

MOTION RE. SITUATION IN NAGA HILLS

Shri L. Jogeswar Singh (Inner Manipur): I beg to move:

"That the situation in the Naga Hills area in Assam be taken into consideration".

In moving this, at the outset, I should like to say a few words about the genesis of the Naga movement for a sovereign, independent status. The genesis can be traced to the days of the Simon Commission. From those days onwards, the Nagas have been demanding independence, under the leadership of Phizo who is the leader of the Naga National Council. Now, when India achieved independence in 1947, the Nagas also, under the auspices of the Naga National Council, insistently demanded for an independent status. At the time when Sir Akbar Hydari was the Governor of Assam and when Shri Gopinath Bardoloi was the Chief Minister, there had been some sort of assurances given to the Nagas, namely, that if they were agreeable to for the time being to give up the demand for Independence and to work the tribal councils, the question of giving them independence could be considered after the lapse of ten years. That proposal, or in other words, those assurances, were, however, turned down by the Central Government.

The movement continued. But there were two schools of thought among the Nagas under the Naga National Council. One section was under the leadership of Shri Sakrie and another section was under the leadership of Phizo. Shri Sakrie wanted to continue the struggle for independence but he wanted to carry on this movement for an independent status non-violently. On the other hand, Phizo wanted from the very beginning, to launch the struggle violently. So, opinions were divided in the two camps. Phizo was continuing the struggle violently, while Shri Sakrie wanted to have negotiations with the Government. But still, Phizo persisted in a violent struggle. In this way, the Council was divid-

ed. Afterwards, Sakrie was treacherously murdered by Phizo's men and Phizo took over an upper hand in the movement.

Now, the Government should look into the situation and the conditions that have been obtaining during this long period. When Phizo and Shri Sakrie were engaged in their demand for independence, what was the Assam Government doing all this while? Phizo was arrested after being captured, by the Burmese Government as late as 1953, and then he was handed over to the Indian Government here when he was released. From that time onward, Phizo was preparing for a final show down. He continued his activities violently, but what was the Government doing at that time? Were the Government quick enough in taking any action? They did not control the Naga Hills in respect of the interior areas. Those how were posted in the Naga Hills administered only the town area. They did not know what things were going on in the interior of the Naga Hills. They did not even collect a single rifle. See the marked difference; the Manipur Government collected 10,000 rifles and a large amount of ammunition left by the rebel forces, but what were the officials of the Assam Government doing all the time? They did not collect even a single rifle from the hill area, whereas in the adjoining area of Manipur State, 10,000 rifles were collected. The situation had gradually become worse, because Phizo was persistently following his terrorist activities. Sakrie was murdered and the situation reached the climax on the 11th June. By that time, the Chief of the Army Staff...

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order, out the history from the very beginning. He should bear in mind that time is limited; only 2 hours are fixed for this discussion and there are at least half a dozen members who want to take part in it. Perhaps there may be more, but I have received intimation from about half a dozen members. Then, the Government spokesman, I hope the hon. Prime Minister, would require half an hour.

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs and Finance (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): It may be less.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member should bear in mind that fact and he should try to conclude within 20 or 25 minutes.

Shri L. Jogeswar Singh: I require about 40 minutes.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: That was exactly my fear. I stood up and intervened, because from the way he began, there were apprehensions that he might take a long time. Half an hour is the utmost that can be given and he should try to conclude earlier, so that he may be supported by others and others may also have a chance to express their views.

Shri Jaipal Singh: (Ranchi West-Reserved—Sh. Tribes): May I suggest that we are not dealing with an honourable member like my hon. friends over there. The problem has his firsthand knowledge. We know that the speaker has his own strange language in which perhaps he could put his case in his own way; he is not multilingual. I do not mean anything more except that he may be given a chance to put it in his own way and not be limited....

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: He is given half an hour.

Shri Jaipal Singh: I am not talking of half an hour or 40 minutes. My right hon. friend over there said he requires very much less time. I only want that the speaker may be given ample opportunity to present his viewpoint.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Let him proceed, but he should be conscious of the fact that there are limitations of time.

Shri L. Jogeswar Singh: So, on the 11th June, the situation reached its climax. It was on that day that a convoy of trucks and vehicles was attacked in which I was travelling. The convoy left Dimapur for

Kohima. Before we left Dimapur for Kohima, the military people and the civilian officers told us that there was no danger and that everything was safe. That was the assurance given by the military people who were stationed at Dimapur and also by the civilian officers. When we reached Kohima, we are surprised, because at that time the military people were taking position and there was sniping and firing all round. A police officer came forward and told us that on that side towards Manipur there was no danger. That assurance was given by the policeman and the convoy proceeded. But, before we reached Kohima, when we were hardly two miles from Kohima, our convoy was attacked. The convoy consisted of 15 to 20 trucks and vehicles; it was attacked from a corner by the rebels and bullets were showered upon us. One of my colleagues was injured by the bullets. Two other passengers were also injured. Two were killed. I wonder what our military people and the civilian authorities were doing at that time.

It was about 10-30 in the morning when we arrived in Kohima. At 9-30 A.M., a wireless message was sent from Manipur to Kohima that no buses bound for Imphal should be allowed to proceed, because the rebels were active and the roads were in danger. On the same day just near the outpost of Manipur State at Mao in the morning a S.D.O. of the Assam P.W.D. and his colleague were shot down by the rebels. From Imphal the above wireless message which mentioned the shooting incident was sent to Kohima not to send buses, because there was danger and the road was unsafe. But in Kohima, no warning was given either by the military authorities or the civil authorities, in spite of the fact that the message was sent to them earlier not to send buses to Imphal. When we were proceeding, when we were hardly two miles from Kohima, our buses were attacked and all the valuables, watches and purses were

looted by the rebels. We were surprised to see that throughout the 21 mile route from Kohima to Mao—the rebel forces were active. When we had covered just 20 miles, we were detained on that night just near Mao, and then we were released.

I want to point out in this connection one thing. The Defence Ministry issued a communique and also General Srinagesh made a statement about this. It was an erroneous statement full of lies. What was the communique? What General Srinagesh said in the following morning was that in spite of the warning, the convoy left Kohima. This is fantastic. I challenge the communique of the Defence Ministry; who gave us the warning? When was the warning given? Who were the persons who gave the warning? If the Defence Ministry is able to come forward and reply to these charges, I will welcome it. I would also request the Government to set up an inquiry committee to find out whether it is a fact that we left Kohima in spite of this warning. I think it is not advisable on the part of the Defence Ministry to issue such statements nor should General Srinagesh make a statement which has got no relevance to facts.

It is fantastic how they could issue such a communique. I could appreciate if they could point out that such and such persons approached the convoy and warned that they should not proceed; I could appreciate if they point out that such and such officers warned the convoy against proceeding. So, it was an afterthought of these people. It has no relation to facts. **This sort of statements put us in a rather embarrassing situation and it also seemed that we did not care for any advice or any warning given by the higher authorities. This is not a fact.**

I just now mentioned about the ambush in which Manipuri drivers and passengers were killed. But up-till now no responsible officer has come forward saying that their de-

pendents would be compensated, or that they would be given something. In Assam just near Jorhat or Sibsagar a small incident took place when the rebels raided a village, comparatively very small, but as soon as that took place the Chief Minister of Assam went there and gave a sum of Rs. 5,000 for the relief of the village who are the persons to look after those who are injured, or the dependents of those who were killed in the ambush? Who are responsible for that. But this matter has taken totally neglected.

Another important matter which I want to place before the House is this. The military deployed in this area is comparatively very small, in view of the difficult nature of the terrain of that area which is full of mountains and jungles. So, it is not possible for the military people, if their number is inadequately small, to combat the forces there. So, I wish to bring to the notice of Government that adequate reinforcements should be sent there, not to terrorise people, but to restore confidence among them. So far as we could see, what the military were doing in those days was this. We could seldom see their activities. They used to go from one place to another in military trucks. But who are the people most active? These Naga rebels. They would sit behind the trees; they would take cover behind the trees and the bushes. Their number is very very large. Their number was increasing even at night. I spent a night near them and I saw their number was increasing. I do not know why the number increases at night. Perhaps there are among them many people with whom I have acquaintance and whose faces are familiar to me. Perhaps, they did not like to show their faces to us. Among them are many students. In comparison with the forces of the rebels, our forces were very very inadequately deployed.

The most affected area in this trouble is the Manipur State. This is

[Shri L. Jogeswar Singh]

what I wish to bring particularly to the notice of the House. Assam would not be affected economically. The Assam Government may want to see that this situation may die down in its natural way. But in our case it cannot be so. The reason is this. We have got only one life-line. That life-line is the Dimapur-Kohima-Imphal Road. This is also known as the Indo-Burma Road. This is the only life-line that passes through the Naga Hills and it passes by the Kohima Town. This life-line has been cut off since the 11th of June. So our means of communication were totally cut off. The prices of daily necessities were going up and the price of petrol went up from Rs. 3 to Rs. 6 per gallon. Womenfolk had to stand in queue to get a bottle of kerosene, and black-marketing was going on. There was a time when there was no kerosene available and the prices of essential commodities were very high.

