चाहिए।

The unparliamentary words should  
go. Furthermore, if there are any  
valid objections, the rules are there.

अरे बाबा, क्यों नहीं बोलने देते हो ?

(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : देखिए आप 353  
में.....

(व्यवधान)

MR. SPEAKER: Why are you inter-  
rupting me? Sir down.

(Interruptions)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप तो बूढ़े आदमी हैं,  
आप भी इस तरीके से बोलते हैं।

(व्यवधान)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप रूल 353  
को देख कर के, अपनी सीमा में रह कर  
बोलिए।

(व्यवधान)

श्री मनोराम बागड़ी : अध्यक्ष  
महोदय, मैं एक सवाल उठाना चाहता हूं।

[श्री मनीराम बागड़ी]

एक तो असंसदीय शब्द होता है। एक किसी को गाली देना है। वह चार्ज है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मैंने कह दिया है, वह नहीं आ सकता।

श्री मनीराम बागड़ी : अगर किसी को कोई चोर, डाकू कहेगा ...

अध्यक्ष महोदय : कैसे कह देगा, वह नहीं कह सकता है।

श्री मनीराम बागड़ी : अगर वह कह देगा तो क्या आप उसको एक्सपंज करोगे या वह वापस लेगा ?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : चोर, डाकू किसी को कोई नहीं कह सकता।

(व्यवधान)

श्री मनीराम बागड़ी : यह तो इन्हें वापस लेना चाहिए.... (व्यवधान) ..

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: This is a forum where we should speak freely. The tragedy is, while others can speak in public if I speak, something, it becomes unparliamentary. He can go on speaking in Assam everywhere and instigate people. But if I come and take resort to this House and try to explain the actual atmosphere in which he has talked, I am told I am at fault. This is the tragedy. You should not stop me. I take responsibility for whatever I say.

MR. SPEAKER: I asked you to speak within limits.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Assam is burning and everybody...

MR. SPEAKER: We want to give a healing touch.

अब आप बैठिये।

श्री राम विलास पासवान : सर, मैं आपसे आग्रह करूंगा कि कल से इस पर डिबेट चल रही है आप इस डिबेट को स्पॉइल मत होने दीजिए। सदन की नेता यहां बैठी हैं ये अपने मेम्बरों को रोक सकती हैं।

(व्यवधान)

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: Sir, this is a leaflet, which has been published by AASU and the Jansangram Parishad, distributed freely all over Assam. In that leaflet the headline is "How to Stock Elections", In that election strategy they have given instructions to their cadres to burn bridges, cut roads and destroy ballot boxes, not only that, they said: you set fire in one area and you inform the fire brigade to go to the other area. This is how in Gohpur the CRP could not reach the village, because the bridges were burnt by the AASU and the Jansangram Parishad. Now my charge against the Government is that when AASU and the Jansangram Parishad went there openly, distributing leaflets, inciting people, which resulted in the death of hundreds of people belonging to the linguistic and religious minorities, why is it that AASU and the Jansangram Parishads are not declared illegal bodies? If you can do it in the case of MNF, why not here?

The Prime Minister has stated that the door is open. We do agree that the door is open. When the representative bodies of all political parties, excepting the Jansangh and the BJP, say let there be dialogue with them, let there be discussion. It has been proved from the records—the all India papers give some record, but I have records collected from the Election Commission of Assam—that in Cachar 65 to 75 per cent of the electors voted; in Goalpara it was 50 to 60 per cent. In Gauhati...

One hon. Member: It is all bogus.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV: I am speaking from records. Assam consists of 126 constituencies, and not

all of them are urban-based towns, where some handful of people, with the help of some national parties and some Government officials, are trying to create trouble.

When the Prime Minister went to Assam, the people there said: we want protection from the BSF and CRP, but not from the Assam Police.

Why it is being said? It is because the Government officials and the Assam police, a small portion of it, are not behaving well. I am very sorry for it. But we must take into consideration the present situation of Assam.

Sir, I do not want to dwell too much on this. All that I want to say is that if you want to put Assam in its proper perspective, if you want to control the present situation after the popular Government is formed, you must not only ban AASU and Gana Sangram Parishad, but also ban the BJP and the Janata who are going and training them in Assam. We must be very courageous. (Interruptions). Let him say whatever he wants to say. Now the Delhi people have ousted him, and he has taken this stand here.

(Interruptions.)

Sir, I do not want to say more, but I only appeal. I am grateful to the Prime Minister for she has visited all the affected areas, she has met the people there and she has done rehabilitation. But rehabilitation and other things must be done on a war footing. And today the Army and the BSF must be employed there because the Administration there is in such a bad shape that they will not be able to restore normalcy.

I do not want to say anything more. I am grateful to this august House and the Members who have participated in this debate, and I am also thankful to you. But again I would say that what I said today here, I stand by it and I will face any consequence. But let him also prove that I am wrong.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI): Sir, I did not want to intervene in this debate. All the points that could have been made have been made from both sides. I have been so deeply anxious about this whole question, and today my heart is so full of sorrow that I can hardly speak. Every life that is lost, whoever it may be, hurts. We can find no words of comfort for the people I have seen in the various camps. I have visited camps in which there were Assamese people only, camps in which there were tribals only, camps in which there were minority communities and in some they were mixed. But if I have got up, it is because my name has been quite unnecessarily brought into this debate. The Opposition was very excited just now. I do not know what these documents are, I do not know whether they are accurate. But I do not know that such opinions have been expressed. They have appeared in newspapers. Some I have read and they were also repeated to me by the Assamese as well as others when I went to Assam. I do not know who has propagated such ideas. But the talk of blood bath and other such provocative pronouncements are current amongst the people there.

I shall first dispose of some of the small points. It seems that Shri Vajpayee is much concerned about the clothes I wear. I might inform him that I am deeply committed to each group in India maintaining its cultural and other identity and from that point of view, in order to show that we do not consider that one dress is superior to another or more beautiful than another, I have been wearing the costumers of different sections as far as possible. I have been wearing Mekhala not just when I went for the Assam election, but since 1955, if not earlier. I have worn it in Delhi, I have worn it inside Parliament and I have worn it in foreign countries as I have worn the Garodress the Jammu dress and various other costumes depending, of course, on the climate and the occasion. It was also said that I



[Shrimati Indira Gandhi]

made a speech in Bengali. If I knew Bengali well enough, I would have spoken in Bengali, but unfortunately I don't. So, when one section of the public said, 'Please speak in Bengali' I spoke one sentence saying that 'I can understand Bengali, but I cannot speak it well enough, so I shall speak in Hindi'. That was the extent of my Bengali speech.

