

Last made to the House on the 21st March, 1975:—

- (1) The Tobacco Board Bill, 1975.
- (2) The Trust Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1975.

12.09 hrs.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SECOND REPORT

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): I beg to present the Hundred and fifty-second Report of the Public Accounts Committee on paragraph 33 of the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1972-73, Union Government (Civil), relating to the Ministry of Health and Family Planning (Department of Health)

13.10 hrs.

STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION
IN SIKKIM

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Yeshwantrao Chavan. You can lay it on the Table of the House.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी : (स्वा-
लियर) : हम सुनना चाहते हैं, यह महत्व-
पूर्ण स्टेटमेंट है ।

बिसेस मंत्री (श्री यशवन्त राव चव्हाण) :
हम भी पढ़ना चाहते हैं ।

I should like to take the opportunity to keep the Hon. Members informed of certain recent development in Sikkim.

As the House is aware, Government has been making sincere efforts to ensure the speedy economic and social development of the people of Sikkim under democratic conditions,

as stipulated in the Agreement of 8th May, 1973 and the Government of Sikkim Act, 1974.

Both documents had the assent and approval of the Chogyal as well as the political leadership of Sikkim. However, the arrangements that were instituted on the basis of these agreements, with the responsible Government constituted by duly elected leaders on the one hand, and the Chogyal functioning as a Constitutional Head of Government on the other, depended essentially for their success, on the sincerity of the Chogyal and full acceptance by him in practice of the democratic system under which he would cease to have the overriding powers he had exercised for more than two decades.

As Hon. Members are aware, Government of India have been requested, on several occasions over the past 20 years, by political leaders and the people of Sikkim for the abolition of the institution of the Chogyal. Government of India's endeavour has been to protect the institution, although in the case of Princely States, the Princely order has been abolished in deference to the democratic processes in the country. The deviation in the case of Sikkim was motivated by our desire to show special consideration to the Chogyal in the hope that he would play a responsible role as regards the present Government and Assembly in Sikkim—the first that is truly representative in character, having been elected on the basis of one-man one-vote in free and fair elections—the demand for the removal of the Chogyal has been made and repeated for the past several months. As early as in September last year, the Chief Minister had warned that if democracy was to survive in Sikkim, the Chogyal must go. On our part, we have counselled restraint in the hope and expectation that the Chogyal would ultimately reconcile himself to his constitutional role and adopt a more constructive attitude. However,

(Shri Yeshwantrao Chavan)

we have always made it clear to the Chogyal that while we are anxious to protect the institution of Chogyal in Sikkim, as we have been doing over the past several years, we must naturally give the highest priority to the welfare, interests and aspirations of the common people and their elected leaders. I must say that the situation in Sikkim has now reached a critical phase.

Almost from the day on which the new arrangements came into force, it became clear through Chogyal's statements and actions that he was not reconciled to his Constitutional role and that he was determined to obstruct the functioning of the democratically elected Government through all means at his disposal. In the past few months, the Chief Minister of Sikkim and his colleagues in the Council of Ministers and the Assembly have constantly been representing to the Government of India against the Chogyal's activities, and drawing our attention to the fact that democracy cannot survive in Sikkim as long as the institution of Chogyal continued to exist. We have been counselling patience to political leaders in Sikkim because we hoped that, ultimately good sense and wisdom would prevail on the part of the Chogyal, in the larger interest of the welfare of the people of Sikkim. Unfortunately, these hopes have been belied. The Chogyal's actions over the last few months have been deliberately directed towards creating a crisis situation in the State. The elected representatives and the Government leaders in Sikkim have taken strong exception, and with justification, to his statements questioning the validity of the democratic process and even the Government of Sikkim Act which he himself had promulgated only some months ago. They have been outraged by the propaganda campaign that he has either undertaken personally or encouraged. The Government of Sikkim and the Government of India have been particularly shocked, in

recent weeks, to know of efforts to intimidate, terrorise, threaten and even physically harm political leaders and common people in Sikkim in a bid to disrupt law and order, obstruct the functioning of the Government and subvert the democratic process. There have been assassination attempts on the Chief Minister by use of explosives, there was the stabbing of an unarmed Member of the Sikkim Assembly by a member of the Chogyals' entourage in the Chogyal's presence, and some other distressing information has come to light only a few days ago on elaborate plans to use violence against elected representatives.