The most important fact is this. Paddy is the most important crop; that is the only means of livelihood of the cultivators. We usually export this paddy through this life-line I have mentioned. But these exporting operations have completely stopped since the 11th of June. The worst sufferers as a result of this trouble were the agricultural labourers and the cultivators. The cultivators used to export their paddy to Dimapur via the Kohima road. On account of the stoppage of this export the price of paddy has gone down. So, the worst hit people are the agricultural labourers and the cultivators. At the same time we have to carry our things from Calcutta to Imphal, for which we have to pay large amounts as freight. We have to carry by air most of our daily necessities from the rest of India on account of the cutting off of this life-line. We have, therefore, to bear the brunt of the trouble. In fact, Manipur is the most affected area. That is why I am interested in moving this motion. It is natural that some

people may ask why I am so much interested in the problems relating to Naga movement. We are the persons vitally affected by this movement.

We are adjacent to Assam. Those officers from Assam who are appointed or posted in the Naga Hill areas are on account of emergency purposes given special pays and special allowances. The relatives of those who were killed in this area were provided with special pensions. But so far as the Manipur officers who are posted at Kohima and Dimapur and on the border of Mao are concerned, no special allowances or special pays or special pensions are sanctioned for them. The life of those drivers who ply buses and trucks on the Indo-Burma Road, on the Kohima-Imphal Road is always in danger. They have to ply the vehicles in the face of constant sniping and firing. So, their life is full of risks. They also should be given similar concessions, similar pensions and allowances as has been sanctioned in the case of the Assam officials who are posted in the Naga Hills.

Another point I want to make is this.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Is that the last one?

Shri L. Jogeswar Singh: I am going to give a suggestion and then I will finish. Another point is this. The situation deteriorates day by day and Parliament has not given thought to this problem.

My suggestion is that we should break this state of suspense and frustration. It is very difficult to bring them round to our way of thinking and ways of life; more especially, Phizo is a hard nut to crack. But if we take a decision in the House, it will have some psychological effect on them. What is the Parliament doing all the time? What are they doing? Are they sleeping over the problem?

Acharaya Kripalani (Bhagalpur cum Purnea): We are debating it.

Shri L. Jogeswar Singh: They have not done anything. You should apply your mind to this problem. The time has come to apply our minds to this problem. This state of frustration continues throughout the Naga areas of Assam. This is my point of view that this trouble may spread throughout the tribal belt of North-East India unless steps are taken in time to check it; that is accepted by all. Nevertheless, this sort of thing should not be allowed to continue. Therefore, my suggestion is this. In order to break this **state of frustration**, this state of suspense, we should send a parliamentary commission consisting of members of different places representing different parties to probe into the problem, to see the drawbacks of the administration and to have an on-the-spot study. Let them report to Parliament.

Shri S. S. More (Sholapur): What about their security?

Shri L. Jogeswar Singh: If one goes there, he will be likely to be beheaded. Without going into that I will tell him that there are many lieutenants of Phizo who are in Indian jails. You can go and contact them. You can ask their opinion. But we must be dead clear on this point—they will not have separate independence and they cannot be separated from India. We could not concede that. That must be made clear. But we can talk with them and examine this question within that framework of Indian Constitution. Let them have a separate unit. What is the harm there? If they want to have a separate unit, what is the harm in granting that? It will not do anybody any harm. Similarly, as Manipur, if the Nagas want to have separate existence, what is the harm in granting it? No doubt, they have their own culture, language and social traditions. Then what is the harm in granting them a separate unit? To that extent we can go and no further. I would like to request

our Prime Minister and our Home Minister to think over this matter very seriously because we are anxious to restore confidence among the masses of the tribal people there.

If this parliamentary commission is there, then the commission may come into contact with those people who are in jail, with ordinary people who will take them into confidence and with the officials among the Nagas. There are many officials among the Nagas and they can be taken into confidence. They can have an *in camera* meeting, if they want. Let us hear their suggestion. But so far no decision has been taken.

This is the position there. The killings are going on and the violence is going on. Who are the sufferers? The poor people, the ignorant people. To win them over, to see that they give a free opinion with regard to their political set-up, confidence must be restored to them. If violence is rampant, if terrorism is rampant and if you say let devil go to the side who wins, then those men who are the friends of the Government in the morning will be the friends of the rebels in the evening. That is the position. They are compelled to do that because they are afraid of both. They are afraid of the Government and they are afraid of the rebels. Naturally, they have to change sides.

There cannot be any settlement by this terrorism. We must have other methods. We have the example of Korea. We have got good traditions and our military, which has good traditions, was sent to Korea. Similarly, they should be sent there also. Their present strength is not sufficient. They will have to do rehabilitation work. They will have to win the people. In this connection I may state that I do not agree with the reasoning of my communist friends that the military should lay down their arms. May I ask my communist friends: can they understand the mind of Phizo and which way the wind blows? It is very difficult to understand Phizo's mind.

[Shri L. Jogeswar Singh]

So, it is upto Parliament to send a commission to go into the matter. This is most important. That is one point about the appointment of the commission.

Another point is this. The present Government there is very weak. It is very inefficient also. The administration also has got parochial and communal outlook. They cannot understand or look at the problem from the psychological point of view or the cultural or linguistic point of view; they look at it from the parochial and communal point of view. This is also one of the factors that had worsened the situation. So, my suggestion is this. For the time being, till the operation comes to a close, the administration should not be under the Assam Government: it should be directly under the Central Government so that this sort of inefficiency will not be there. I do not say that it should be kept separate from Assam. That also will depend on the wishes of the people living in the Naga areas. No doubt we have a very good Government. But it should be, for the time being, kept under the Central Government.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Motion moved:

"That the situation in the Naga Hills area in Assam be taken into consideration."

I find that the number of Members have increased and now I have got twelve names here. Hon. Members shall realise that it will not be possible to accommodate every one of them. Any Member who is called upon to speak must realise that he cannot take very much time. He must condense his remarks so far as is possible for him.

Shri Kamath (Hoshangabad): I suggest that the debate may be extended by one hour tomorrow. We will require more time.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: If the House is prepared to sit half an hour longer, then we can continue, but not otherwise. It will not be possible to extend it tomorrow. We ought to conclude it today.

Shri K. K. Basu (Diamond Harbour): Tomorrow we are likely to save some time from other Bills because we have fixed ten hours for the third reading. But it will not take more than a day at the maximum.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I would have no objection if the House wants to sit longer. I am here till seven o'clock, if the House wants. But it would be difficult to extend it tomorrow. There might be other business. So, if the hon. Members are prepared to sit longer today we can sit.

Some Hon. Members: No, no.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Let the debate proceed. We will see.

Shri Jaipal Singh: I would like to know whether we have to catch your eye or send chits.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Both can help equally. The ultimate decision is to be taken when my eye is caught. Certainly the chits that I receive are also a guide.

Shri Rishang Keishing.

Shri Rishang Keishing (Outer Manipur—Reserved—Sch. Tribes): It is extremely regrettable that the Naga problem has been brought for discussion so late and only after so much harm has been done to national life and blood. Whatever is happening in that closed stretch of the north-eastern border of India can be well described as a miniature war confined within the land inhabited by the great and colourful Nagas of which India can always speak with dignity and pride.

The Naga problem has been gradually, through a series of errors, developed into a Gordian knot, and therefore we must cast a sober reflection over the genesis of the whole trouble. The hon. Prime Minister and the Government of India have been dealing with this affair from a position of strength, if I may say so, and in dealing thus, they have never perhaps taken rightly into account

the analysis of the past history of these people.

There was a real chance of winning over the goodwill of these people immediately after the independence of the country. There was, in fact, an agreement arrived at between the late Governor of Assam, Sir Akbar Hydari, and the late Chief Minister of Assam, Shri Gopinath Bardoloi on the one hand and the representatives of the Naga National Council on the other. That agreement was signed on the 22nd June, 1948, but that was not honoured by the Government. Had that agreement been respected and brought into force by the Government of India I am sure we should not be witnessing all this orgy of violence that has been unleashed on the citizens of that part of India. We can say that the dishonouring of the agreement by the Government was the initiation of a series of psychological and diplomatic tussles which followed in the wake.

After this agreement was dishonoured, the Nagas under the leadership of Shri Phizo kept up their emphasis on the demand of complete independence. There were occasions when Shri Phizo had meetings with the Prime Minister and the present Chief Minister of Assam, but I am sorry to say that the parties did not try to understand each other's mind and the atmosphere was soon vitiated and tempers were lost. I wish that the Prime Minister had displayed here the same amount of patience and psychological insight for which he is famous in the field of international diplomacy.

However, there was one more chance for rapprochement and that was when the Prime Minister visited Kohima in the early part of 1953 when as many as 15,000 people collected to present their viewpoint before him and then to listen to him. But the entire situation was mishandled by the local authorities and it was a sad day when they refused to allow the Nagas to present their representation to the Prime Minister. These people are very sensitive to

the question of their prestige and they thought when the Prime Minister was not ready to listen to them, why should they listen to him. And they walked out from the meeting en bloc.

I would quote in this connection a letter which was sent to me by the late Shri Sakrie, the then General Secretary of the Naga National Council, for whom the hon. Home Minister has regard as is shown by the way he has referred to him during the course of his statement in this House. He wrote to me on the 8th April, 1953 immediately after the visit of the Prime Minister to Kohima. I quote some portions of his letter:

"Dear Rishang,

We want your help and we know you will give it. I write in connection with the recent visit to Kohima of the Prime Minister. The visit was an utter failure. We regret it sincerely. Our visit to Delhi to wait on him is always made so difficult that we heartily welcomed his visit. We welcomed it because we felt we would get the opportunity to have a heart-to-heart discussion on all outstanding questions between the Nagas and India. That opportunity came and went like a mirage."