So far as the ending of the speech is concerned, I do vary the ending of my speeches depending on what the people will respond to. I have tried hard to get people to respond to Jai Hind in some parts of the country. They do not always do so. So, you have to say what they will respond to. Usually, in my meetings in Tamil Nadu—I must say I do not approve of their anti-Hindi Policy but I do approve of encouraging all our different State languages—in Tamil Nadu I say 'vanakam'. In all States if I happen to know some local words I try to use them. In Assam I also said 'Namaskar' in some places 'vande mataram' in others. In some places I shouted Jai Hind. In one place I felt that a section of women who I had been told understood Hindi, did not seem to be understanding a single word. So to create a sort of rapport I said 'khuda hafiz'. I do not think that there is anything wrong in my saying this. In the Khasi hills. I say 'God bless you.' That is what they say and I respond. This is not political in any way. If we want to encourage our people and want them to feel one with us, we have to adopt some of their phrases and do other things which would make them more conscious of our unity and assure them that it is not a unity of unequals. All people have an equal right to their language, their costume and customs and their culture.

Then, I think some hon'ble member has accused me of saying that nobody would be sent out. I have said no such thing. I reiterated what I have often

stated and which has been my offer to the students even when I met them in Dispur. That 1971 would be not the cut-off point but a starting point and thereafter we could peacefully discuss what else could be done. That has been my consistent stand and the base for the talks that have been held. I have pointed out to the students and in some of my meetings the great difficulty of moving large populations. Perhaps, you have read what has recently happened in an African country. So I asked where will we put these people? One cannot just announce—'I am going to send these people out.' Where will they go? Which State in India will accept them, which country outside India will accept them? This is the question which I posed to the students and at that time they agreed with me that it is a major human problem. I also said that those children who are born here, and I think our Constitution declares that those who are born after 1950 (since the Constitution was made) are Indian citizens and we cannot send them out. I have said nothing beyond that—what I have been consistently saying either in the House, to the agitators or anybody else. But it is true that the minorities, and they are not only religious minorities, there are also linguistic minorities, there are Nepalese, there are the tea garden labourers and above all the plains tribals. All these people were greatly frightened not just now after the massacre but throughout these years, and their fears have been increasing. The plains tribals have been coming to see me off and on for the last two years to say—for God's sake take us out of Assam, make us a separate State, give us Union Territory, do anything you like, but please do not leave us with these people. This is the atmosphere that has been growing.

Just now, my friend spoke about refugees who have gone to West Bengal. Yesterday I had a long telegram from the Chief Minister of Arunachal. Nepalese, tea labour and others have crossed over to Arunachal, so he requests our help to sort out this problem and see how to look after them.



He is concerned because he does not have the facilities.

There is much debate on the calling of the elections, I do not want to go into this matter now. It has been adequately replied to. I shall only remind hon'ble Members opposite that violence was growing in Assam even before the elections. Year by year, it was growing. There were many murders. There were threats to officials who went from other parts. There was sabotage. A large number of people who belong to different religions and different ethnic groups felt threatened. What is equally serious is that the agitators are trying to inculcate such feelings in their neighbouring States also. These are all border States and you can realize how dangerous the security position of India can be if such attitudes permeate into these other States, the tribals States, namely that only local people can stay and everybody else should go out? Actually one of the issues the plains tribals raised was "Who are the Assamese? We are the original people who lived here. They have come from outside." These are not my words. These are their—"They have come from outside and pushed us in the jungle and in the hills." Of course this is true of all Adivasis and not only in Assam, the adivasis are the original inhabitants of this country.

Even now, officials are not allowed to work. It is not true to say that no Assamese wanted to cooperate in the elections or before. I know many who did cooperate. But they have to think of their children and their families. When they were threatened, 'if you do this, well, you will not escape and your family will not escape', you know, normal persons will think ten-times before they give cooperation or go to cast their votes. Unfortunately, this has sometimes happened in other parts of India also. Sometimes people who are considered weak like the Harijans, I have seen with my own eyes that because some voted, they were beaten up. Now, if this sort of thing takes place, it is not a fair judgment on what the Assamese wanted to do.

I know that the Assamese people are greatly agitated. My friend here has said something which seems to have offended. I am sure he did not mean to offend anybody. He was talking to me yesterday in the plane. How full his mind was and his heart of the tragic situation in his State. But before elections, names were being struck off without verification.

Now we have offered tribunals. We have offered several suggestions to find some way out—it may be not totally satisfactory. In such a situation, you cannot satisfy everybody. But let us try and find a way which is least disruptive of Assam and least harmful to the Assamese or to any of the others concerned. But because the agitators did not want their officers to cooperate with us, even at that stage the steps which could have been taken at the border could not be pursued. But all that was neglected and could not be done. From the Centre, we tried our best. But we have to depend on local officials. If local officials do not cooperate with the Centre, then work cannot be done.

It was the same with development. When I met the students and others in Dispur, they complained of insufficient development. It is true that Assam, other hill areas in the U.P. and elsewhere are more economically backward because of lack of communications and various reasons. We have to make up for lost time. Immediately, I spoke to various public sector people. I spoke to our Finance Minister and to private industrialists that even if it caused some loss, they should put up something in Assam. Some people agreed. But then, the violence started and the agitators tried to stop the oil. So the industrialists said, "How can we put up an industry in Assam? Tomorrow, they may burn the factory; they may tell the workers, "don't work or don't allow goods to come out. How can we?" So, what development could have been taken up was also hampered.

(Smt. Indira Gandhi)

As we know, the Voters List now used in the 1978 list when Members from Assam were elected either to this House or that House. They did not complain in 1978 that they would not be elected because the list is incorrect. My colleague, Shri Mukherjee has explained how the decision to have the elections was taken. I do not want to go into the points that have been raised.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Mr. Mukherjee has not spoken here. It might be in the other House.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: Well, he has said it publicly. This matter was raised by Shri Vajpayee when we met the leaders of the Opposition in another connection. At that time, as I was replying, some representatives of other Opposition parties confirmed what we have said.

श्री मनोराम बागड़ी (हिसार): लेकिन 1966 तक विद्यार्थी मान रहे थे । आप 1971 का कह रहे थे । और क्या विद्यार्थी सन् 1965 को मान रहे थे । भगड़ा यही से खत्म हुआ ?

श्रीमती इन्दिरा गांधी: नहीं हमको नहीं मालूम कि मान रहे थे, क्योंकि यह चीज कभी स्पष्ट नहीं हुई ।

श्री मनोराम बागड़ी: आप से मांग रहे थे ।

श्रीमती इन्दिरा गांधी: नही मुझसे तो नहीं मांगा । क्योंकि मेरी बात तो दीसपुर में हुई उसके बाद मैं उन से नहीं मिली ।

The elections were held to uphold our Constitution. It was a constitutional obligation. In the present situation, as my friend there has said, all sections have suffered. Some may

have suffered more and some a little less. All have suffered. And more than that it is the State which has suffered. This is the attitude which is alienating the people from the State. Assam was a big State. It could have stayed a big State. But some how, one by one, people wanted to separate and a situation was created in which we had to come to some understanding with these different groups.