In view of the sharp deterioration in relations between the elected representatives and the Chogyal, I had instructed the Foreign Secretary to visit Gangtok last week to study the situation. In particular, the Foreign Secretary did his utmost to impress upon the Chogyal that we had all along been urging patience upon the elected representatives in the hope that the Chogyal would cooperate with the Government instead of seeking confrontation with them, but if these efforts to impede the functioning of the Government, insult the elected representatives and intimidate them in various ways continued, the situation could well reach crisis proportions. It is now unfortunately evident that this effort did not have the desired effect.

It is in the context of the deteriorating law and order situation and the suspicion of the imminent threat to the lives of some leaders in Sikkim that an urgent request was received from the Chief Minister of Sikkim for the immediate disarming and disbanding of the Sikkim guards. Even earlier, the Government of India had been urged by the Chief Minister that the Government of Sikkim should not be expected to support with public funds the presence of several hundred armed personnel for the exclusive use of the Chogyal. The Hon Members would agree that there could be no justification for a private army of

about 400 people retained by the Chogyal on the palace premises but paid for by the public exchequer. The evidence of possible conspiracy against the Chief Minister and his colleagues indicating complicity of some Sikkim guards added urgency to this request. In view of the pressing appeal from the Chief Minister and of the Government of India's responsibility to ensure law and order in the State, the Government took necessary steps to disarm the Sikkim guards on the afternoon of 9th April.

Before I conclude, I would like to mention another demand by the political leaders in Sikkim, which has been made earlier on many occasions and has been reiterated in recent weeks, for according to the elected Government full rights and responsibilities on par with a constituent unit of the Indian Union. The request is a reflection and a conscious expression of the traditional sentiment and popular wish in Sikkim to fully participate in the mainstream of Indian life. It has again been repeated, along with the demand for the abolition of the institution of the Chogyal, in the resolution passed unanimously by the Sikkim Assembly at its meeting on the 10th April, the implications of which are being studied by the Government of India.

श्री मधु लिमये (बांका) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं संक्षेप में दो बातें कहना चाहता हूँ।

MR. SPEAKER: I am very sorry. It will be much better if you avoid it. Don't ask question.

श्री मधु लिमये : मैं क्वेश्चन नहीं पूछूंगा।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : इसके बारे में कल ही नोटिस दिया था, यानी मिनिस्टर के स्टेटमेंट देने के बारे में नोटिस कल दिया होगा, हम लोगों ने सबरे दिया। तो यह मामला काल एटेंशन में आना चाहिये। वह नहीं आया। मैंने उनको इंटरप्ट नहीं किया।

मैं केवल दो बातें कहना चाहता हूँ। आपको याद होगा कि सिक्किम के बारे में अधिवेशन में संशोधन करने वाले विधेयक

अध्यक्ष महोदय : स्टेटमेंट के बाद इस वक्त न कुछ कहिये।

श्री मधु लिमये : कब मौका मिलेगा ? विशेष पक्ष के द्वारा जो बातें कही जाती हैं उसके बारे में यह सोचते नहीं। पिछले सिक्किम बिल के बारे में हमने कहा था कि यह तमाम मामले उठने वाले हैं। हमने इस तरह की प्राशंकाएँ व्यक्त की थी।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : किसी और मौके पर कल लीजियेगा। इस वक्त न करें तो अच्छा ही है।

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai): In this regard, a Constitution. (Amendment) Bill has been adopted in this House. This statement could have been made by the Home Minister. I do not know why the Minister of External Affairs should make this statement. Now Sikkim forms an associate State of India.

MR. SPEAKER: That is a different matter.

श्री प्रमल बिहारा बाजपेयी : अध्यक्ष जी, मेरा यह सुझाव है, इस समय हम कुछ पूछना नहीं चाहते लेकिन मैं एक सुझाव देना चाहता हूँ कि विदेश मंत्री महोदय सदन के कुछ सदस्यों को निमंत्रित करें, वहाँ की परिस्थिति के बारे में जो बातें वह प्रकट रूप में नहीं कह सकते वह हमारे सामने रखें, हमारी प्रतिक्रिया जानने और भविष्य में क्या करने का उनका इरादा है इसके बारे में भी संकेत दें, विचार विनियम करें।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : ठीक है।

SHRI SAMAR GUHA: A Constitution (Amendment) Bill has already been adopted.

अध्यक्ष महोदय : माननीय मधु लिमये जी चाहते थे तो मैंने मना नहीं किया। और मौके पर देख लीजियेगा जिस पर यह चीजें आ सकती हैं। मैंने मना नहीं किया उनको। मैं सोचता हूँ कि जैसा माननीय बाजपेयी जी ने कहा है बैठकर बात कर लेंगे, उसके बाद जो मुनासिब समझेंगे कर लेंगे।