Referring to the walk-out, he wrote:

"The Nagas walked away because the Nagas wanted to speak to him and give him also their written thought. They were prepared to listen to him if he was prepared to listen to them."

He further mentioned that their honour and self-respect had been challenged. He wrote:

"Because of the walk-out, some 80 of us are to be arrested. We are being charged under sections 143 and 427 of the I.P.C. Please do something."

This is what Shri Sakrie had written to me.

[Shri Rishang Keishing]

The least that this letter shows is that among the Nagas there was a spirit of peaceful negotiation, but this spirit was never recognised. It was after this sad occurrence that the Assam Government took police measures and repressions started. The police indulged in ravaging houses and destroying crops and there were cases of raping as well. It is important to remember that in spite of all these provocations, there was no organised violence on the part of the Nagas till the middle of 1955. The movement was non-violent and peaceful, and yet persistent, up to the middle of 1955. During that period, repeated attempts were made by the Naga National Council to have discussions with the Government of India and especially the Prime Minister, but I am sorry to say that the Government of India always put some condition before the meeting could be acceptable to them. I have always felt that the demand for complete independence by the Nagas was not at all feasible, but I have also been feeling that Government should not have been reluctant to start non-committal talks and discussions with the Nagas in order to iron out the differences.

The logical conclusion of the Government's intransigence was a violent reaction on the part of the Nagas followed by military operation in this cursed land where today thousands of men, women and children have been forced to starve in jungles and to lead a wretched life under the shadow of hunger and epidemic, where most of the homesteads in the villages have been burnt to ashes, mainly by our Army, who put to flames more than 30 villages out of the 54 villages in the Makokchung sub-division alone, and also destroyed more than 60 per cent of the villages in other areas.

An *o*gy of gruesome murders and ruthless oppression has been let loose, and neither Government nor the hostile Nagas appeared to be in any

way milder in their enthusiasm to destroy. Till the end of last month, the military alone have been responsible for killing as many as 371 hostile Nagas. This figure does not include the innocent citizens and loyal Nagas like Dr. Haralu, a gentleman over 75 years of age, who was hunted in the streets of Kohima and shot down by our Army. The number of loyal Nagas who were killed by our military is surely more than the aforesaid figure. Besides, more than 500 Nagas are in jail, and this number includes children and students of ages ranging between 1 and 13.

The Army men have shown an utter disregard for the sentiments of the local Nagas, for, they have tried to terrify them by carrying the naked corpses of the Nagas killed by them, bound hand and foot to bamboo poles. Compare this practice with the murder of Mr. Sakrie by the hostile Nagas. They did, not only this, but the dead bodies of the Nagas who were killed by the Army were burnt, in spite of the fact that Nagas never burn their dead bodies. Are these the ways in which a civilised Government would behave? Have Government in any sense done less than the Nagas? Who can boast of an untarnished record? Who can dare fling the first stone and assert that they are not sinners? I ask this of the hostile Nagas as well as of this Government.

Even if it is presumed that the Army is there to give protection to the peaceful and law-abiding citizens, it has failed to do that, for, it could take no action when a convoy of passengers bound for Imphal, on the advice of the military and police authorities was attacked—an incident, to which my hon. friend has already referred—and looted them just 2½ miles from Kohima, and again, when the headquarters of the military operations at Kohima was occupied and looted for about a week, during the month of June. The military

happened to be entirely helpless to provide the protection to the peaceful Nagas, to which they had committed themselves. Under such conditions, what regard can be for Government's pronouncement that those who surrender would be protected?

As a matter of fact, the entire issue has been so much entangled that no amount of administrative and military action can solve it. It may be that the rebel Nagas will have to admit defeat, very soon, at the hands of the far superior military strength of the Army. But that does not solve the problem. But those who know the mind of Nagas will tell you that the spirit of revenge for all the killings that are going on will persist for generations. That shows that the problem will not be solved, even though they may be defeated. I want to make it clear to all concerned that this problem is not an administrative problem. It is a wholly political problem, and it must be viewed in that perspective.

Time and again, I have tried to bring home to the Prime Minister and the Home Minister that no consideration of prestige should come in the way of making sincere efforts to solve this problem. I have come to the conclusion that Government have been fundamentally in the wrong, and that it is necessary that Government must change their policy now. They must forthwith stop relying on military operations or the use of third-grade tactics, for in that way, they will not be able to break the hold of the Naga National Council or of Mr. Phizo. Of course, they may succeed in annihilating the entire Naga habitation in this troubled area.

In all earnestness and seriousness, I wish to make the following eight suggestions for your consideration, which will enable you to solve this problem. These suggestions include those which I have had occasion to emphasise on the floor of this House earlier. My first suggestion is that there should be an immediate declaration of general amnesty. Secondly,

there should be a conference with the representatives of the Naga National Council as well as those of the other Naga organisations. Thirdly, the basis of the conference talks should centre round the immediate formation of a separate administrative unit comprising the Naga Hills, Tuensang division, and the Tirap Frontier region. Fourthly, there should be a restoration, to the new unit, of all lands taken away from any of the Naga areas mentioned above. Fifthly, the framework of the new administrative unit, should, for the present, be on the pattern of that in Manipur and Tripura. Sixthly, on the lapse of a certain agreed period, the people of the newly created unit should decide the pattern of administration, within the orbit of the Indian Constitution. My seventh suggestion is that a parliamentary delegation should visit the disturbed areas, as early as possible, to restore goodwill and confidence. I wrote as far back as August 1953, to the Prime Minister, to this effect, but my request was turned down by the Prime Minister.

My last suggestion is that in future, Manipur, Tripura, Assam and the new Naga unit, may come together in some regional organisation; if they wish to come together, and steps may be taken to arrange for that.

I have counselled general amnesty, because, without general amnesty, no talk can take place. A restricted amnesty has been offered already. But that will not bring to us the men, about whom there is no doubt that they command the respect of the general people, that is, Mr. Phizo and his colleagues. With restricted amnesty, we would not be able to bring them round. If we wish to let the rule of sense prevail, we must take the initiative by creating an atmosphere of goodwill and by offering to talk with those whom Government have always been considering as enemies of peace, but whom, on the other hand, the Nagas have been considering as the heroes of their land.

[Shri Rishang Keishing.]

I would say that we must talk to the Naga National Council. We must talk to Mr. Phizo, because, whatever Government might think about them, and whatever might have been their errors and omissions in their approach to the problem, these persons are still the men whose voice is heard, and who have an unchallengeable following.

I would like to remind the House that already certain associates of the late Mr. Sakrie and ex-members of the Naga National Council have recommended a basis for settlement. That must also be studied. I am sure that once the question of prestige is set aside, general amnesty declared, and military operations stopped and the suggested conference called, we can start our negotiations for peace and settlement. I hope that when such an atmosphere is created, even the extremists among the Nagas will allow reason to prevail. Let us think of the miseries of the Nagas today, and let us change our mood from one of mere destruction to that of construction. Let Government give serious thought and take immediate action to build the villages which have been destroyed, to bring back the starving families from the jungle, to give them food, to rehabilitate them and to start schools for them. Let Government act expeditiously to mitigate the sufferings of these brave yet ill-fated citizens of India.

We are civilised, and we are taking a prominent part in applying the principle of peaceful negotiations to distant lands, but now, let us apply this very principle ourselves in our own land.

5 P.M.

I would make a similar appeal to the Nagas and to their leaders. I would ask them to give at this stage a dispassionate consideration to their problems, because the continuation of hostilities means the ruin of innocent citizens. And once the people are destroyed, who will remain there to

reap the fruits of the settlement? I am sure that the people of India, the common citizens of this country, will stand truly with them if they give up violence and their demand for independence and if they decide to settle their problems with peace, goodwill and confidence.

Shrimati Khongmen (Autonomous Distts.—Reserved—Sch. Tribes): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, there is no one in this august House perhaps who is more sorry than I am at what has been happening for the last few months in the Naga Hills. This is first of all because the Nagas are a tribal people, like myself and in whose welfare I am as much interested as in my own. Secondly, because they are fellow-citizens of India whom the hon. Home Minister has rightly pointed out that they are flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood.

Even since the hostilities began in this area, I have been greatly distressed by the violence adopted by a section of the leaders of this area, for whom I have great respect, because many of them are personally known to me, including Mr. Zapu Phizo himself who is a friend and contemporary of mine. I have in my personal capacity as well as in the capacity of Vice President of the Tribal Association, tried to intercede and beg of him and his friends to give up this fruitless demand for complete independence. But I am greatly disappointed. I deeply regret that they did not take such a request worthy of their consideration.

