MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member may continue next time.

HALF-AN-HOUR DISCUSSION

AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION IN ORDER
TO LOWER THE VOTING AGE

MR. CHAIRMAN: We now talk up the Half-an-hour Discussion.

Shri C. K. Chandiappan.

The spirit of what you are going to say was discussed earlier. So, you be brief.

SHRI S M. BANERJEE (Kanpur). Our contention is that they might accept it.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Gwahor · An ally of the ruling party!

CHANDRAPPAN SHRI C. K. (Teilicherry) Before going into the details of the matter, I would make a request to the hon Manister not to give another evasive reply to this question because in August 1972 I myself had raised this question in the House by way of Half-An-Hour Discussion. As it is known to you. half-an-hour discussions are when Ministers give evasive answers To a question whether there was any ploposal before the Government to reduce the voting age, the Minister had answered that such proposals were under consideration, and when an half-an-hour discussion was raised, again the hon. Minister give the same rcply, a very brief but the same reply. But I would like to tell him that, in 1971, when his party faced the electorate in this country, they had made a promise that they would reduce the voting age to 18. You may remember, in 1967 when party had been reduced to a minority in nine States in the country, analysing the election results the Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, said that one of the several reasons

for the defeat of the Congress was the disenchantment of young people and they would try to do something to rectify this. In 1971 they got, as they always put it, the massive support of the young people. And those young people who supported them naturally expected that they would be given a right to have a say in the future of the country. But that has been denied.

To reject one of the arguments put iorward by Mr. Vajpayee, the hon. Minister had quoted the recommendation of a Joint Committee on amendments to Election Commission. He had quoted the recommendation to reject Mr. Vajpayee's proposal. But the same Committee has recommended.

'Having considered both the above viewpoints, the Committee decided that the voting age should be reduced from 21 to 18 years"

The Committee, therefore, recommended that article 326 of the Constitution might be amended accordingly I would just ask him whether he is ready to accept that proposal of the Committee, because that Committee s recommendation was cited as something holy to reject Mr. Vajpayee's proposal.

Then the petitions Committee of the Fourth Lok Sabha also had recommended that voting right should be given at the age of 18

I had been hearing the discussion which was taking place in the House on Mr. Vajpayee's Resolution when this point was also raised. Several members said that something very dangerous would happen if people were allowed to vote at the age of 18. It has been said that they are students at that age, they will not be able to study and all that. My hon friend, Mr. Daga, has pointed out that at the age of 18 they are students and their studies would be affected.

What is the percentage of such students in the country? It is very smail. Even after 25 years of independence, most of the people do not have the fortune of being in the schools upto the age of 18. So, don't worry about the students. The question today is whether you are going to accept certain realities which have been accepted more or less the world over. That is, the young people today want a greater say. They want to have a greater say on all matters, they want to have a direct participation and they do not want any more to be treated in a patronising manner. And when the Government say that young people are behaving in an irresponsible manner this is one of the ways by which you can share your responsibility with the young people. You can take them into confidence and you can give them certain right and you have also to accept the fact that in the present age, due to technological developments, due to spread of mass media, communications, etc., the young people today are not like the young people of the olden days; they are more enlightened, more educated, more conscious of their right and they want that their right should be accepted.

I will not make a long speech. We often cite the example of Britain, the Mother of Parliaments. In Britain two elections were held, that is, the recent election and the election before, on the basis of 18-year voting right. In the United States 18-year voting right has been granted. Our two neighbours, Bangladesh (where conditions are more or less similar to ours), and Ceylon have granted 18-year voting right.

I want a categorical answer from the hon. Minister. He was whispering to me that more or less the same answer I will get. I want to tell you of one thing. If you are today denying it, it is not like the denial of 1972. 'There is a different' context and metning. Now the Election

Commission is in the midst of delimitation. They have appointed Committees and work is going on. If your intention is not to bluff young people, if your intention is that you will consider and do something, this is the time for you to grant voting rights. If you want it after a year or so, it is not practical for you to implement it in 1976. So, I will take it, if he denies now or if he says, it is under consideration, things are to be discussed, I would beg to submit to him, that it is not as an academic matter that I am raising this thing. If you say like that, you should remember, by that statement you are completing betrayal of the young people which you have been doing for the last few years. I think it will not be pardoned and I would like to strike a note of warning, that there is going to be a very powerful united movement of the young people in this country which will be massive, which will be militant, they will adopt whichever course they may like for achieving this right before the 1976 elections.