Now, another point I made at my meetings and at the meeting where I said Khuda Hafiz, that I regard all the people, especially young people, in Assam as my children. Even those who are angry with me, even those who are following a path with which I do not agree and which I consider is wrong, I consider them my children and therefore, I cannot disown them or say that we shall have nothing to do with them. We must continue to find a way. At every meeting, whatever its composition, I made the point that we must continue to try and bring them around to peaceful talks and try to create an atmosphere in which all can meet.

Even on the question of foreigners, I had told them that it can be solved, if they remain peaceful and do not raise a hue and cry. When such a hue and cry was raised, immediately, Bangladesh said, "We will not take back even the post-1971 people." If this matter had been dealt with in a cool and collected manner, may be we could have found a way out. In all our talks with them, we have assured them that we are deeply concerned about the preservation of their culture, their identity and how to expedite development in the region.

To come back to the elections, it is the democratic right of all citizens to be allowed to vote. We did not stop voters there, others stopped them. Somebody has remarked that the elections were held at gun-point. The elections were not held at gun-point to ask people to vote. The guns were pointed at the people who were coming to vote by those who did not want

them to do so. Some of the Opposition people there and some of the agitators were the ones who were trying to do things at gun-point. We did no such thing. But unfortunately there were some groups, whatever their motivations, who threatened and finally this led to violence on this tragic scale.

The question is: can any group anywhere in India, no matter what their grievances, hold the country to ransom? Can any group say, "Our demands have not been fulfilled and because you are not fulfilling our demands we will not allow you to have the elections or we will not allow you to do something else"—there are plenty of demands; every group has a demand; many of them are justified demands but we cannot fulfil them because of lack of resources or for some reason. The country will go to bits. If we cannot hold together, we cannot meet the real challenges. But for the atmosphere of terror, many more Assamese as well as others would have voted and cooperated in every way.

Another question which arises—I do not know what Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and others have said about it. Have they condemned the violence that is taking place?

श्री मनोराम बागड़ी: दोनों तरफ से सरकार ही या गैर-सरकारी हो ।

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: I do not want to interrupt the Prime Minister. We addressed a meeting at Gauhati Judges maidan and the speech has been reported. I would like to quote:

"Addressing a mammoth rally estimated at over 25,000 here, this afternoon, at the Judges field, the leaders also appealed to the people of Assam to shun violence at all cost and to continue with their non-violent movement and non-cooperation with the Government."

Let her call for a report from the Government of Assam about my speeches. Let her call for a report.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: Never mind, I did not take your name or anybody's name. I am expressing the general feeling there. Wherever I went people mentioned this. How is it that those who support the agitation do not condemn the violence. I have myself asked some opposition people at a much earlier period before there was any question of elections. Then they claimed that there was no violence. But we had the list of the people killed. At that time, they were mostly officials. I did not get a reply at that time either. That was at least a year ago.

But today I do not want to dwell on all these matters because I feel that we must avoid all types of acrimony. The first consideration is the safety of all those who are menaced. We must ensure that relief is adequate and reaches all affected people.

Why did the tribals react? Their areas are rather cut off and the agitators came and broke the bridges. So, whatever little did trickle through, would take even more time to reach them. The bridges were broken, it is true. They should be repaired. Some of them have been quickly repaired, for people to be able to get across.

We must help to rehabilitate those who have lost their all. We must express our sympathy for them and the agony of our hearts for the parents whose children have died, for the children whose parents have died and those who have lost all their worldly possessions. We must cooperate in creating an atmosphere more conducive to harmony and peace.

Many new communal organisations have cropped up. I do not want to mention names. But I do put it to the House that: Can these strengthen either the majority community or our various minority communities? They can only aggravate an extremely delicate and difficult situation. These are some of the matters which we have to consider immediately.



[Smt. Indira Gandhi]

I am sorry that some people have attributed motives that we wanted to win the elections. Naturally, every political party wants to win elections. It is something natural. But I have always said that that is not the most important thing. But the important thing is how the elections are fought, the important thing is that the country is higher than any party. The country is higher than any movement also or any of us here. This is what I say.

So let us try to strengthen this spirit of unity and nationalism. Those who have struggled for freedom can understand when there is a danger to freedom when there is a danger to unity. The freedom movement bound us together. Now the dangers are no less and we need the same spirit to hold us together. And we know how quickly it can be damaged and weakened.

I spoke about nationalism. I should like to make it clear that I am not referring to any chauvinistic or narrow-minded nationalism but one that can keep us together, that can strengthen different communities, groups, sections of people who live in India and take us on to an internationalism where we can together solve national as well as international problems.

I do hope that this House will look at these points and create an atmosphere of cooperation.

**श्री मनोराम बागड़ी:** क्या आप आसाम के सवाल को राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर हल करने पर विचार करेंगे? अकेले आसाम पर ही बर्डन न डालकर, समूचे राष्ट्र का सवाल बना कर के आप इसका हल ढूँढने पर विचार करेंगे?

**THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. C. SETHI):** I am grateful to the Hon. Members who have participated in the debate. Although they were forceful in making their points, by and large, the debate was not acrimonious. Everybody was

sorry for the bloodshed which has taken place. They wanted peace to be restored and the relief works to be started. Having said that, I would now like to deal with some of the points which the hon. Members of this House have made.

It is not as if the elections have started the violence. Since the start of the agitation in Assam in 1979, there has been considerable escalation of violence. More than 350 persons have lost their lives in mob violence and police firings. There was also spurt in extremist activities. Therefore, it would not be correct to say that it is the election alone which is the cause of this violence today.

Prof. Madhu Dandavate had many points to make. He said that the elections were conducted at the point of guns and bayonets, he also said that there was strict censorship in Assam. the electoral rolls were not revised and the use of government machinery to interfere with the elections was there; he also mentioned the Railway Minister's name and made certain allegations against him.

**PROF. MADHU DANDEVATE (Rajapur):** The present Railway Minister.

**SHRI P. C. SETHI:** You were also one of the Railway Ministers.

As far as these points are concerned, I would like to say that, as has been clarified by the hon. Prime Minister, we had to send Force but no army was deployed for use in elections, and whatever Force was sent from here was with the consent and permission of the Election Commission, and that was necessary because the local administration and the police force were inadequate to meet the problems of the situation. I would also like to point out that, as far as CRPF and BSF are concerned, we must realise that they are working in every difficult conditions. Even in riots where the CRPF and BSF had been deployed recently to Meerut, the role of the CRPF was appreciated not only in



Meerut by the people there but also by some of the hon. Members while the role of the PAC was criticised. Therefore, by and large, in very difficult conditions, the CRPF and BSF were there. They were instructed right from the beginning to use restraint and not to use force unless there was violence or unless there was the question of self-defence. Therefore, I would like to say that, as far as police firing is concerned it has taken place only to meet the situation of mob violence or to safeguard the candidates or to safeguard the polling booths or to safeguard the bridges from being burnt, etc., and the toll of those persons who have died on account of police firing is about 125.