Today I again take this opportunity of appealing to him and to the other leaders who are carrying on this agitation to give it up. I may assure them that in my experience, the tribal people of India are fully safe in the hands of the Government of India, and we should feel happy in laying our destiny in the hands of India. I would instead invite them to experiment with the provisions of the Sixth Schedule which give the measure of autonomy which we desire, consistent

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with Indian citizenship. In any case, I would request them with all the earnestness at my command to give up violence, the continuance of which is bound to result in great sorrow and suffering to the Naga people themselves. I would hope that the Naga leaders would make a declaration without delay for a direct negotiated settlement with the Government of India. I hope if such an approach is made on behalf of the Naga people, the Government of India in its usual kindness would readily respond so that a settlement honourable to all may be arrived at.

I would like to touch upon only one point more. I would like to say that the allegation made by my hon. friend who initiated the discussion, against the Government of Assam is incorrect. The Government of Assam had been exploring all possible ways for persuading the Nagas to give up their attitude and to co-operate with that Government in carrying out all development work in the tribal area. The Chief Minister of Assam himself made an effort to persuade Phizo to give up violence, and Phizo himself issued a statement denying violence.

Shri Jaipal Singh: I do not know whether I can congratulate this House on having an opportunity to discuss this very, very delicate problem. I am not here to condemn any Government, to condemn the shortcomings of our armed forces who have been put there to do their job as they have been told, or to praise them.

Nearly ten years ago, I was instrumental in bringing the Leader of this House into touch with Phizo. The Leader of this House had been to Assam. When he was in Assam, Phizo tried to see him. But the authorities then there would not let Phizo get near him. Then when the Leader of this House reached Calcutta, naturally it was more difficult for Phizo to get near him.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: May I say that I met him three times?

Shri Jaipal Singh: That is after that. I was instrumental in making my hon. friend meet him for the first time. I am talking of what happened nearly ten years ago; I am not talking of what has happened in between. If my hon. friend will have a little patience, he will realise that I want to assist in trying to find a solution for this most unfortunate problem.

Then Phizo was in Delhi. Here also he had great difficulty in getting anywhere near the Prime Minister of India. It was only by accident that I came across him. And then it was a happy occasion when the Prime Minister of India, at my very, very humble request, agreed to receive him. I took him to the Prime Minister's house. After that, I took him also to General Cariappa's residence. After that for a while, Phizo assured me, he would withdraw this agitation. I am acquainting the House with the early stages of this very unhappy situation. I mention this only to indicate that this is only a human problem. It is a question of somebody getting upset because somebody else would not receive him or could not receive him, through no fault of his own. He just could not get near. People would not permit him to get near. This is the way things had happened. Sir, we have to assess the imponderables of Adivasi culture, whether we are dealing with the Nagas or whether we are dealing with Manbhum or anything else. We cannot measure these problems by the same common yardstick.

I would first like to address myself to Phizo and his colleagues. If they think that I or anyone else in this House or outside this House will have any sympathy for them if they want to get away from India, they are sadly mistaken. They will not get one ounce of support from me—I do not know about other people who have been their friends, acquaintances and the like—but from me, they will not get any support. If my words can reach them, let my words reach them. No support from me if they want to be separated from this great country,

[Shri Jaipal Singh]

the Union of India. And, let them remember there are only a few lakhs of Nagas; but there are millions of Adivasis in India and they also have problems. Only last week we had problems and we know how those problems were handled. But we have faith in humanity. One day or the other, I will see that my honourable friends over there do see with me, feel like me and try to do things as I would have them do. But, if Phizo thinks that just because, for a moment, he may have arms left there, Allied arms, Japanese arms or any other arms, if he thinks he can fight us, well, that will be futile. So, I appeal to my friends in the Naga Hills to realise that there are millions more with them if only they will make up their minds once and for all that they are with India.

Now a suggestion has been made by my hon. friends that we should declare an amnesty. I really do not know whether that is the right thing. When trouble began we had two battalions. Somebody asked for much more and we have many more now. It would be pleaded here by my hon. friends over there, and they will say in the popular, western, strong man's language, we will 'larn' them. You will not 'larn' the Nagas. Let me tell you that. They are a brave people. You have to win them with your affection. Now, what is affection? Let each one of us ask ourselves that question. We have to win them with our affection. When I say that I do not mean that we should put up both our hands and say, 'we surrender'. We do nothing of that sort. India is a big country and it has the might and majesty of arms. But, let us give up certain things. Here is a problem which is essentially human. It is no good our saying that we will not go up to them unless they do this or that. Some hon. friend who preceded me said that we must send to them some missions. I do not know whether a mission of hon. Members of Parliament is the correct thing. I do not think Shri More would be very happy

as a member of that particular mission (Shri S. S. More: Not at all); I do not think he would be any good for the matter of that. He may be the most wonderful man; he may be a good leader; but we have got to be very careful about it. It is essentially a human problem. I do think it is never too late to get at the natural leaders of the Nagas. It is no good our trying to say that Phizo is no longer their spokesman, no longer their leader. We would be living in a fool's paradise if we denounce what has been the natural organisation of the Naga people for decades and decades.

While I address myself to the Naga people, I address them only in one context and that is as citizens of the Indian Union; I am with them. If they have made up their minds that they do not want to be with us, I have no use for them and all my talking here is useless because burning villages and sending battalions after battalions is not going to help India. If they have made up their minds that they do not want to be with us, it is useless proceeding with matters. But, I believe, they are like all the rest of the tribals in India. They do want to be with us, this great country of India, with a very understanding man like Shri Jawaharlal Nehru at the head of it. He has been to those tribal tracts again and again. I wish he revisited these particular areas. I know he is very busy. It requires strength of mind and he is the rightful man and not the officers there. He is the one and only man who can solve this problem. My speech is not by way of giving bouquets; it is by way of a simple suggestion. He can certainly get the Naga people to realise that this great country, with all its strength, with all its power is not out to perpetrate genocide there. If we have sent battalions there, it is not because we wanted to kill them or anything of that sort, but, in a mistaken way, we felt that it was the only way which could make the leaders climb down. We have failed in that and the next four months are

going to be more months of failure, no matter how many battalions we send there. It is difficult country, the terrain is difficult and the whole psychological situation is not easy.

So, while I say that to them, I also feel for our administration. Obviously, no administration worth the name can knuckle down to the cry of threat that has been made out to our country. But still we are dealing with a group of people, a section of the Indian community that are very, very different from the vast majority of Indian citizens. That is the only excuse I have; I have no other excuse. We have to deal with them in a way different from the way we have to deal with people elsewhere who have been creating trouble or who have created trouble. The position is very, very difficult and I do think that the Leader of the House is the one person who can solve this problem. It is no good one speech being made either by the Minister of Defence saying that the Armed Forces behaved in an exemplary way, or, for the matter of that, the Home Minister telling us that it was a question of law and order. It is neither a matter of defence of the realm—I know they are border areas and trouble is spreading to the other areas, I know that—nor a question of law and order; it is essentially a human problem.

So, while I appeal to the Naga people and maybe to Phizo—I do not know whether he is alive or not—or his colleagues and other leaders, I do appeal to the administration to climb down a bit and not say, 'We will not talk to them unless they withdraw this and that', because if that is the case, this debate is useless. If the question is, 'We will raze things to the ground; we will raze this agitation to the ground, and then we will talk,' then, Sir, I humbly submit that our debate and our discussion and our suggestions are all futile. I think there is the human way. I do think there are ways and means whereby even standing here our hand of friendship and our desire to find a solution could reach them. And let it reach

them without the police and the bayonets.

Only recently there has been a change even in the question of the Armed Forces. I would rather not talk about these things here. I would rather talk to the Leader of the House elsewhere. I think it is better that such things were not brought out openly on the floor of this House. I do feel that we must make up our minds whether, once and for all, we have given up this idea of diarchy or not. A great deal of the mischief, to my mind, has been due to the fact of diarchy in the matter of handling the situation. If the civil administration could not handle it, I think in this particular matter we should have committed the task to the armed forces to handle the situation. I do not mean diarchy in the sense of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms but of dual control, and that has been responsible for a good deal of the unfortunate things that have happened. I do feel that our armed forces have a better sense of discipline, they are not handicapped by the political considerations of civilians, and when they are given a job to do, trust them, they will do their job. They have done it everywhere else, and I do not see why they cannot do it in the Naga Hills. If the civil administration is competent to handle the situation, let the armed forces get out, let us not give them a bad name. But if the civil administration is incapable of handling the situation, I humbly suggest that the entire matter be handed over and I can assure you, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, that there will be less carnage there.

Shri Bimalaprosad Chaliha (Sibsagar—North Lakhimpur): The whole trouble in the Naga Hills has arisen out of the demand for complete independence by the Nagas and so far it stands as an uncompromising demand. Although the Prime Minister of India, the State Government and certain non-official agencies tried to persuade the Naga National Council leaders to think of anything else than independence, to suggest some accept-

[Shri Bimalaprosad Chaliha]

able improvement to the Constitution of India so far as the Sixth Schedule is concerned, the Naga National Council has not found it possible to leave the demand for complete independence. The police operation or the military operation or the outbreak of violence and all other unpleasant happenings are only offshoots which have arisen out of the demand for complete independence.

I had the honour of coming in contact with the Naga people and the Naga leaders. They are great people; there is greatness in them; they have sense of justice, they have strong commonsense and they are brave people. Therefore, I still entertain the hope that one day they will see the reasonableness in what this august Parliament thinks or the people of India think. They will be the people of whom we shall be very proud of. In spite of their demand for complete independence, however, I think our Government was always endeavouring to treat them as equal citizens. The difficulty started when violence broke out. This outbreak of violence really put the Government in a very difficult position. When the Government found that those who would not believe in the way of thinking of the rebels were killed, and when the police proved inadequate to cope with the situation, Government had no alternative but to take the help of the armed forces. I was really surprised when this violence broke out in the Naga Hills. Actually some friends from the Naga Hills who were here at that time were also surprised. I was more surprised because I know many Naga friends who really do not believe in violence. Since I had the occasion of meeting some of them in one of the jails, I claim to know their mind. They condemned violence and the border raids which have taken place. In spite of that, that violence has broken out is a fact, and the Government, as the authority responsible for law and order, have to bring the situation under control. Now it is the anxiety for all of us that the sooner

the conditions are created for withdrawal of army and the violence stops the better it is for all the partners concerned. For that purpose, I suppose, the responsibility lies more on the rebels who have resorted to violence.

We have another responsibility also. Either willingly or unwillingly, a section of the Naga people co-operated and are co-operating with the Government and we have to be quite sure about their protection. For that purpose we have to make the best arrangements that could be possible. All these things have to be taken into consideration. Negotiations, of course, we want to have, but every time the negotiations break down on account of the demand for complete independence. So far as my information goes, when the representatives of the Naga National Council met the Prime Minister they put forth the same demand, and that is why the Prime Minister found it impossible to discuss on that basis. That is how the negotiations did not bear any fruit.

Unless the Naga leaders see some reason in what the Prime Minister has said from time to time—asking them to suggest if they have any proposal for improvement of the Constitution, more particularly the Sixth Schedule or respond to leaders like Shri Jaipal Singh and other friends, I do not think that any useful purpose will be served by starting any negotiation. Still I hope that as soon as circumstances permit and law and order is restored in the Naga Hills, if any offer comes for negotiations, such an offer should be accepted and we should be prepared to start negotiations.

There may be omissions and commissions on the part of the Government—I mean the Central and the State Government. The problem itself is really a very difficult one and our officers who are deputed there are actually having a very hard time. They are working under great strain in that difficult terrain. Under all the adverse circumstances I am not going

to believe that all that was done by officers and army was correct and ideal. There may be omissions and commissions on the part of our Government or its officers. But the main issue is what is our attitude towards the demand for complete independence? That is really the central point. Neither in this august Parliament nor outside, I do not find a single Indian in the whole of this vast country who considers the demand as reasonable and is prepared to concede it. Therefore the position is that on the one hand there is the uncompromising demand for complete independence and on the other hand our inability to accede to it. That is the crux of the whole problem. Under the circumstances I do not see how do we gain by putting the blame here or there. Nevertheless we have a responsibility; our responsibility is to win over the Nagas by reason, affection and actions, as stated by Shri Jaipal Singh, so that they will feel, if not today, tomorrow that we are really their well-wishers, we belong to the same country and we want to live with them together as equal partners. That is a great responsibility for the Government, no, not only of the Government, I think this responsibility lies more on the people of India.

Shri Kamath: Sir, the House has, during the last few months, shown grave and growing concern—and rightly so—over this problem—this human problem, psychological problem, political problem—on our Eastern frontier, where the situation has been deteriorating from day to day, and from week to week in recent months. It has tended to become a blind spot with our Government. Every time an approach was made, they say that unless the Nagas give up violence, unless they give up their terrorist methods, there will be no talks. May I ask the Government and the Prime Minister whether, as my friend Shri Rishang Keishing said, it was not the initial mishandling of this human problem by the Assam Government—may be by the Central Government too—that

touched off this grave unrest? We have heard in this House that the policy of 'Assamisation', to put it briefly, pursued by the Assam Government was the main reason for the unrest and discontent in the Naga Hills area.

Late in the day, the Central Government adopted certain social and economic welfare measures which I, in my humble judgement, consider to be inadequate and unsatisfactory. The Prime Minister has been telling the House that he, at any rate, has not looked upon it as a law and order problem; he has looked upon it as a psychological, human and political problem. But, in practice, what have we seen? As my friend, Shri Rishang Keishing, said and showed so very conclusively and clearly, it has been dealt with, in practice, as a military problem—not even as a law and order problem. The tale that has been unfolded here in very vivid language by him is a gruesome tale. Villages have been razed to the ground. Loyal Naga leaders like Dr. Haralu have been murdered in broad daylight. I put a question here in the House some days ago. I had a suspicion that the Government had half a mind to hush it up. The Home Minister's answer was that an enquiry was in progress. My information is that it happened in broad daylight, not at night, when the doctor was just coming out of his house, in his own garden. He has got two sons and, I believe, one daughter also in Government service. Such a loyal, an ultra-loyal, Naga, who had such connections with the machinery of the Government, is murdered in cold blood and after this act, Government hopes that there would be a better spirit prevailing among the hostile Nagas!

The Government subscribes to Panch Shila. Panch Shila has been advertised for export to countries from the USSR to the USA. Even the other day, the Prime Minister, speaking at Bhuj, I think, advised

[Shri Kamath]

the people of India to learn the ways of Panch Shila. May I, in all humility, appeal to him to teach a little Panch Shila to the police and the army also, before the situation in the whole country deteriorates? After having seen, with my own eyes, how the police ran amuck in Ahmedabad, and heard how they behaved in Patna last year and then, in Bombay, this year and lately in Hoshiarpur again, I am perfectly prepared to believe to the grave allegations made by my hon. friends from the Naga area—Shri Rishang Keishing and Shri Jogeswar Singh—against the army in action. Call it army action or police action; the result is the same.

The sands are running out. May I suggest to the Government to do this before it is too late? It is still not too late. Let it not be said of this Government in the very words used by, shall I say, these personages on the Treasury Benches, these very persons who adorn the Treasury Benches now, when they opposed the British Government, that the British Government acted too late and too little. Let it not be said of those who carry on the Government today that they are also following the same path of the British Government—too late and too little. The methods pursued in this case to deal with this problem—human, psychological and political problem—have been reminiscent and even redolent of the tactics and methods adopted by them. I am sorry, but I am constrained to say, that we are adopting the same methods that the British imperialists adopted here, and lately to deal with Mau Mau movement in Kenya and in Cyprus. Today, the British papers have told us, the morning papers say, that the British Government, even the British Imperialist Government, had appealed to the rebels in Cyprus to surrender their arms and create an atmosphere suitable and favourable for talks. Is it too much to ask our Government, which is not an

imperialist or colonial Government, certainly a Panch Shila Government and which looks upon the Nagas as their own flesh, flesh of their flesh and blood of their blood,—is it too much to ask our Prime Minister and our Government to approach the Naga problem in a much more humane manner—to say the least—than the British imperialists? They are themselves approaching the Cypriot rebels today by appeals.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh (Shahbad South): Is it a colony?

Shri Kamath: My hon. friend mentions about colonies. I hope he does not regard the Naga Hills as our colony. I hope the Secretary to the Congress Legislature Party knows this.

Shri Raghunath Singh (Banaras Distt.-Central): He is saying that it is not a colony.

Shri Kamath: I would, therefore, very earnestly appeal to the Government and to the Prime Minister to think of other methods now, and not to think of this military approach. Let him approach in the old spirit with which he championed in the good old days of the freedom struggle the cause of Rani Gaidallo of Assam. I suppose, I am not sure, she also belongs to the very tribe—the Naga tribe—whom we are trying to crush today. Let him revive that spirit and let him approach this Naga problem in the same spirit as when he championed the cause of the exiled and imprisoned Rani Gaidallo of Assam against the tyranny of British Imperialism. Let him shed this wooden approach, this wooden barren outlook which he has condemned in his auto-biography.—like the approach of the old British bureaucracy and British Imperialism. This wooden approach, this military approach must go. The human approach must come. The political approach, the psychological approach must come. Let him put it in practice and not merely say that it is going to

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be our approach. Let not the old approach continue. The Home Minister, soon after his return from Shillong or Gauhati—I am doubtful if he went to the Naga Hills area, to the trouble spots—made a statement that unless they shed these violent methods, there could be no talks with them. The British Government used to say the same thing in the old days. But ultimately, the British Government, even before the leaders who adorn the Treasury Benches today gave up their methods of 1942, came to terms and talks, and Lord Wavell invited them before they had openly denounced or relented their methods. And, in the end, I would appeal to the Government to declare an amnesty, as was just said by my friend Shri Rishang Keishing, a general amnesty in the Naga Hills area. I would also appeal to the Naga rebels to surrender their arms. It should be a simultaneous affair and not one following the other, simultaneous as far as possible, so as to create an atmosphere favourable for talks on a human plane. Let this House also make it clear, Sir, that this House does not subscribe to the demand of the Nagas for a separate independent State. I hope, if these steps are taken, if this military approach is abandoned and a human approach is taken up and followed, it will yield lasting fruits in the Naga Hills area and we will win over the Nagas as friends of India and not the hostiles which they are today.

Shri K. K. Basu: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, discussion on the Naga problem, though belated, is a very important one. We are given an opportunity to give expression to our opinion on the problem which has created much furore in our political atmosphere.

My friends who spoke before have dealt at length about the conditions there, the atrocities of the military and also how violent methods are being indulged in by a section of the Naga people. Sir, we have got to realise the peculiar problem of this area which is in the borders of India.

As Shri Jaipal Singh has said, the people of this area differ largely from a great percentage of the Indian people. But they are a part of India though a section of them might be propagating for a long time for an independent State to which, as my friend Shri Kamath has said, no section of the House subscribes. Have we tried, especially the Government who are in charge of the administration, to understand the problem, instead of replying to their demand for an independent State with all sorts of military pressures and oppression, examples of which were given in detail by Shri Rishang Keishing? When the Government saw a section of the people of that area indulging in violence, they were misguided. Have they tried to understand whether the entire people in the Naga Hills have subscribed to that demand and the acts of violence to get that demand? Why did not our Government, instead of sending a military man like Shri Kochir—whose qualification, I am told, is that he is in the relation of a very important Army Chief of staff—to deal with the whole problem, which, as my friends have said, is a human problem, try to understand the problem? They are demanding for a separate State. Have you tried to understand why this demand is made when no part of India, after the freedom movement and after we have become independent, is demanding for a separate State? It may be because, as my friends have said, the Naga people are not satisfied with the constitutional provision that is embodied in the Sixth Schedule, or possibly, with the way in which the staff of the Assam administration are behaving.

As I said, Sir, their problem is a peculiar one. What we wish is that our Government should negotiate with these people instead of terrorising them. Instead of standing on prestige and saying that unless they give up their arms and stop the acts of violence there is no question of any negotiation, they must try direct

[Shri K. K. Basu]

negotiations. The hon. Home Minister flew from here, I am told, to Shillong or Gauhati, the seat of the Assam Government, but he never tried to contact the people or go to the real spot where there has been so much trouble, as has already been pointed out, and where there has been a big movement among a section of the people who forms part of India. Therefore, we would urge our Government not to stand on prestige but to open direct negotiations with these people. There may be a small section who even today may be demanding a separate State. But I am sure, if the Government go forward and tell these Naga people, who have a peculiar problem of their own, that they are going to constitute it as an autonomous region with much more powers than provided under the Sixth Schedule, they will agree. It may be, as has been already suggested, made as one of the Part C States provided in the Constitution with much more autonomous powers. I am not going to suggest as to what it should be. What I am saying is that the Government should not stand on prestige but they should open direct negotiations.

We are very often told that people from outside are drafted to work in the administration of that area, when among the Naga people themselves there are people qualified enough. They are not taken into the administration of that particular area, because the Assam Government—whoever may be in charge of the administration—do not have confidence in those people. Do you mean to say that the peculiar problems of the area cannot be dealt with by the sons of the soil, when there are capable boys available who are qualified enough to work? I think our Government should not take the attitude which the Britishers usually took in dealing with the tribal people in NWFP and use bullets and police oppression.

I would, therefore, once again urge upon the Government not to stand on

prestige but start direct negotiation with a view to settling the problem. They naturally do not want an independent area. They are only trying to take the administrative unit with much more autonomous powers. Our friends opposite have been proclaiming our philosophy, forgiveness, tolerance and good living with other of having opposite views. But why today, because a small section—3 lakhs—of the people who are misguided, who have peculiar problems of their own, who are racially somewhat different from a great majority of the Indian people, are indulging in acts of violence for obtaining their demand, you are using force against them? If you take this military attitude and take military action, the tendency of separatism will grow. You should not stand on prestige. You should start direct negotiations. Ask them to surrender their arms and immediately declare a general amnesty as my friends have already suggested. Explore all possible measures so that this problem in the Naga Hills can be permanently tackled and solved, so that they may form a part of Free India and take their due share in the developing Free India, which all of us wish to develop.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have welcomed this debate in this House on the situation in the Naga Hills; not that that situation from a military point of view is a very grave one but because it is essentially the kind of problem in which the House and Parliament should take interest.

Now, it has been repeated many times that this should be treated as a human problem; some hon. Members have said: as a political problem and not as a military problem. Well, if we had treated it as a military problem only, probably, the results should have been quite different. It is because we have not treated it as a purely military problem, it is because we have issued all kinds of instructions, restrictions, limita-

tions and inhibitions to our Army and to the others not to treat it as a military problem that from the military point of view progress is not being as fast as it should have been. I believe that if we had treated it in a military way and did not succeed in winning the goodwill and co-operation of the Nagas, we would have failed utterly. There can, and there should be no thought that you can deal with a problem like this, or that you should deal with it, in the sense of merely by force of arms suppressing the people. That is not our attitude.

I should like this House to remember that they should look at this in the larger context of our general policy in these areas, not only in the Naga Hills but in the NEFA area and roundabout areas. Many of these areas, for the first time, were brought under some kind of administration during the last six, seven or eight years. Vast areas have been brought under some kind of administration. I do submit to this House that they will probably not find a parallel of this kind of administrative system spreading out so peacefully and with very few incidents. Why was that so? Because we have issued strict injunctions and directions, saying that we have to win over the people and that we have to seek their co-operation. We have to build, whatever we do, on their goodwill. There have been incidents, but very, very few.

There has been one major incident which, the House might remember, was a little over three years ago. In Auchinmore, in the NEFA area, in October, 1953, an officer of ours, with a number of troops, was going there, not to shoot or kill but for normal patrol work and inspection work. They were suddenly attacked, most unsuspectingly. The poor person was making a cup of tea in his camp, and the others were putting up tents. What was the result? 70 persons were killed—40 porters and 30 army personnel. It is a large number. This kind of thing naturally and normally produces strong reactions in a Gov-

ernment. But I doubt if any Government in the wide world would have dealt with the situation in the way we did. I must say that when we first heard of this incident, it made us rather angry. It made our army, naturally, a little angry. It was not just fighting, but it was sheer cold-blooded murder—people coming and suddenly surrounding peaceful people who were sitting down, and killing them in large numbers. Yet, immediately, we recovered from the first shock and surprise and anger, and naturally we took steps to send our forces there. But we told our forces that they must realise who those people are. It is no good going about killing them and burning their villages. Some hon. Member suggested that the normal thing in British times was to go and burn the villages. Of course, bombing does not kill anybody there because they are not living in concentrated quarters. So, it was said that you can simply burn their villages. But we said, 'No.' The place was very much interior and it was very difficult to reach the areas. It was not plain. We refrained from doing that. We took enormous trouble and after weeks of trail, some of our forces got there. It took us months and months to deal with the situation. We did deal with it and we dealt with it essentially in a peaceful way and ultimately we captured the people who were supposed to be guilty, but we handed them over to the tribal councils to judge.

I mentioned this incident of nearly three years ago to show how we have approached these matters. This particular incident has nothing to do with the Nagas as such. I am merely saying that we issue instructions to the forces, to the civilian officers and to our army, to deal with the situation in a peaceful way.

Last year, there was some trouble in the Tuensang area which is largely a Naga area. Now, it is all very well for the hon. Members—Shri K. K. Basu and Shri Kamath—to say, "You must deal with it in a human

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru.]

way. Why do you send the army?" But then, what exactly is to be done when other people start killing? Do we send them messages of goodwill, or do we try to stop the killing? We got messages from the population of that area, asking for help. We got messages from the villagers and we got messages from the Government employees, teachers and others, saying "Protect us". What are we to do? Should we not give them protection? This happened in the Tuensang area. We had to send some of our forces with some rifles and the rest, quietly, without much fuss. Of course, it was easy enough to treat or deal with it differently, by military action or by the army. But we proceeded rather slowly, because we had the object of winning them over and not merely crushing them. Of course, we had to shoot some because they shot at us, but that is a different matter. So, the Tuensang problem was solved within a few months without too much fuss.

Now, when fighting was taking place in the Tuensang area, the Naga Hills were relatively quiet. That is, there was no major incident or acts of violence. There might have been some smaller incidents. At that time, Phizo had come to see the Governor and the Chief Minister of Assam. Actually, he issued statements, more or less mentioning his adherence to non-violence. But we found that while he said so and actually issued notices, he was actually organising for violence, at the same time. There is no doubt about it. It is absolutely true. He was encouraging the people and telling them that "I am doing this. It is a trick, just to give you greater chance to go ahead. Let us play this game here, and you carry on your activities there". This was the kind of thing they practised.

Now, I should like the hon. Members to have some idea of who the Nagas are. I should first like to say that the Nagas, correctly speaking, are not what might be called a tribe

or one group of tribes closely tied to each other. I do not know when the word 'Naga' came to be used. I have an idea that it is a British word, that is, in the British times, that word was used. It may or may not be correct—I am not sure. But their tribes are named differently—Acama, Ao and Angami. These are the names of major tribes. They do not call each other as Nagas. This is a word which you and I may use or the Britishers used. Perhaps, it was used rather in some kind of derision, because Naga means naked. It is quite likely that the Britishers used that word. But the biggest tribes are the Acama, Ao and Angami. If you go to this area, you will find that there is no common language, a common Naga language. Every few miles, over half a dozen villages, the language changes, or the dialect changes. You can hardly meet with one common language over a distant place, except in a broken kind of way.

Among the Nagas, of course there were, or there used to be, some tribes which might be called the dominant tribes, who are, militarily, stronger or tougher than others. The tribes which dominated the others received some tributes from the other tribes. So, there is a certain element of domination over the other tribes. There were some stronger tribes who claimed tributes, in the past, and if they did not get tributes, they took stronger action and stronger measures against the other tribes and forced them to pay tribute. This has been the position there. Then, our administration spread through in those areas.

