

14.36 hrs.

**MINIMUM PRICE OF JUTE BILL\***

**Shri Jhulan Sinha (Siwan):** I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for fixation of minimum price of jute.

**Mr. Chairman:** The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for fixation of minimum price of jute"

*The motion was adopted*

**Shri Jhulan Sinha:** I introduce the Bill.

14.37 hrs

**PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE BILL**

**Mr. Chairman:** Shri Ram Shanker Lal is absent. So, the House will now take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Shri Naushir Bharucha on the 12th December, 1958.

"That the Bill to define powers, privileges and immunities of Parliament and its Members in certain respects be taken into consideration"

Out of 2½ hours allotted for the discussion of the Bill, one minute was taken on the 12th December, 1958 and 2 hours and 29 minutes are now available. Shri Naushir Bharucha may continue his speech.

14.38 hrs.

[**MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER** in the Chair]

**Shri Naushir Bharucha (East Khandesh):** The Bill I propose to discuss today at some length relates to the privilege of this hon House and of the hon Members. An incident occurred in the House of Commons when one MP by name Mr. Strauss wrote a letter to the Minister on 8th February 1957, a letter in which a complaint about the London Electricity Board and its policies in connection

with sale of copper scrap was made. That letter was *per se* defamatory and the London Electricity Board called for an apology from that Member and threatened to prosecute him criminally. Mr Strauss felt that his privilege as a Member of Parliament was in danger and, therefore, he requested the protection of the Chair, and the Chair referred the matter to the Privileges Committee. On the issues before the Privileges Committee its decision was that in writing a letter Mr Strauss was engaged in a proceeding in Parliament within the meaning of the Bill of Rights, 1688

I shall discuss the phrase "proceeding in Parliament" at considerable detail presently. The Privileges Committee also held that the solicitors, by threatening to issue a writ or summons against Mr Strauss committed a breach of privilege of Parliament and, thirdly, the Privileges Committee recommended that the opinion of the Privy Council should be sought on the issue whether the House would be acting contrary to the Parliamentary Privileges Act of 1770 if it were to treat the issue of a writ as a breach of privilege.

The Judicial Committee—the Privy Council—replied in the negative. But in the mean time, probably the solicitors of the London Electricity Board thought it wise to drop the proceedings. Therefore when the matter was referred back to the Privileges Committee, the Privileges Committee recommended that no action may be taken in view of the fact that the threat which was issued had been dropped. At that time there was free vote in the House of Commons and when the report of the Parliamentary Privileges Committee came up, it was not accepted by 213 votes to 218—a difference of five votes, which appears to be more or less a snap vote. The result is that today the position is that any MP, who writes to a Minister

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