As far as the other things are concerned, the other emotions crept into the picture later on, and on account of this, the number of deaths is rising every day and no figure is yet final. But according to our information, apart from police firing and use of force, about 800 people have died so far. But the bodies are being recovered and we do not have the final figure. These are all on account of the passions generated later on.

Therefore, I would like to put a clear picture—that as far as the force was concerned, they were not used to force anybody to go to the polling booth or to force any candidate to file his nomination.

Only when it was necessary they used the force.

As far as the electoral rolls revision is concerned Government have been making earnest and sustained efforts to find an amicable solution to this problem. We had always taken the stand that a solution to this problem has to be found within the framework of the constitution and the laws and national commitments, international obligations and agreements and have to be regarded from the humanitarian considerations also. People cannot be departed arbitrarily but only after following the due process of inquiry as per law. This has been our

stand right from the beginning and as far as this stand is concerned, we still stand by this commitment.

As far as the foreigners issue is concerned, we are prepared to resolve it, but it will have to be done within the framework of these which I have just now mentioned.

As far as the leaders of Assam agitation are concerned—because yesterday when I used the word 'agitators,' it was not appreciated or liked, therefore I would like to call them the leader of the Assam agitators—They agreed at one point of time that whatever is the cut off date, as far as this thing is concerned, they are in agreement with this. Then you also remember that at one point of time or at many points of time, the suggestion of appointing Tribunals came from one of our esteemed colleagues who belongs to the Janata Party itself, Mr. Ravindra Varma and we have agreed to this situation. Even during the talks we agreed that we are prepared to appoint Tribunals and as the Prime Minister has pointed out, had the atmosphere been conducive, the Tribunals would have been appointed and they would have started their work. But since it was not possible to resolve the deadlock and there was the constitutional obligation to revoke the President's rule by 18th March 1983, there was no other alternative but to request the Election Commission to make arrangements for holding the elections.

As far as the conduct of elections and the electoral rolls are concerned, the conduct and superintendence of elections vests in the Election Commission and the preparation and revision of the electoral rolls is their domain. Even in this connection I would like to slightly put the record straight. Yesterday we have heard many hon. Members saying that they were prepared to support the constitutional amendment. Yesterday my colleague, Shri Mukherjee has made this point very clear in the other House. Some of the parties—without naming the parties, I would say—were prepared to support

[Shri P. C. Sethi]

this provided a special session is called and they advanced this argument which they said yesterday here also, that 6th or 7th was the date and therefore, it should not be brought now. The date of talks was 6th or 7th and therefore, it should not be brought now. The Finance Minister made it very clear at that time that it would be difficult to agree for a special session.....

श्री रशीद मसूद (सहारनपुर): आप ने जो बात कही है— सम-आफ़-दि-पार्टीज़, लेकिन हम ने, यानी लोकदल वालों ने पिछले सेशन में ही कह दिया था कि आप एक्सटेंड कीजिये। प्रनब मुखर्जी साहब ने भी वहाँ पर कहा है, यहाँ पर नहीं कह रहे हैं।

[श्री रशीद मसूद (सहारनपुर):  
 آپ نے جو بات کہی ہے -  
 ”سم آف دی پارٹیجز“ لیکن ہم نے  
 یعنی لوک دل والوں نے پیچھے  
 سیشن میں ہی کہہ دیا تھا کہ آپ  
 ایکسٹینڈ کیجئے - پر نوب مکھرجی  
 صاحب نے بھی وہاں پر کہا ہے  
 یہاں پر نہیں کہہ رہے ہیں -

SHRI P. C. SETHI: I have said so.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Mr. Pranab Mukherjee has clarified that.

SHRI P.C.SETHI: I am stating the position of those parties who made the support conditional. But at the same time there was not only the Lok Dal but one or two more parties who had extended their support to it without any condition.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Why did you go ahead?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Because, that support was a sort of conditional support. And thereafter even in that meeting and the later meeting which the Prime Minister called, there was no unanimity of opinion. Those were the parties, apart from these parties, who wanted the elections to be held. And they not only wanted the elections to be held, but they have participated in the elections. As far as the 1979 rolls are concerned or 1978 rolls are concerned, even the Janata party fought in the election to Assam Assembly on the basis of the rolls which were there. And therefore, it does not lie in their mouth to say that we were not in favour of 1979 rolls.

As far as the censorship in Assam is concerned, the Assam Special Powers (Press) Act was invoked by the Assam Government which was of course, later on stayed by the Supreme Court.

Though the Supreme Court stayed this operation they only wanted an undertaking from the newspapers that that they would not publish any news which would be calculated to cause communal disharmony.

That was the only type of censorship. As far as the election propaganda or election speeches were concerned, there was no ban on them. The only censorship which was applied to them was to a limited extent and this you would appreciate, in a surcharged atmosphere if newspapers bring out news or articles which enhance the communal feelings or disharmony then the situation becomes more grave. This we have seen in other riots which have taken place in some parts of the country.

Then, Sir, as far as the Government machinery is concerned, it is not fair to say that nominations were not filed but they were collected at the residence of the candidates.

As far as the elections are concerned I have said that the charge that the

election commission is not fair, is it self not fair. The Election Commission works quite independently. We did not use any pressure on them. And even if we had used they would not have agreed to it. Never at any point of time we used it. Therefore, to charge them saying that the Election Commission was not fair, is itself not fair. When the local officers were not available to the extent that they desired, the Election Commission permitted to send the officers. They issued a circular to all the State Governments and the Central Government saying that if the conditions are such and if elections are to be held then you are free to send the officers. Even in Bihar where the officers refused to go, about one thousand people had gone from there. From the Central Government more than 4,000 or 5,000 people went from here. Similarly some persons were sent from West Bengal. When requests were made to West Bengal Government they also cooperated in sending some vehicles and other things which were badly required. Whatever was done with regard to the sending of the personnel was done with the consent of the Election Commission.

Sir, much has been said about the clash between the CRP and the Assam Police. Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Prof. Dandavate both mentioned about this. You must realise that particular clash between them was a localised one. The facts of the case are that some Assam police officer was trying to persuade them to do a particular job and there was some acrimony between them and therefore they chased that officer and that officer took shelter in some CRPF Camp.