So, taking all these into account. I would request the hon. Minister to say 'yes' or 'no'; let us be quite clear about it.

श्री मूल चन्द डागा (पाली): सभापित महोदय, युवक स्वभाव से ग्रादर्शवादी होता है श्रौर वह न्याय का हिमायती होता है। जो वातें ग्राप की जौइंट कमेटी ने तय कर ली हैं श्रौर इलेक्शन कमीशन ने उस को वारव र टालने की कोशिश की है, तो जो युवक का हौसला उभरा है, उन के दिमाग में नई बात ग्रायी है, श्राप दे दें तो ग्रच्छा है, नहीं तो ले लेंगे। ग्रच्छा हो ग्राप कह दीजिए, नहीं तो ग्राधकार वह मांग लेंगे। तो शोभा इस में होगी कि हां कह दें या कुछ टाइम दे दें। ग्रगर मना कर देंगे तो दुनिया के तमाम लोग कहेंगे कि हमारे जवानों की जो इच्छायें उभरी हैं श्रौर विद्यार्थी लोकतन्त्र में हिस्सा लेना चाहते हैं श्रौर न्याय की हिमायती करना

चाहते हैं, उस बात को बाप क्यो रोकना चाहते है। यह देश मे बडती हई बात है, भीर द्याप तेरोक दिया तो वह आगे आ जायगे। अच्छा होगा भ्राप वह द कि हम कर देगे जल्दी से जल्दी । मना मत करना ।

सभापति महोदय: मदी जी, ग्राप मेरी भी एक शका का जवाव दे दे ग्रपने जवाब मे भीर वह यह कि यदि एक युवक सेना मे भर्ती होकर 18 साल की उन्न मे देश के लिये कूर्वान हो सकता है, यदि वह शादी कर के 18 साल नी उप्र में पिना भी हो सनता है कानन नी रृष्टि से, तो क्या वह मतदाता ही हो सकता? भ्राप को इस के बारे मे क्या कहना है?

विधि व्याय और कम्पनी कार्य मत्रास्य में राज्य मत्री (श्री नीतिराज सिंह चौधरी). मभापति महोदय सब सं पहले प्रस्तावक महोदय न जो बात कही उन्हें एक गलतफहमी हे उस को में दूर करना चाहता हू। उन्हों ने कहा है कि डी-लिमिटशन कमीशन ध्रभी काम कर रहा है भीर यह ऐसा अवसर है जब शासन का अपना निर्णय कर लेना चाहिय क्यों कि कास्टीटयऐसीज का डी-लिमिटेशन हो गया व." हो जाने के बाद अगर फैसल हुआ तो 1976 के चनाव में गडबडी होगी हो नहीं सकेगा। में कहना चाहना है कि डीलिमिटेशन बोटस की सख्या पर डिपेड नहीं वरता / बल्कि वह जनसञ्या पर मन्हसर है। ग्राज जो डीलिमिट-णन क्मी शन कर रहा जो कन बीनो सदनो ते बनाया है। उस मे जो डीलिमिटेशन होगा वह पौपुलेशन जनसख्या के ग्राधार पर होगा। उस मे यवक भी रहेग बच्चे भी रहेगे बढे भी रहेगे फिर सव ल श्रायगा बोटर्स लिस्ट का कि बोटर कीन है। इस के लिए जीइट कमेटी ने एक व्यवस्था की है। सभी यह होता था साल मे पहली जनवरी एसी तारीख था जिसके ग्राध र पर सारी बोटर्स स्टबनाई जाती शिधवा जो बिल है उसमें सुझाव है साल में पहली जनवरी पहली अर्थन पहली जुलाई और पहली सितम्बर नव लिफाइन डेट होगी जिस के आधार पर मेणा बोटर्स लिस्ट बदली जायगी। सो धागर शासन ने धाज यह फैसला लिया या धाज नहीं कुछ समय बाद लिया तो जिस समय लेगा उस के बाद मे जो भी पहली तारीख इन चार मे से भावगी उस के श्राधार पर मतदाता सचियों में परिवर्तन हो जायगा भीर उस के ... बाद जो चुनाव होगे वह उसी भ्राधार पर होंगे इसलिये इस बिना के ऊपर कोई मन मे शुबहा _ रखना ठीक नही है कि डीलिमिटेशन होने के बाद ग्रगर शासन ने निर्णय लिया तो यह बान नहीं हो सकेगी।

