

COMMITTEE ON PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS**FIFTY-SIXTH REPORT**

Sardar Hukam Singh (Kapurthala-Bhatinda): I beg to present the Fifty-sixth Report of the Committee on Private Members' Bills and Resolutions.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**EARTHQUAKE IN KUTCH**

Shri Raghunath Singh (Banaras Distt.—Central): Under rule 216, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon.

"Recent earthquake in Kutch".

The Minister in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Shri Datar): With your permission, Sir, I shall make a statement.

The House must have heard with deep distress the news of the earthquake which rocked parts of the State of Kutch on the night of the 21st July and in the morning of the 22nd. The shocks were of considerable intensity and the loss caused to life and property has been heavy. The tremors were most severe in the central part of the State between Bhuj and Bachau where the town of Anjar is situated. This town and the surrounding 22 villages including Dudhai, Ratnal, Dhamadka, Jaikadi, Galpadar, Dhaneti, Chirai and Bachau, have consequently suffered most. The town of Bhuj, the western Taluqas and the eastern and southern areas of Kutch seem to have fallen outside of the wave and have thus escaped damage. It is not possible to give final figures about the casualties and the extent of damage to property as the debris is still being cleared. According to the reports received from the Chief Commissioner till late last night, there have been 111 deaths, out

of which 102 were at Anjar alone. The number of injured exceeds 300, including 93 seriously. Nearly 1300 houses have been so badly damaged as to be uninhabitable. Of these 800 are at Anjar. About 2,000 houses have been slightly damaged and require repairs. Immediately on receipt of the information on the night of the 21st, the Chief Commissioner rushed to Anjar which was worst affected, accompanied by senior officials, and organised relief measures. The work of removal of debris and of recovery of persons trapped underneath, was taken in hand by the State Police assisted by a unit of the army, in which they have since been continuously engaged. For people who have been rendered homeless and destitute, a common kitchen has been established in the town, and temporary shelter has been provided in tents and other available buildings. For the injured persons, steps have been taken to provide medical relief. Medical parties have also been organised and despatched to the affected areas in the interior. As soon as the tragic news about this calamity reached here on the 22nd July, a sum of Rs. 25,000 was placed at the disposal of the Chief Commissioner for immediate relief. A further sum of Rs. 50,000 has been allocated from the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund.

The work of distributing housing loans has already been taken in hand. Persons living in the town of Anjar will receive up to Rs. 2,000 while those living in the rural areas Rs. 1,500 per family, of which 25 per cent will be available as subsidy. Temporary tenements made of corrugated iron sheets are being constructed at Anjar for about 125 families. 70 tons of iron sheets have been offered by the Government of Saurashtra for this purpose. Assistance is also being given to small traders to enable them to rehabilitate themselves. Rs. 200 will be advanced as loan and Rs. 100 as grant for this purpose. To mitigate the suffering of people who have been rendered homeless, up to Rs. 30

per family are being given for the construction of temporary huts. Foodgrains are being distributed at the rate of three quarters of a seer per adult and half a seer per child to villagers in the affected areas. To facilitate the expeditious distribution of relief, four Committees have been set up for the town of Anjar, the villages in the Anjar Taluqa, villages in the Bhuj Taluqa and villages in the Bachau Taluqa. A Central Committee consisting of officials and non-officials is being formed to supervise the entire work of relief and rehabilitation. Instructions have been issued by the Government of India to the Chief Commissioner for taking such other relief measures as may be necessary and to report what further assistance, if any, is required.

I am sure the House would like to express its heart-felt sympathy for all those who have suffered as a result of this sudden calamity.

STATEMENT BY SHRI C. D.
DESHMUKH RE RESIGNATION
FROM OFFICE OF MINISTER

Shri C. D. Deshmukh (Kolaba):
Mr. Speaker, for some time past my resignation of my office of Minister has been pending. Yesterday the President's office issued a Press Note to the effect that the President has been pleased to accept the resignation. I consider it necessary to make a statement in explanation of my resignation, and proceed to do so in accordance with rule 218 of the Rules of Procedure of the Lok Sabha.

I have resigned because I do not wish to share the responsibility for Government's decision to separate the city of Bombay from Maharashtra, as embodied in the States Reorganisation Bill, 1956, and because I wish to protest generally against the manner in which this issue, so vitally important to the interests of my constituency of Kolaba in particular, and of Maharashtra as well as India in general, has been handled by the Prime Minister.

My protest has special reference to (i) the inability or unwillingness of the Government of India to persuade the Bombay Government to hold a judicial enquiry into the police firings of November, 1955 and January, 1956 in the course of which about 80 persons were killed and about 450 injured; and (ii) to the impropriety of the Prime Minister's announcement in early June in regard to the future of Bombay while the States Reorganisation Bill was before the Lok Sabha and had been referred to the Select Committee. I had in vain pleaded for an enquiry in regard to the former. In regard to the latter I have had no discussion with the Prime Minister, as obviously a discussion after the event was useless and as on the day the Prime Minister returned from Bombay after the A.I.C.C. meeting, I asked him to make my pending resignation effective. It was at his suggestion that I agreed that the acceptance of my resignation might await his return from his tour abroad.

I accepted the office of Finance Minister in May 1950 at the repeated requests of the Prime Minister. The House may be interested to know, as some little proof of my disinterestedness, that I had declined a similar offer made previously by Lord Wavell in May 1946 on the ground that neither by training nor by tradition was I qualified to take on the role of a politician. Before I accepted the Prime Minister's offer, I warned him that I was apt to prove difficult where principles were involved and that I would have to resign if there was a major disagreement on matters of principle. His reply, if he will recall it, was: "In that event it will not be a case of your walking out alone." Although the question was never explicitly discussed between us, this remark and assurance formed an unspoken pact between us to pursue and promote a progressive economic policy as a sound foundation for plans for the country's economic development. It is for him to say if he is satisfied or not with the nature and quality of