Some figures about the Nagas might interest the hon. Members. I shall of course use the word 'Naga' as a generic term, because we are using this word in the records. The population at present all over the areas—not the Naga area alone—is a little over half a million. In the Naga Hills District, it is a little over two lakhs. In the Tuensang frontier division also, the population is slightly over

two lakhs. In the Tirap frontier division, it is 50,000 and in the Manipur State, it is 80,000. So, the total is a little over 500,000, which is spread out. In the Naga Hills itself, it is a little over two lakhs.

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Now, I confess that I heard about Nagas as such about 20 or 25 years ago, and I was rather attracted by what I had heard. Then came the case of that lady to which reference was made by Mr. Kamath—Rani Guidallo—who, parenthetically, after suffering a long period of imprisonment, was released many years ago; and, I am glad to say that proper arrangements were made for her to live in the house built for her—she built it herself and we gave her help—and we made as much reparation as we could for the misdeeds of the previous Government. Although I became interested, I did not know much about the Nagas then.

Mr. Jaipal Singh mentioned the sending of those people to see me. Ever since then I have come into contact with them on a number of occasions. Mr. Phizo and a number of his colleagues met me here; they met me twice. There was one occasion to which reference has been made by Mr. Keishing; he said something about an incident at Kohima, where, according to him, the Nagas came and were prevented from giving me an address, and therefore they became angry and walked away. The facts are not quite that. The facts are, I went to Kohima; to begin with, it was not a normal visit to Kohima. The Prime Minister of Burma had come over; flying across the frontier, he met me at Manipur, I think, and we were going to Burma a day or two later. I thought I might utilise that opportunity to go to Kohima. We went to Kohima and we relaxed. I suggested to the authorities there that some kind of a welcome might be given to the Burmese Prime Minister. He was our guest and the people gathered to say a few words. So, it was not a normal occa-

sion on which I go there. What I found later was that the Nagas there wanted to read out an address to me. The Deputy Commissioner told them, "You can hand it over to the Prime Minister afterwards; I cannot allow your reading it out to him at a meeting when the Prime Minister of Burma and others had come", so that, it is not correct to say that I refused to take the address. As a matter of fact, at Kohima on a previous occasion, a year before or so, I had actually met the Naga leader—Mr. Phizo was not there—discussed the matter with them and taken a long document from them just a year before. So, it is not true to say that I refused or even the Deputy Commissioner came in the way of the address being given to me. But, he did come in the way of that being read at the meeting. I did not know it at that time; I knew only later. Then, when U Nu and I arrived at the meeting place, these Nagas who were present, about a hundred or may be a thousand, got up and walked away. I was very distressed at this, not because of me, but here I had taken the Prime Minister of Burma, an honoured guest of ours, and for him to be treated so discourteously hurt me very much.

Now, much has been said. Mr. Basu talked about the atrocities of the military and Mr. Kamath about Cypriots and Kenyans. I do not know what justification they have for using this language; or, it was merely a phrase they are used to without much significance, I do not know. Then, Mr. Keishing referred to the burning of villages and shooting down of people. Obviously, in military operations and the rest, I cannot get up here and say that everything that is being done was as if we were sitting in a drawing room and that everything that was done can be justified completely. Sometimes mistakes are made. Sometimes apart from mistakes, wrong things are done by individuals. That is a different matter. I do submit that mistakes have been made and one of the most

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regrettable mistakes which distressed us exceedingly has been in connection with the killing of Dr. Haralu. Apart from this, his sons, as the hon. Member said, are important officers of ours—assistant political officers here—and his daughter is serving with me in the External Affairs Ministry. It came to me as a tremendous shock when I came back—I was not here then—and we took immediate action in regard to it. We are taking action; in fact, courts of enquiry etc. are carrying on the processes. Military processes, I believe, are fairly thorough, but they take a long time. Undoubtedly, we should punish those who are guilty.

An Hon. Member: Hear, hear.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I am not saying that wrong things are not being done there by individuals or groups, whether by civil authorities or by the military. But, I do wish to remove this impression that our army or anybody else there is just playing fast and loose with lives and with burning of villages and the rest. Apart from our instructions which are very strict, the General Officers-Commanding and others have been constantly issuing instructions. Now, it is true that many villages have been burnt there. Our information is that a far greater part of the burning is done by the Naga hostiles. They themselves do it; that is our difficulty. Mr. Jaipal Singh talks about more and more regiments or battalions to be sent there. It is true, but why do we send them? Principally, it is in order to protect the people who are being attacked. It is easy to attack; a group of 10, 20 or 30 persons can go about and attack any village. But it is very difficult to send a garrison to every village. So, it is attempts of protection more than anything that has led to our sending troops in the Naga Hills as well as in the places adjoining them. So, I do submit that slight errors have been committed; most regrettable mistakes have been made. But, the general conduct of our forces

there has been certainly better than any other similar operation that I know. I do believe that Mr. Keishing is misled by reports he may receive, if I may say so, from Mr. Phizo's publicity department, because I get them too and they are the most fantastic tales one can imagine; completely it has no relation to truth at all. These things are not sent to him only, but sometimes, not frequently, they are sent abroad to foreign newspapers in America and elsewhere.

Shri Rishang Keishing: I want to submit to the Prime Minister that I never received anything from Mr. Phizo regarding the figures which I have given. I hope normal situation will be restored and the Government, as it is a democratic Government. (Interruption.)

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: He did not say that you were receiving it.

Shri Rishang Keishing: He said that I might have received reports from Phizo's publicity department.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I said that Mr. Keishing must have been affected by news emanating from Phizo's publicity department. I got the news too and many other Members get it.

Shri Rishang Keishing: The figures are unchallengeable.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Which figures?

Shri Rishang Keishing: Figures regarding the burning of the villages.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I do submit there are three types of burnings. Firstly, the Naga hostiles deliberately burn, because, after all, the tribes look at it from their point of view. They cannot, and any such group cannot, subsist for long unless they get help from the villages, unless they get food, money, etc. from the villages, if not out of loyalty, at least out of something imposed by fear. The result is they go about collecting money and food.

Now in the Tuensang Division there are at least one hundred defence societies of local people, Nagas and

others, formed for the protection of villages from hostile Nagas and when the hostile Nagas come local people fight them. We have given some arms to those local people. So also—I do not know the number—to some extent in the Naga Hills it becomes rather a civil conflict between Nagas and Nagas and our information is that sometimes villages are burnt in this process. The figure of Mr. Rishang Keishing may be correct, but I say that most of these villages have been burnt by the Naga hostiles themselves. Another way of burning is—after all they have only thatched roofs—when any kind of firing takes place between our forces and Naga forces, the firing itself sets fire to the villages. May be our firing sets fire to them. I believe that there were cases in the early days or some months back when, suspecting that some villages had been occupied by these hostiles our armed forces either directly burned them or their firing burnt them. But that has been completely stopped, so far as our instructions are concerned. Where there is firing of this kind it is very easy for thatched villages to catch fire. As my hon. colleague reminds me the Nagas fight, apart from guns, with arrows with burning heads. This is a thing which particularly sets fire to thatched roofs.

I do not for a moment say that there have not been mistakes made by the civil or the military, errors committed, regrettable errors committed; but both our approach to this problem and to a large extent in the carrying out of our directions by the army authorities have been rather remarkable for patience that is shown in the face of considerable provocation. I say provocation. Now any hon. Member can realise that it is very irritating to be sniped at, to get an arrow or gun shot suddenly while you are going along a road or passing through anywhere. Now it would be an easy enough problem to deal with armed forces, but the problem is of sniping, not everywhere, but at many places. This kind of

thing is irritating. It makes an average soldier or civilian rather angry. Nevertheless, our instructions are: exercise patience, because we want to win over these people.

Even now in an increasing measure we are utilising the co-operation of the Nagas. Quite apart from Naga officials and others, there are some Naga people in our Assam Rifles, some Naga regiments in our army. I do not mean to say they have all been crowded up there; they are in various places. But our definite instructions are that they must seek the co-operation of the Nagas in every way and seek to make it clear to the hostiles and others that we have inevitably to meet them. We have to meet a person firing a gun at us with a gun.

I do not understand what Mr. Basu and Mr. Kamath meant when they suggested to us that we should treat it as a human problem—yes certainly—and withdraw our army. I really am astonished that any person should make that suggestion, which means handing over large numbers of people there who have relied upon us for their protection, just well, for their liquidation.

Shri Algu, Rai Shastri (Azamgarh Distt.—East cum Ballia Distt.—West): That will be very callous.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: That will be an astonishing thing for anybody to do, whatever be the consequences. That obviously cannot be done.

So that, I submit that the broad approach that we have followed is very much on the lines of what several hon. Members have suggested. Apart from mistakes made here and there, we propose to continue to follow that approach.

The hon. Member—I think it was Mr. Rishang Keishing—referred to the agreement which was made by the Naga National Council with Sir Akbar Hydari and Mr. Bardoloi. Now I do not accept his statement that that agreement has not been honoured. I do not accept that. He re-

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peatedly said that it has been dishonoured. That agreement came up before the Constituent Assembly, or rather before the Special Committee of the Constituent Assembly. I was not in it. The whole of the Sixth Schedule attached to the Constitution was largely drawn up keeping that in view. It may be that the Sixth Schedule as a whole was not an exact reproduction of the agreement. I was not in that committee. I cannot speak with authority as to what happened there. But the whole object was to give autonomy to those areas and to allow them, or to help them to live according to their own ways.

