

Will the hon. Minister indicate whether the Government is considering to amend the Cantonment Boards Act to the degree that that the civilian population living in the cantonment areas are also able to enjoy the same facilities of civic life as the areas under the municipal corporation and the municipal committee.

SHRI K. C. PANT : It is a very wide question. Really speaking, my hon. friend has raised an issue which must be gone into. I recognise the validity of the presumptions on which he has based the question. But we must take into account the fact that these cantonments were meant for the Defence services and not for the civilian population. For instance, 4,247 acres is the area of Kanpur Cantonment of which the civil area is about 560 acres. So, the area is not that large. Population is fairly large—88,000. Population is certainly an important thing. But this is an area which was meant for the cantonment. I would like to emphasise that point because today the city may have grown around the cantonment. In many cantonments in the country, the city may have grown around the cantonment. Land has become costly and there are encroachments and so on and so forth. But the Army has got these cantonments for 100 years or so in some places. whether some other alternative arrangements can be made or not, these are matters to be considered in depth. I do not think that I can give you any assurance in this respect.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARISH RAWAT : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Sulabh-Sauchalaya' schemes have gone a long way in solving the problem of sewerages towards which attention of the hon. Minister has been invited by our hon. friend Shri Sreenivasa Prasad. In so far as I know, a scheme of Sulabh Sauchalaya was prepared and submitted to the D. G. Cantonment Board by all including Ranikhet Cantonment Board for approval but the grants given by the Ministry to Cantonment Boards have been curtailed, as a result of which scheme is still pending clearance. May the hon. Minister let us know whether the proposal regarding enhancing the grants for

Cantonment Board on this head is considered sympathetically and cleared.

SHRI K.C. PANT : In so far as Kanpur is concerned, Cantonment Board has constructed Sulabh Sauchalaya at 5 places with the help of Sulabh International. Besides, they have constructed two Sulabh toilets on their own and are going to construct six more. In so far as the general principle that for Sulabh Sauchalaya more grants should be provided, I am also of the same view but I am not aware of the details of the schemes submitted by the respective Cantonment Boards. I will see to it and if found feasible, grants will be increased. I am in favour of this scheme,

[*English*]

Talks regarding Ram Janam Bhoomi
and Babri Masjid issue

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*433. **SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA :**
SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE :

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government had offered to hold talks on the Ram Janam Bhoomi and Babri Masjid issue in the third week of August;

(b) if so, whether the talks have taken place; and

(c) if so, the outcome thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI
SONTOSH MOHAN DEV) : (a) Yes,
Sir.

(b) and (c) Talks are continuing. It will not be in the public interest to disclose the details at this stage.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I think everybody in the House is very anxious that an early settlement should be arrived at on this very vexed issue which has got potential for a great deal of conflict and

strife in our country, I am not pressing the Minister for the details, because he will not give them, of the talks which have already been held; I believe, according to the Press reports, they have been so far held only with one side, that is, the people representing the Babri Masjid Action Committee and talks with the other side perhaps are still to be held. We would of course be happy if the Government's efforts, delayed efforts of course, better late than never—can lead to a settlement on the basis of some mutual agreement or compromise between the two sides. It would be better. What I would like to know is whether, in the event of the Government's efforts being unable to bring about an agreed solution or a compromise between the two sides, they would stand by the assurance or commitment which has been publicly made on behalf of the Government in that case the judicial process at the level of the High Court would be expedited or accelerated as the only way of getting a solution. Would they consider that?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (S. BUTA SINGH) : Yes Sir.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Such a laconic reply to a lengthy question.

MR. SPEAKER : I can tell you what you want to.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I thought that at least he would shed some light on what is the proposal...

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY : Brevity is not the soul of secrecy.

S. BUTA SINGH : There is complete understanding between you and me on the stipulation that you have made.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : I am not going to fight over Babri Masjid. My second question would be this after they have held the talks with both the sides and before they make up their minds as to what to do finally, would the Government consider consulting also the other parties who are represented in the House

to try to see whether some political consensus can be arrived at as to how to find a solution?

S. BUTA SINGH : My answer would have been—Yes, Sir, but now that they want me to say something, I would say, yes, it has to be with the involvement of all those who are interested in bringing about a mutually acceptable solution to both the factions. And, I would like the hon. Member and other leaders of the political parties here or outside this House to spell out their attitude towards this issue clearly. So far certain political parties have not spelled out their attitude (*Interruptions*) Not the one you represent, but many parties. I would not at this moment like to name those parties, but still there are parties having their legs on both the sides. They must come out clearly how they would like this issue to be resolved in the best national interest.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA : Let us have a discussion in this House; we will spell it out here.

S. BUTA SINGH : That would be at the end when the exercise is completed.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE : Though in public interest the hon. Minister has decided not to divulge anything here and I would not like to challenge that at this stage, yet many of the details have already come in the press and that is creating a great confusion; it would have been perhaps better to tell us the position officially. In any case, I leave it at that.

I would like to know whether the Minister has been able to come to some conclusion with regard to the projected demonstrations from both sides which were to be held in the near future.

S. BUTA SINGH : I made an appeal to both the sides and the House will be satisfied to know that the response to my appeal has been positive.

Imported Equipments

*435. SHRI G. BHOOPATHY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :