

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

OFFICIAL REPORT

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HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE

Monday, 10th August, 1953

The House met at a Quarter Past Eight of the Clock[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(See Part I)

9-15 A.M.

STATEMENT RE KASHMIR SITUATION

The Prime Minister (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): Sir, certain events have occurred in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, with dramatic suddenness during the last two days, and I am therefore venturing to take some time of the House in placing before it such facts as are known to us. Not only this House but the country at large must have viewed these developments with anxious concern. The State of Jammu and Kashmir has been to us not merely a piece of territory which acceded to India five and three quarter years ago, but a symbol representing certain ideals and principles for which our national movement always stood and which have been enshrined in our Constitution. It was because of a community of these ideals and principles which brought the State, in a moment of grave crisis in October 1947, into the larger family of India. But even before that constitutional development took place, a devotion to

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these ideals and to certain common purposes had brought the national movement of the Jammu and Kashmir State in line with the struggle for freedom that inspired our people. In the Kashmir State it was the National Conference which represented this struggle and spoke on behalf of the masses of the people there. The association of the State with India, therefore had a deeper significance than even the constitutional link that was built up.

Much has happened during these years and we have faced trial and tribulation together. Even at the time of the accession of the State to the Union of India, it was made clear that it was for the people of the State to determine their future when suitable opportunities for this arose. The Union was a free union of free people without any compulsion on either side. It was recognised from the very outset that the peculiar position of the State made it necessary for a special position to be accorded to it in our constitutional relationship. Later, when the constitution of the Republic of India was drawn up and finalised, this special position was recognised and it was made clear that any change in or addition to that position would depend upon the wishes of the people of the State as represented in their Constituent Assembly. The subjects of accession were three, namely, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Communications. In an agreement that was arrived at last year, known as the Delhi Agreement, certain consequential and implied powers were

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defined. But the essential subjects of accession remained the three already mentioned.

I mention this because much confusion has been caused by forgetting this basic fact that we have all along stood for a special position of the Kashmir State in the Indian Union. Some people have talked of a "merger". That word of course is totally inappropriate in any event and, to the extent it meant something beyond the constitutional position and our present agreements, was opposed to our policy and those very agreements. Others advocated a weaker association which would also have been against the basic policy that had all along been agreed to and would have involved grave difficulties.

In recent months, an unfortunate agitation sought to undermine this basic position and created not only confusion but powerful reactions, more especially in the Valley of Kashmir. That has been one of the important causes of the difficulties that the people of Kashmir and of India have had to face. Unfortunately, some persons in the State were so affected by this agitation as to forget that community of ideals and principles which had brought Kashmir and India together. It was still more unfortunate that wrong advice was given by them to Shaikh Mohammed Abdullah who had been the acknowledged leader of the National movement in the State and the Prime Minister. Certain utterances of Shaikh Abdullah reflected this advice and created confusion in the minds of the people of the State. Disruptive elements, who had not accepted the principles on which the democratic movement in the State had been built up, took advantage of this position and attempted to disrupt the State. At a time when economic problems of grave import all over the State demanded attention and solution, the Government of the State was divided and ceased to function effectively.

A serious situation was thus created and there was a progressive tendency towards disruption. The Government of India were naturally gravely concerned at these developments, but they did not wish to interfere, except with advice, in the internal structure and administration of the State. Advice was frequently given, but unfortunately it did not succeed in bringing about that unity which had been shaken in the course of the past few months.

Some two weeks ago, two Ministers of the Kashmir Government, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed and Mirza Afzal Beg, visited Delhi and had prolonged consultations with us. We pointed out to them the necessity for resolving their differences and working as a team in furtherance of the aims and objectives of the State. We assured them that we recognised the special status of the State and the Government of India did not wish to interfere in any way in internal problems which should be decided by the Government of the State. We were anxious to help, financially and otherwise, in the development of the State, and were interested in the maintenance of the security and internal order of the State.

A few days ago, we were informed that the differences within the Kashmir Cabinet had become even more pronounced and in fact Ministers publicly spoke against and criticised each other and advocated rival policies. The majority in the Cabinet adhered to the objectives for which they had always stood. One member of the Cabinet, Mr. Beg, however, progressively encouraged by Shaikh Abdullah, opposed these policies. A considerable majority of the Executive of the National Conference sided with the majority in the Cabinet and against the Prime Minister. The break was almost complete and it was impossible for the Government to carry on in this way.

When we were informed of this and our advice was sought, we urged that some way should be found for the

working of the Cabinet as a team on agreed principles and policies. This was an internal matter and we did not wish to interfere. Our interest was in a peaceful and progressive Government having the support of the people. Three days ago we learnt of the demand made by Shaikh Abdullah to one of his Ministers to resign and the latter's refusal to do so. Events then moved rapidly. We were informed of them, but our advice was neither sought nor given. On the 7th August, the majority of the Cabinet presented a memorandum to Shaikh Abdullah in which they pointed out that a factional tendency had been evident in the Cabinet and that this had been responsible for a progressive deterioration in the administration, that their advice had been disregarded and that the Cabinet, as constituted, could not continue. They communicated this memorandum to the Head of the State, the *Sadr-e-Riyasat*.

On the 8th August, the *Sadr-e-Riyasat* sent for Shaikh Abdullah and conveyed his deep concern at the serious differences which existed in his Cabinet. He impressed upon him the immediate necessity for restoring harmony and unity of purpose among the members of his Cabinet in the execution of his policy. Shaikh Abdullah could not give any assurance about the future and as to how he would be able to get over these differences. The *Sadr-e-Riyasat* thereupon suggested that an emergent meeting of the Cabinet should be held at his residence that evening so that the possibilities of securing a stable, unified and efficient Government for the State could be jointly explored. Shaikh Abdullah, however, did not agree to this. Later in the day, the *Sadr-e-Riyasat* wrote to Shaikh Abdullah pointing out all these facts and stating that in these conditions he had been forced to the conclusion that the present Cabinet cannot continue in office any longer and hence he had decided to dissolve the Council of Ministers. A formal order to this effect was passed and a copy of it was

sent to Shaikh Abdullah. In concluding his letter to Shaikh Abdullah, the *Sadr-e-Riyasat* said:

"I need hardly add how deeply distressed I was at having to take this action but the vital interests of the people of the State, which it is my duty to safeguard, leave me no alternative. I trust that this will in no way affect the mutual regard and cordial feelings that we have for each other."

Immediately afterwards the *Sadr-e-Riyasat* called upon Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed to form a new Cabinet. In doing so he stated that the continuance in office of the new Cabinet would necessarily depend upon its securing a vote of confidence from the Legislative Assembly during its coming session. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed accepted this invitation and was sworn in as Prime Minister of the State.

I received information of some of these developments at 11 P.M. on Saturday night, that is night before last. Further information followed on Sunday morning.

Shaikh Abdullah had meanwhile gone to Gulmarg. In fact, the last order was served upon him in Gulmarg. Later he was placed under detention and so was Mr. Beg. I have not received the exact papers in regard to this matter yet, but I understand that this was done in the interests of the peace of the State which was threatened in various ways.

Some time after the news of Shaikh Abdullah's arrest became known yesterday morning, small processions in protest started in some parts of Srinagar and converged towards Amira Kadal which is a bridge. These processions became violent in some places and threw stones at the police and militia. On two occasions the police had to fire on the crowd, it is stated, in self-defence. Three rounds were fired on one occasion and four rounds on another. The total casualties were three killed and one injured. The dead body of one person was paraded through the streets.

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As it was Sunday, shops were generally closed and there was little obstruction to traffic. There were no communal incidents of any kind.

So far as is known, there has been no trouble in any of the outlying areas. By the evening the situation had improved considerably. Till last night, 35 arrests had been made.

The Indian Army personnel was not involved in any way. The situation was dealt with by the Jammu and Kashmir police and militia. One party, however, of the Central Reserve Police functioned in one place.

Shaikh Abdullah was taken to Udhampur where he is lodged in the Rest House and every comfort has been provided for him.

It is a matter of deep regret to me that Shaikh Abdullah, an old comrade of 20 years, should have come into conflict with our other comrades in Kashmir and that it should have been considered necessary by the Kashmir Government to place him in detention for the time being. I earnestly trust that this is a passing phase and that the leaders of Kashmir will co-operate together in the service of that beautiful and unfortunate land.

Last night, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, the new Prime Minister, broadcast a long speech in which he has referred to the recent developments as well as to the policies which he and his Government intend pursuing. I would commend this speech to the Members of the House.

I should like to repeat that we have considered these recent developments in Kashmir as an internal matter with which we should interfere as little as possible. On the larger issues our policy remains what it was and we shall stand by the assurances we have given.

To the Members of this House, to the Press and this country and the people generally, I would make an earnest appeal to exercise forbearance and restraint in regard to these events

which have followed each other in quick succession in the Jammu and Kashmir State. We must send our full sympathy to the young *Sadr-e-Riyasat*, to the Government and to the people of that State who are facing this crisis, and assure them of all the help that we can give them to bring about normality and a progressive administration which will serve the cause of the people of that State.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

STATEMENTS SHOWING ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON ASSURANCES ETC.

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (Shri Satya Narayan Sinha):

I beg to lay on the Table the following statements showing the action taken by the Government on various assurances, promises and undertakings given during the various sessions shown against each:

- (1) Supplementary Statement No. II. Third session of the House of the People, 1953. [See Appendix VII, annexure No. 1.]
- (2) Supplementary Statement No. III. Second Session of the House of the People, 1952. [See Appendix VII, annexure No. 2.]
- (3) Supplementary Statement No. IV. First Session of the House of the People, 1952. [See Appendix VII, annexure No. 3.]
- (4) Supplementary Statement No. VIII. Fourth Session of the Provisional Parliament, 1951. [See Appendix VII, annexure No. 4.]
- (5) Supplementary Statement No. VII. Third Session (Second part) of the Provisional Parliament, 1951. [See Appendix VII, annexure No. 5.]
- (6) Supplementary Statement No. V. Second Session of the Provisional Parliament, 1950. [See Appendix VII, annexure No. 6.]