Therefore, the occasion for an altercation between the CRPF and the Assam Rifles arose. But we took enough precautions to see that this did not spread and this was limited to only one place and there is complete harmony.

In this connection, I would like to point out that recently I visited that place. Shri Samar Mukherjee has also said in his speech that in order to give protection to the minorities and other people who are in danger—now an atmosphere of terror has been created actually—more forces are required. It was said in the other House also that after the elections are over, if necessary, the army's help to restore peace should also be taken. Therefore, it is not as if we had send forces which were more than necessary there.

Sir, as for as Shri Stephen is concerned, I am grateful to him for the very powerful support that he had extended and clarified the position.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : वे अग्रर  
मिनिस्टर रहते तो बहुत पावरफुल आवाज  
उठाते। आपने उन्हें मिनिस्टरशिप से  
दहां भेज दिया ।

SHRI P. C. SETHI: As far as Mr. Vajpayee is concerned, he thinks that Ministership alone is more important. Mr. Stephen is very happy with the present situation and he has voluntarily preferred to work for the party and I must say that he will prove very useful even here.

Sir, I am also thankful to Mr. Samar Mukherjee that he clarified the position with regard to elections and the stand taken by their party. He said that the elections were a Constitutional necessity. He has also quoted here that the agitation was directed against the minorities. He has said that in the meetings presided over by Mr. Vajpayee it was mentioned that the policy of AASU and the Assam Gana Sangram Parishad was praised and he said that Assam was your motherland and you must free it from foreigners.



[Shri P. C. Sethi]

Many things have been said. But I do not want to go into any details of that. But, Sir, he has also made a very important point. He said that on many points the AASU and the Assam Gana Sangram Parshad agreed but at the same time when they want back to Gauhati they always slipped back from that position. He has also said that in this Movement there appears to be some foreign link.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:  
Do you agree with that?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Please hear me. As far as whatever he has said, is concerned this is a matter which needs to be enquired into.

Sir, I am thankful to Mr. Anand Gopal Mukherjee also who clarified the position very clearly and he was very emphatic and forceful as far as the points in which he entered are concerned. Now, I come to the points raised by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

13. hrs.

As far as Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee is concerned, he spoke more with emotion rather than on the validity or non-validity. He said that a drama was being enacted in Assam which had ended in a tragedy. If elections are to be held in some State and if it is to be called a drama, then, as has been said by the hon. Prime Minister just now, in any other State also, this demand for not having elections on account of one reason or the other can arise and any group which wants to prove its violence can say that. How is it that Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee's party which was very vocal in demanding elections in Delhi, when on account of ASIAD we postponed it, they had demonstrations, they paraded the streets and shouted anti-Government slogans because of that, and here when the election process has been started, he not only does not participate, but condemns and goes there to advocate

that elections should not be held, and nobody should participate?

As regards the points that he made with regard to the Prime Minister's tour of the areas, I think, the Prime Minister has made certain points clear which were personally referred to her. As far as the areas are concerned, I would like to make it clear that she did not prefer to invite more violence, and, therefore, the areas were chosen from that point of view. It was already said by the agitators or the leaders of the Assam agitation, that they would boycott the meeting, and not allow the Prime Minister to speak. It was done in order to save that situation of violence. It is not that she has preferred only particular areas, it was done with a view to avoid violence that certain areas were visited.

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee has said that the D.C. did not visit Gohpur and 100 battalions were sent from here. First of all, as far as Gohpur is concerned, it is true that they took some time to reach there, but all communications had been destroyed, and, therefore, there was some delay but the officers did reach there. He also made an observation that the officers whom he met said that their job was to hold elections and not to preserve law and order. What he said is not correct. The force was there not for the conduct of elections, but to maintain peace and when they were there to maintain peace, their primary duty was to maintain law and order; their primary duty was not to see that only the elections are held properly. The primary duty of the local officers, all the State machinery, and also all the force which was sent from here was to see that the law and order problem did not deteriorate. But it was so widespread particularly after the 14th that in some areas even the forces could not reach in time and this blood bath took place.

Sir as far as Shri Ghani Khan's speech is concerned, he is unfortunately not well, otherwise I would have requested him to intervene.



PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: And make the same speech here!

SHRI P. C. SETHI: But, Sir, I have contacted him.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY (Bombay North East): Where is he?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: He is very much in Delhi, but he is not well.

SHRI HARIKESH BAHADUR (Gorakhpur): Has he denied having said this thing?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Sir, he has very categorically said that he has not said any such thing that if anybody wants to remain in Assam or in India, he should vote for the Congress. He had said that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the Congress is the only Party which look after the interests of all communities and castes and that they are also looking after the interest of all the persons on the humanitarian ground. Therefore, you must vote for Congress. This is what he has told me and I want to clarify his position.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Otherwise part of his speech you have dropped.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Which otherwise?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Otherwise you should quit.

SHRI HARIKESH BAHADUR: If you don't vote for the Congress, you will have to go.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: With regard to the point that if one person is killed, four will be killed, he has categorically denied that he has said any such thing.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER (Durgapur): There is a tape-recorded speech. If you want we can bring it here also. Do you want to hear that?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Sir, I don't think any person would go to that extent of saying that not only Mr. Ghani Khan Chaudhuri, but anyone else also.

(Interruptions)

SHRI P. C. SETHI: As far as the allegation that there is shortage of life-saving drugs, I would like to mention, as I said yesterday that we are rushing the life-saving drugs there. In all about 150 tonnes of life-saving drugs are being despatched. About 50 tonnes have already been sent and everyday a few more tonnes are being sent. This includes anti-gangrene also. I agree in the beginning it appeared that there was some shortage, but as soon as we knew about it, we started rushing the supplies.

Sir, he also mentioned that even bread and cake was sent from here. Sir, when the local food was not available in some places and even drinking water was not available, it was the prime duty of the Government to see that the personnel who had gone there, at least they should get bread to eat. And therefore, it was sent from here.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: It shows the boycott was complete.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY: Tell us, are you going to continue with the negotiations now?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Sir, are we having the lunch break or we are continuing?

MR. SPEAKER: You finish it off.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: After me, Mr. Dandavate will speak.

MR. SPEAKER: Yes. We will complete it first. One thing at a time.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY: Sir, he has lost his notes. Why don't you give him launch break?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Sir, I have not lost the notes, I have lost all the names of the Hon. Members who had spoken.

MR. SPEAKER: At least I make it sure that they are here. I will not get them lost.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Sir, now I will not go into the details by names. But I am thankful to the Hon. Members who participated in the debate. By and large I have replied to many of the points.

I have got it now.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY: Are you going to continue the negotiations?

SHRI P.C. SETHI: I will continue.

