

he may be innocent—but the fact remains there. What is on trial is not the fortunes of the Congress Party. We know they are in doldrums. What is more important is this, Let not the interest of the party prevail against the interest of India. When the Kashmiri people chose to accede to India, it was because India was a democracy. If elections are not to be free and fair in Kashmir, what is it that we are going to offer? Today, if in some sections of the Kashmiri people—I have mentioned it again and again—there is a kind of frustration and resentment, it is not against India. It is against this kind of practices that they resent because they are never allowed to enjoy the common heritage of fellow Indians.

Once again, this Government is going to commit the same mistake. The Kashmiri people, like the rest of India, must be given the same right, the same privileges and the same freedom to elect their Government, including the possibility of changing the Government. If the Kashmiri people realise that they can change an unwanted Government, no Pakistani pressure, no insinuation, can ever make a dent on their thinking about the accession to India.

The hon. Minister has given an assurance that the Chief Secretary has been asked to look into it. Why does he not prevail upon the Chief Election Commissioner to be present in Kashmir? It is not enough to say that a senior officer is going there. I do not know what is seniority here. These are very vague terms. A Section Officer is very often a senior officer. I do not know how senior he is, whether he refers to the status or the age of the officer. He may be a man approaching retirement and, therefore, senior. I want that the Chief Election Commissioner himself or somebody of that status should be there. Further, it is no use locking the stable after the horse has bolted away; it is no use taking care after the malpractices, after such practices, are resorted to. These complaints should be enquired into immediately and an assurance given to the electors that the elections will be fair as they are entitled to.

SHRI GOVINDA MENON : A senior officer is not an old man as has

been said. One of the Secretaries of the Election Commission, Mr. Rajgopalan, is going there to study the matter. After all, a telegram received is only an allegation. He has been asked to look into the matter and see that these things do not take place.

SHRI NATH PAI : Why not the Chief Election Commissioner? Since there is a history behind it, because 22 elections were rigged and you know how the High Court has said about it—I do not want to repeat it—let the Chief Election Commissioner go there. In the light of the serious allegations in the light of the fact that it is India that is on trial and the whole world sees what is happening in the Valley, why not persuade the Election Commissioner to go and inspire confidence? What will be lost?

SHRI GOVINDA MENON : The Chief Election Commissioner who is responsible for the conduct of elections has selected one of his senior-most officers to go there. It is not for me to direct the Chief Election Commissioner.

SHRI NATH PAI : I said, 'convey'; did not say 'direct'.

12.15½ hrs.

PAPER LAID ON THE TABLE
COAL MINES (AMENDMENT)
REGULATIONS 1969

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND REHABILITATION (SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD) : I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Coal Mines (Amendment) Regulations 1969, published in Notification No. G.S.R. 945 (English version) and G.S.R. 946 (Hindi version) in Gazette of India dated the 12th April, 1969, under sub-section (7) of section 59 of the Mines Act, 1952. [Placed in Library. See No. LT—859/69]

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBER'S
BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS
(FORTY-EIGHT REPORT)

SHRI RAMAVATAR SHASTRI (Patna) : I present the Forty-eighth Rep-