ग्रब रही बात यह कि शासन इस के बारे मे क्या फैमला कर रहा है ? यह बात जैसा में ने पहले भी जवाब मे कहा था भौर पहले 1972 में आधे घटे की चर्चाम जो कहा था वही परिस्थिति आज है। बान सही है श्राप ने जो बात वही उस को मे बिल्कूल मानता हंस्वीकार करताई जो डगाजी ने कहा श्रीर माननीय चन्द्रप्पन ने कहा उन सब की में स्वीकार करता है श्रीर व्यक्तिगत रूप से एक कदम भाग जाता है। पर जब करना होता ैतो कुछ कठिनाइया होती है उनको हल करना पडता है। बिना उन को हल किये कोई पै.सला कर लेना कोई ग्रकलमन्दी की बात नहीं है ।

यह बात मही ह जंसा ग्रभी कहा गया कि कुछ देशों ने बगला दश श्रीर सीलोन ने 18 साल की उम्र के लोगों को बीट देने का ग्राधिकार दे दिया है। यह भी ठीक है कि यु० के शौर यु एस ा न मे भी दिय गया है।। पर यह बात न भने कि यु के कि भीर यु एस० ए० मे 100 साल बाद यह अधिकार श्राया । मगर इस श्राधार पर हम यह ·ही कह सकते कि हम भी 100 साल बाद द गै बल्कि हम को तैज चलन पडेगा। यु० के० में लैटी कमेटी को बनाई गई थी 1965 में उसने ग्रपनी सिफारिश दी उस के बाद स्पीकर्स कानफरेस ने 1968 में रिकमन्डेशन दी उस के बाद यू॰ के॰ ने 18 साल से ऊपर वालो को बोट देने क प्रशिकार दिया था। यही प्रक्रिया यु० एस० ए० की भी है। हमारे यहां शासन इस पर विचार कर रहा है उसमें क्या क्या वार्तें भ्रायेगी जिन की इमप्लीमेट करना है उनसे राय लीहेंं उन्हों ने भ्रापनी राय दी है। जो करना है उन सब पर विचार

कर के उस के ऊपर फैसला किय जायगा।

373

मेंने जो कहा में आप से एक कदम आगे हूं में इस भावना को मानता हू और व्यक्तिगत रूप से इस से सहमत हू कि ऐसा होना चाहिये। पर मेंने जैसा कहा कि कठिनाइया है और जब तक उन को हल न कर लिया जाय।

सभापति महोदय . कठिनाइया किस स्वरू । मे है ? कानूनी या व्यावहारिक ?

श्री नीतिराज सिंह जीवरी: जी नही। कानूनी तो इतनी है कि सिर्फ, ग्राटिकिस 326 को ग्रपेड करना पडेगा। ग्रीर बाकी उन को ग्रमल में लाने के लिये क्या क्या करना हागा यह देखना है

SHRI C. K CHANDRAPPAN We can understand that if the hon. Minister will tell us that the difficulties which the Government is facing now will be overcome before 1976.

SHRI NITIRAJ SINGH CHAU-DHARY: As I have already said, the hon Member had expressed a doubt that if a decision were taken later after the delimitation ...

SHRI C K CHANDRAPPAN: I am convinced of that point So, let him not repeat it Will he take a decision before 1976? That is my simple question

SHRI NITIRAJ SINGH CHAU-DHARY It would not be proper for me to make that commitment, but I say that Government are actively considering this matter and a decision would be taken as soon as the difficulties are solved.

MR CHAIRMAN: So, he says that it is capable of being taken before?

18.30 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, March 18, 1974/Phalguna 27, 1895 (Saka)