I am also thankful to Mr. K. K. Tewary for the forceful speech which he made, and the support given to our position.

Mr. Rasheed Masood is there. He has made it clear even now here that his party was prepared to support the Constitutional amendment; but with regard to that point, I have made things very clear.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी: नहीं तो आपने उनके प्रस्ताव को स्वीकार क्यों नहीं किया ?

श्री प्रकाश चन्द्र सेठी : नहीं, वह तो आपका कंडीशनल सपोर्ट था न ।

He made one particular charge against the Congress Party, that we are trying to play one community against the other. I deny this charge. As a matter of fact, Congress is the only party which can speak on behalf of all the communities.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY: Which Congress is he referring to?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: I am referring to the Congress to which I belong, which is the Congress(I).

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Except in Andhra, Karnataka, West Bengal, Tripura and Tamil Nadu.

SHRI P.C. SETHI: I want to thank Mr. Gadhavi also for the support that he extended. I am thankful to Shri Indrajit Gupta for having supported the elections, and also for putting the record straight, not only during his television interview, but also here. He has particularly made one point that during the last round of talks, a suggestion and an offer about having 1965 as the cut-off year by me, was there. I made it very clear there also that this offer had not come from me. This offer had come to us, which we put to the students also—whether they were prepared to relax on this to some extent.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat): Come to you from whom?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: I will not like to name the person.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Never bothered to consult anybody else.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Therefore, it is wrong to say that we were prepared to accept 1965 as the cut-off date. As a matter of fact, we have said so; and the Prime Minister has made it very clear that we should have the starting point from 1971.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY (Calcutta South): You floated the idea.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: No.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: I asked in Parliament. You did not deny. You go and check up the records. You simply floated the idea.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: I put it that this type of suggestion had come.

Mr. Indrajit Gupta is right in saying that a sort of fear psychosis and a climate of terror has been created. He

asked whether Assam would continue as a composite State. It will be our endeavour to keep Assam a composite State; but it will depend on the atmosphere there, and the peace and harmony among the various ethnic groups.

I am thankful to Mr. Chiranji Lal Sharma for the support which he extended.

Mr. Harikesh Bahadur has said that no permission was given to Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee. In this connection, I would like to say that Mr. Vajpayee has just now read from the newspapers that he addressed a mammoth meeting of 25,000 people.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: That is the press report.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: Therefore, it is not correct to say that no permission was given.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: What about Dibrugarh and Tezpur?  
(Interruptions)

SHRI P. C. SETHI: He has also said that Indira-Mujib and Nehru-Liaquat Pacts are not explained. We have said and I have said in the Preamble that we are committed to all these international agreements and commitments. I am grateful to him for having appealed to the Assam leaders not to take a rigid stand and all parties should try to solve the problem. I am also thankful to Shri Jamilur Rahman for having extended the support to us and for clarifying the position as it stands. Then I come to Shri Chitta Basu. I am very thankful to him because he was not only emphatic but as very powerful and forceful in his arguments.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Not only ethnic but fanatic also!

MR. SPEAKER: Was that not unparliamentary, Professor?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: He has very rightly said that the separatist and divisive forces have to be fought so that the country's unity could be maintained.

He has also said that in 1977 it was notional to treat 1971 as cut-off year.

(Interruptions)

SHRI P. C. SETHI: This has been recently clarified by the Prime Minister. Mr. Chitta Basu also made a point that Assam is multi-lingual and the demand of one group cannot be considered in isolation and the national consensus of 1971 should be taken into account when you decide this figure. I am thankful to Begum Abida Ahmed for the position she has clarified and the support she has extended. I am thankful to Shri Unnikrishnan and Dr. Karan Singhji for their viewpoints. Dr. Karan Singhji has said that all-party delegation should be sent there. In this connection, Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee's motion is coming for consideration and I would like to express myself at that point of time. He has also made a point that we should not stand on a prestige issue and we should start a dialogue. As far as we are concerned, we have never stood on the prestige issue and our door for a dialogue is open. But, at the same time, to start a dialogue, there should be a conducive atmosphere and normalcy. As soon as normal and conducive atmosphere is restored, we would certainly have a dialogue but to have a dialogue with only ASSU and AAGSP, I am sure, will not be fruitful. We will have to involve not only them but the national parties and the other leaders of Assam in the dialogue and particularly the elected representatives. In this connection, I would like also to clarify that the other groups of Assam, the ethnic minorities, tribal hills, etc. and AASU etc. have also to be consulted. We have consulted them before. As a matter of fact, some of them participated in the first meeting. But apart from that, apart from participating in the tripartite talks, time and again, we had met them. I am thankful to Shri Girdhari Lal Vyas for the support which he has given to us. Then, Sir, I am thankful to Shri Chandrajit Yadav, who has very clearly said that a group of people under the garb of demands is responsible for this.



AN HON. MEMBER: What are they?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: I know Shri Chandrajit Yadav very well. He always prefers dialogues. He is always in favour of settlement through negotiations and he is generally helpful to resolve a problem. And Sir, he has..

(Interruptions)

श्री रामावतार शास्त्री (पटना) :  
आपकी स्पीच खाली तारीफ करने वाली  
स्पीच है।

SHRI P. C. SETHI: He has also stated that the constitutional obligation was justified.

Then, Sir, in the last, I am thankful to Mr. Banatwalla for the speech he has delivered and to the last speaker, Mr. Santosh Mohan Dev also. But I am sorry, some heat was generated during his speech.

AN HON. MEMBER: Unnecessarily!

SHRI P. C. SETHI: But he was full of sorrow, his heart was full of sorrow. It was sure that he was bound to speak on the factual position.

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV: It was full of facts.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Minister, no thanks of the Chair which has provided so much of opportunity?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: I am not only thankful to you, but grateful to you for giving me time, and also for accommodating me. I should also thank the leaders of the Opposition and of my own Party for having participated in the debate and accommodating me in attending both the Houses.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: Yesterday I called the movement secessionist and it was challenged. I must establish it.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not the time.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: When Mr. Dandavate replies—he should reply—but I have documents and quotations about the leaders of the movement and with your permission I like to read it. (Interruptions) I will take only one moment. This is the manifesto.

MR. SPEAKER: I cannot allow. You do it some other time.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: Let me say.

MR. SPEAKER: This is not the time. I am sorry.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY.....\*

MR. SPEAKER: It is not going on record. No.

(Interruptions)\*

MR. SPEAKER: He will answer. If I start in this way..

(Interruptions)

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मैं जवाब दे रहा हूँ,  
आप क्यों बोल रहे हैं? मेरा काम करना  
हो तो यहीं आ जाइये।

If I am to .....