Now it may be that one may say that the Sixth Schedule as it ultimately emerged did not go far enough, or was not satisfactory enough. I can understand that argument. Let us then consider the Sixth Schedule; let us amend it; or let us do what we like with it. It is up to Parliament to do whatever it likes.

Throughout this period this question has been raised. It has been raised off and on in the last eight or nine years. It is not something sudden that has happened now. As I said, on three occasions I met Mr. Phizo and at least once or maybe twice I have met other Naga leaders, that is to say the colleagues of Mr. Phizo. At least four times, or maybe five times, I have discussed this matter with them and pointed out to them that we are always prepared to consider any constructive proposal for amendment to the provision regarding these areas, but it is no good talking to me about independence. Certainly I have laid stress on that. It is no good talking to me about that. I consider it quite a fantastic idea for that little corner between China and Burma and India—a part of it is in Burma—being called an independent State.

Later it is true that when they wanted to see me certain conditions were attached. One of them was that I am not prepared to discuss inde-

pendence. This was condition No. 1. The second was: you must give up violence. This was before this major violence and other things, when petty acts of violence were taking place. As a rule, I am prepared to meet anybody: does not matter whether we agree or whether we disagree. But I was told that after each interview that I had had, the people went back and stated in those areas that they were going on the road to independence, because they met the Prime Minister. They go over the heads of the local government and local officials and generally try to strengthen their position there by reference to the interview they had with me. Their decision with regard to independence certainly came in my way. If they exploit interviews like that with me, should I encourage them? Even then I told them: I should be glad to meet you provided you make it clear that you do not demand independence. That is the position after I had met them four or five times in various places in various ways. Otherwise, there will be no difficulty in meeting them.

In fact, apart from me, the Governor—and the Governor of Assam, as you know, is our Special Agent, Government of India's Agent in regard to N.E.F.A. and the problems of N.E.F.A. and the problems of Naga Hills, although different, nevertheless, have a certain similarity and so the Governor has been taking great interest in these matters—often met the Naga leaders. He had a meeting with Phizo. The Chief Minister, last year, met him too, more than once I think. So, there has been every attempt, on our part to meet them or to try to explain to them or to win them over from violence and all that. I do not mean to say that the Assam Government's policy or our Government's policy or every step that we took was absolutely correct or happy. We made mistakes, naturally. These petty mistakes do occur. But the whole objective before us was to win their minds and hearts and not to

terrify them or frighten them. It is true, as some hon. Member has said some time back about this policy—what is called Assamisation—perhaps it has been injudiciously pursued. But these are relatively minor things in this picture and the whole object was to deal with them directly, to establish conditions there which would lead to their progress and would allow them to lead their own lives without interference.

The one thing I was most anxious about was the establishment of basic schools there by their own people chiefly. As a matter of fact, a number of Naga boys had gone to Sabar-mati to spend some years there and they go back as basic school teachers. We wanted them to establish schools there because I thought it would help them.

The second thing was the community projects. I thought these two things were more suited to that place and the Nagas themselves can work them with a little help from outside. Then there are the major schemes, of course, like communications, schools etc. So, this has been our approach.

I have not referred to the military aspect. There is not very much to refer in it. But I will just say this. Our instructions to our military continue to be what I have just stated—that they must treat it as a human problem; and military cannot deal with a political problem. That is for us and we are prepared to deal with it and we do consider it as a political problem and a human problem, much less a military problem.

Then, some hon. Members referred to general amnesty. Yes, certainly there is the amnesty. There is a proclamation of amnesty. I do not understand this demand for general amnesty which some hon. Member has made. I do not know what he means by saying this should occur simultaneously as if when there is a general amnesty automatically and spontaneously everybody surrenders.

Shri K. K. Basu: We made the offer by saying.....

Shri Kamath: We simultaneously appeal to the Government and to the rebels.

Shri K. K. Basu: We should appeal to them.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Right at the beginning I have said that when amnesty was proclaimed there were some exceptions, exceptions I believe for persons who had committed murder or something. I have forgotten the phraseology; there were some exceptions.....

The Minister of Home Affairs (Pandit G. B. Pant): Heinous offence.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Heinous offences or something. There is still that proposal for amnesty for whoever surrenders. Although the period expires from time to time, we extend it. In fact, there it is. So, there is no difficulty about it. We are not out to punish any individual or any group there. We want them to settle down because it is no pleasure for us to have to deal with this problem and certainly it is no pleasure to see the great majority of the people living there lead abnormal lives, for naturally they are afraid on the one side of Naga hostiles coming and making them pay up or otherwise extorting things from them and afraid on the other side of fighting that takes place roundabout or some accidents happening or their villages burning—all kinds of things happen and nobody likes this kind of thing. The sooner it is ended, the better.

Does any hon. Member expect Government to invite the leaders of the Naga National Council and treat them as the leaders of, well, a different State and have a treaty with them. What exactly is the meaning of that, I do not understand. We are prepared to talk to anybody but not about independence; that is the sole qualification. If they want to come, they can come. But if they do something in the wrong way, instead of discouraging them, should we encourage them? That is what we found in the past and that is our difficulty.

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It is not a question of prestige. The Government of India's prestige does not come in dealing with the poor countrymen of ours. The Government of India is too big a thing for its prestige to suffer in these small ways.

There is the question of our not taking a step which is misunderstood, misinterpreted and which is criticised by our own colleagues among the Nagas, all those who are co-operating with us. Surely, the House will not expect us to betray all those Nagas who, in spite of difficulties, have co-operated with our officials and our civilians, who have looked to us for help and protection. We wish in the future more and more to bring in this element of co-operation with the Nagas there.

Now, with regard to the political aspect, an hon. Member said that Tuensang Division of the Naga Hill District should be made into a separate political entity. I think he added Tirap frontier track too. These are political problems which we can very well consider. But we cannot consider them in this particular context because that will require a change in our Constitution, amendment etc. If necessary, we shall change the Constitution and I have no doubt that the House will agree to change it provided the right conditions exist and in this matter, naturally, we have to consult the Assam Government.

We cannot simply brush it aside because the main thing is the well-being of the people who live there. It does not matter whether you have one unit or two units. They should have a feeling that they can lead their own lives and they should have autonomy and they should be proud of being citizens of India.

Now, Mr. Jaipal Singh talked about ~~discrepancy~~ division of authority between the civilians and the military there. I do not know how far the present

arrangements there have come in the way of efficient work. It was our desire not to go too far with the army. That led us to send our army in aid of the civilian power. It was easy enough to declare martial law or hand over the whole area to the military, but always we are thinking of not treating this as a purely military problem, the point that has been so much emphasised by hon. Members. So, we sent them in aid of the civil power. That is the present position. But, in effect, of course, the civil power functions in a very narrow way there; maybe in some centres it does, but in a very limited way. Naturally when the armed forces are functioning in the way they do and hostile elements are functioning, the civil power's activities are rather limited, but what the hon. Member Shri Jaipal Singh said is a matter worthy of consideration and we shall certainly consider it. I gather from my colleague the Home Minister that the chief function of the civil authorities there is really relief and rehabilitation. In fact, even the Army of course is doing that, and here I would say that the record of the Army and the civil authorities in regard to the building up of villages and giving relief is fairly creditable. It is an increasingly formidable record of help that they are giving.

Shri Jaipal Singh: The armed forces could do any job a hundred times better than the civil administration, whether it is rehabilitation, building villages or houses or whatever it is. They are much better and more competent to deal with the situation.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: That may be so. Is the hon. Member referring to this relief and rehabilitation or everything?

Shri Jaipal Singh: I am referring to everything in the light that the Naga situation is under discussion, not the whole of India. Anything I say relates to the Naga situation.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I am inclined, if I may say so, to agree with the hon. Member that any kind of work of this type is likely to be handled much more efficiently by the Army than by the civil authority.

Shri Jaipal Singh: Hear, hear.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I have no doubt in my mind.

Shri S. S. More: But will they do it in a human manner?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: They will do it and they will do it in a humane manner too. I have no doubt about that and if I may say so, I was surprised to find that even in the field of the law the Court Martials of the Army are much more thorough than some of our civil courts.

Shri S. S. More: Have we suspended the Criminal Procedure Code everywhere?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: My colleague Dr. Katju, who is an eminent lawyer apart from being Defence Minister, tells me that he is surprised to find the high quality of the law in the Army.

Shri S. S. More: Now he has ceased to be a lawyer.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I have no doubt about that particular piece of work but—there is a big 'but' about it—in the short run that is good, in the long run that is not good. In the long run giving these activities to the Army produces certain results which may not be good, but that is not the fault of the Army.

One thing more. A proposal was made to send a parliamentary commission there.

Shri Jaipal Singh: With Shri More as the leader.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I must confess I do not quite understand what a parliamentary commission is going to do and where it is going to go. Wherever the commission goes, we will have to send a battalion, round it to protect it, but I hope later a time may come when hon. Members of Parliament may be able to visit these areas.

6-34 P.M.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till
Eleven of the Clock on Friday the
24th August, 1956.*