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You can do it later on give some personal explanation. I cannot agree. Then everybody will say this is important. I cannot open the Pandora's Box.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You have made your point. Be reasonable Yes, Professor Dandavate, please.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Raipur): Mr. Speaker, we had a lengthy debate right from yesterday and first I am very happy to find that in the entire debate there was no acrimony, though my friend Mr. Santosh Mohan Dev has said something. I can understand the feelings of anyone coming from Assam. Therefore, though on some substance we may



have differences, I share this anguish and anxiety but I am happy about the complete absence of acrimony in the debate.

In a lighter vein, I would like to begin with what the Prime Minister said. She made a very welcome announcement, that she respects the cultural identity of every State. Of course, this statement came by way of personal explanation to account for the varied costumes that she uses and she said that she liked the costumes of every State, and that they are equally beautiful. India's concept of unity has never been uniformity; India's concept of unity has been unity through diversity. Therefore, we are extremely happy and we have no grievance against the Prime Minister going to the different States and wearing different costumes. All the costumes are equally beautiful, and if the Prime Minister looks more beautiful, we will be happier, because we have no complaint at all. But the feeling she expressed is more important, that she respects the cultural identity of the various States. When she comes to Maharashtra, I shall offer her the most beautiful saree of Maharashtra. But I hope that she will also take cognisance of the problems of Maharashtra.

MR. SPEAKER: But you did not send us the mangoes which you promised.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: If I failed to send the mangoes of the Konkan region, I hope it will not prejudice the mind of the entire Parliament.

There are certain serious questions that have been raised in the entire debate. One question was particularly posed by a number of members to me and the members of the BJP and the Lok Dal, which were part and parcel of the Janata Government. The question posed was: why is it that this question of the foreigners' issue has become so intense today, why has it become alive today, why was it not taken up

by the agitators earlier. Here my only reply is that sometimes there are live issues, important issues, burning issues, sometimes they are raised at a particular stage, in some other cases they are raised earlier. If our critics go on arguing why the people became alive to the issue so late, if I were to give an analogy, going back to 1929-30, when on the banks of the river Ravi the Indian National Congress adopted the pledge of complete independence, the Britishers could have posed the question, why all these years you never talked in terms of complete independence, you never made any demand for complete independence, why is it that in 1929-30 you are talking about it?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: That is no analogy at all.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Even if the nation realises late about its rights, responsibilities and duties, to me it is a welcome phenomenon. If the pledge for independence and the demand for independence came in 1930 and for years together we did not talk of independence, that does not justify any opposition to this demand. Therefore, if various people are talking in terms of the cultural entity and identity within the broader framework of India's Constitution, India's unity and integrity, I do not think it is altogether a proposition that can be opposed by anyone.

There was another question that was raised, and that was the serious question of violence and arson. There was one meeting to which Shri Vajpayee has already made a reference. Quite a number of members asked the question: Did the Janata Party, the BJP and the Lok Dal dissociate themselves from violence and make an appeal to the people to see that the divisive forces are not strengthened? I have with me a statement issued by Shri Ravindra Varma, General Secretary of the Janata Party. It was issued on the 17th of February. I would read only a small paragraph from that statement:

[Prof. Madhu Dandavate]

"In everyone of the meetings that the former Chief Minister, Shri Golap Barborā and I addressed in Assm, we appealed to everyone to eschew violence and to adhere strictly to peaceful and non-violent means. We appealed to people not to give any quarter to those who tried to appeal to divisive loyalties—communal, linguistic or ethnic—and to defeat all efforts to disrupt the harmony, resort to violence or divide people. Subsequently, on the eve of the poll, Shri Barborā, the President of our party and the members of our party in the Rajya Sabha appealed to people to desist from violence and maintain peace at all costs. The National Executive of our Party made a similar appeal in the resolution it adopted recently at Bangalore."

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN (Gulbarga): what we said is that you never condemned violence.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: We openly condemned violence everywhere. We went to the extent of explaining the efficiency of non-violent peaceful struggle and I quoted the Gandhian method by which they were able to produce better results and appealed that, therefore, better counsels should prevail upon the agitators and that they should resort to the peaceful democratic path. That is what we have said.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Are you condemning it at least now?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Even now I am condemning it, if that satisfies Shri Stephen. If Shri Stephen has any doubt and suspicion about the democratic credentials or democratic intentions, in that case, even on the floor of this House, I would say that I condemn every form of violence, be it the leonine violence committed by the rulers or the violence committed by the agitators. I equally condemn both and I want that to go on record.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: It is too late.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: No, it is not too late, because I have already done it earlier. (*Interruptions*) Even when the violence was committed I had addressed a number of meetings in which I had put forward this point of view. (*Interruptions*).

I have already placed before the house the entire background of the issue—our complaint against the Government, the failure of their policies. But there are some additional aspects to which I would like to make a cursory reference.

As far as this Government is concerned, it has invoked certain provisions which were invoked during the British days. Leave aside the National Security Act and the Essential Services Maintenance Act which is their own creation they also went back to some of the old provisions which were utilised by the Britishers when they ruled this country. Sir, the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act is in force in Assam, and this Act empowers any commissioned officer, warrant officer or non-commissioned officer or any other persons of equivalent rank in the armed forces to fire upon, or otherwise use force, even to the causing of death, against any person who is acting in contravention of any law or order for the time being in force. Similarly, you will be surprised to know that not satisfied with these measures, the President promulgated the Assam Executive Magistrates (Temporary Powers) Act, which empowers the Executive to confer the temporary powers to an executive magistrate or any gazetted officer, and further gives unprecedented judicial powers to the executive magistrate, "to the exclusion of other magistrates to take cognizance, try and dispose of cases relating to offences under IPC or any other law providing for imprisonment for six months", "to try offences against public tranquility and contempt of the legal authority of the public servants."

And, Sir, to crown the glory of all these ignominious laws of the British regime, the Government has invoked Sections 17 and 18 of the Indian Police Act, 1861, which authorises the Government to "appoint residents of the neighbourhood to act as special police officers, with the same powers, privileges or protection and shall be amenable to the same penalties, and be subordinate to the same authorities, as the ordinary officers of police."

Sir, these provisions which I quoted very clearly indicate that to suppress the agitation of the Assam agitators they are prepared to resort to all the repressive measures. But it should be possible for the Government to take shelter under the existing laws and see that law and order is maintained, but you can see the manner in which the police force were actually utilised. While the Home Minister referred to the entire situation in Assam, he said that the entire para-military force has conducted itself in a dignified and remarkable manner. Sir, you can see the manner in which some of the youngsters are harassed by the paratroopers, the manner in which the womenfolk has been harassed, the manner in which the lawyers and the professors and the doctors have been harassed by the police. There are a number of villages from where a number of young persons, when the paratroopers come, go to the fields and disappear from their homes because when the paratroopers are not able to find any culprits, just for producing a young man for a young man, they try to take away the young folk and that is being done by all the para-military forces.

There is a reference to clash between the local police and the CRP. Such a situation arises only when the discontent has gone deep. I am not happy that the clashes took place between the police forces themselves because that will mean the end of India's unity and integrity. Nobody would be happy about it, but when the policeman also takes to arms and fire on

others, it means that the entire discontent is deep and therefore, cognizance has to be taken of this particular fact.

As far as other points are concerned, our Home Minister was able to say—all the necessary precautions were taken and he made one statement in this House—as far as electoral rolls are concerned, as far as the faulty electoral rolls are concerned, as far as the corrections are concerned, that particular area falls completely within the jurisdiction of the Election Commission. If they have detected that there are already certain faults, thousands of people are left out of this, those people who have recently become the voters and their names have not been included and the question of foreigners has also remained unsolved, I think on the basis of the provision of the Representation of Peoples Act it was obligatory on the part of the Government to have gone through all this procedure.

I would like to repeat what I said yesterday that the former Chief Election Commissioner has already said about certain obligations as far as the Peoples Representation Act is concerned—after every census try to see that the rolls are revised and those who have newly become the voters, they are not kept out of the voters list, that is their obligatory responsibility and duty. Even that has not been fulfilled. When they found that that is actually a loop-hole in their entire policy and implementation, to day the Home Minister comes out with the formulation that as far as this area is concerned, it is completely the jurisdiction and the responsibility of the Election Commission and they are getting their hands completely off.

It is not a surprise that the local population did not come forward to act as the Returning Officers and various officials and agents at the polling booths and, therefore a large number of people had to be brought to Bihar. Bihar Government Servants Associa-



[Prof. Madhu Dandavate]

tion passed a Resolution and they refused to go. It was a sight to see when officers from Delhi were taken to Assam, to Gauhati. All the members of family of these government servants came to give them a send off as if they were going to the war front. There was Lakshman's cartoon to that effect—people i.e. Government Servants were given send off by the members of their family, as if they were going for the war front. That was the unstable situation that was created.

Even now it is not too late. I do not want to repeat all the points that I stressed yesterday. But I would like to remind the Home Minister that if you are interested in settling the foreigners issues and see that the stable administration is given to the people of Assam, it is necessary that you do not break the link of the negotiation that you have already started. Continue these negotiations and in these negotiations, I can assure on behalf of the opposition that we will continue to co-operate to find out the solution. If our Indian Government is committed to solving the international dispute at the negotiating table then how is it that we fail in our negotiations at the negotiating tables as far as Indian problems are concerned? I would, therefore, urge the Home Minister and the Prime Minister that despite what has happened, the avenues of negotiation can never be closed. The negotiation should continue. I have not the least doubt that Assembly that is going to be elected will be rump Assembly, the Government that will be formed will be a rump Government. It will never represent the will and wishes of the people of Assam. Therefore, this new puppet Government will never be able to represent the wishes of the people and, therefore, democratic and peoples Government will have to be formed. It have not the least doubt, and I would warn the Government—if you try to perpetrate an unrepresent Government in Assam, that

will never carry the people of Assam with it.

You have already fulfilled the obligation in the Constitution. You will have to do away with unrepresented and un-democratic Government so that new Government represents the will and wishes of the people and also the foreigners issue is solved. Even if this debate is able to drive home to the Government the imperative need of solving the foreigners issue, I think the debate would have fulfilled its objective.

One more word about the Motion that I have moved. I do not think the Motion which I have moved is controversial at all because I have under Rule 184 moved and it merely says—

“That this House do take into consideration the Statement that is laid on the Table of the House.”

That is, read out in the House by the Home Minister. I think whether that Motion is passed or not, my Motion is already implemented because it only said:

“That this House do take into consideration the statement of the Minister” and, therefore, whether you vote for it, or against it, I think my Motion has been implemented in fact.

SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN (Madras North): I want to get one clarification from the former Railway Minister. When Shri Madhu Dandavate was the Railway Minister suppose he asked the driver to run the train engine, if he refused to run, what he would he have done as Railway Minister?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Let me make it very clear. If this situation were to arise as a part and parcel of this agitation, I would have shown the guts to say that the demands of these agitators are justified and therefore I am not going to..... (Interruptions) If it comes to that, I

would even resign. But I would not take this kind of action. (*Interruptions.*)

SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar): That is why, people have rejected you.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: My Party has polled the highest percentage of votes in the elections.

अध्यक्ष महोदय : वाजपेयी जी, क्या आप अपना सब्स्टीच्यूट मोशन वापस ले रहे हैं ?

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं तो यह समझता था कि मेरा सब्स्टीच्यूट मोशन स्वीकार करने में कोई कठिनाई नहीं होगी । लेकिन अगर मेजोरिटी पार्टी को कोई कठिनाई है तो मैं इस सवाल पर हाउस को बांटना नहीं चाहता । अगर सरकार की मर्जी हमारा सहयोग लेने की नहीं है तो बात दूसरी है । मैं तो यह चाहता था कि इस सदन की ओर से एक स्वर में कुछ कहा जाता ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : वह आ जाएगा ।

Has he the leave of the House to withdraw the motion?

HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

The substitute motion was, by leave withdrawn.

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आनरेबल मेम्बर्स, अभी आप के सामने सारा विवाद हुआ । आप लोगों ने समस्या का समाधान सोचा । सारे हाउस की तरफ से यह राय है कि हम इस मामले पर कुछ कहें जो कि एक मरहम के तौर पर हो और देश के लिए सुखदायी भी हो । जो कष्ट हुआ है, उस को हम ठीक करें ।

यह देश बहुत बड़ा है और इसकी जड़ें भी बहुत गहरी हैं । उन जड़ों को को कोई दीमक लगाने वाला न रहे, इस वजह से, इस हाउस की तरफ से मैं यह रिजोल्यूशन आपके सामने रख रहा हूँ ।

"This House, after discussing the situation in Assam, do condemn the brutal killings and the riots that took place there and appeal to the people of Assam to strengthen the feelings of mutual cooperation and brotherhood and find a solution to the complicated problem amicably and help the administration in restoring peace."

*The Resolution was adopted.*

MR. SPEAKER: So, the Resolution is adopted unanimously.

13.44 hrs.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW MINISTER.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI-MATI INDIRA GANDHI): The Ministers were introduced the other day. One of them was not well and so he could not be introduced. May I now introduce him to you and through you to the House?

He is my colleague, Shri Dharamavir, Minister of State in the Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri P. Shiv Shankar.

श्री राम विलास पासवान (हाजीपुर) : सर, मैंने नोटिस दिया है ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय: आपने मुझे नोटिस दिया है, मैं आपको बताता हूँ ।