

**The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy):** (a) No.

(b) No.

(c) On 18th August, 1950 at about 19-20 hours 204 Down Delhi Express, while starting from Delhi Sarai Rohilla station, entered wrongly on the track which was to be used later by 93 Up Jodhpur Mail scheduled to leave Delhi at 19-30 hours. There was however no possibility of any accident as a result thereof as electrical devices already provided would not have permitted lowering of the signals for the movement of 93 Up Mail on the line occupied by 204 Down Express. Instructions were, however, given to Delhi station not to start 93 Up Mail and the Train had not left that station. 204 Down was stopped by the train Guard. A passenger also pulled the chain on hearing the shouts from the gateman.

(d) and (e) An Assistant Officers' Committee is investigating this incident. Necessary action against the staff held to blame as also, the staff who deserve reward will be considered by the Railway Administration after examining the Enquiry Report.

12.01 hrs.

**MOTIONS FOR ADJOURNMENT—**  
Contd

**RESIGNATION OF ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF**

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Prime Minister

**Shri Sadhan Gupta (Calcutta East)** rose—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order. I have called the hon. Prime Minister.

**The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru):** Sir, I wish to apologize for my absence from the House yesterday. I was anxious to be here because of a number of adjournment motions on a subject which had naturally aroused much interest, but as the House knows, I had to go to Palam just at

that time to meet the President of Pakistan. I sent a request to you to be good enough to take up these adjournment motions a day later, that is, today. I wished particularly to deal with these matters myself and so I requested the Defence Minister not to deal with them. I am grateful to you and to the House for postponing consideration yesterday and for giving me this opportunity today.

I can well understand the concern of this House as well as of others about the news that was published yesterday concerning the resignation of the Chief Staff of the Army. That was, particularly in the circumstances existing today, a serious matter. But an element of sensationalism has been given in the newspapers and much has been said there that is not true. I shall endeavour to give an account of the facts as they came to my knowledge.

I have been interested in the Defence Ministry throughout my period of office. For brief periods, I have held the defence portfolio. Even otherwise, I have kept myself in touch with its activities not only through the Defence Committee of the Cabinet but also on the personal level. From time to time, I have met the Chiefs of Staff and whenever possible I have taken the opportunity to visit some defence establishments.

About a week ago, I sent for Gen. Thimavva in the normal course in order to have a talk with him. When he came to see me I said to him that I had heard that there was some discontent about recent promotions in the army. He gave me an account of what had been done. I shall refer to this later. I was satisfied that these promotions had been made in the regular course through Selection Boards and there was no element of partisanship or favouritism in them. I say this because I find that some reference was made yesterday in the House to political considerations influencing promotions. I think that there is no truth in that charge.

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru.]

Gen. Thimayya then said to me that he was not feeling very happy about various matters connected with the Defence Ministry. When I enquired further from him he said that it was quite true that during the last two years more work had been done in the Defence Ministry than in the previous ten years. Many amenities had been given to our men in the army and these had been greatly appreciated. Production work in the ordnance factories had progressed greatly and generally they had had to work much harder than before. He assured me that the army was in fine fettle and the morale of the officers and men was excellent.

Nevertheless, he said he was not happy at the manner some of the work in the Ministry was being carried on. He gave me some instances but they were to my thinking rather trivial and of no consequence. I realised that the difficulties that had arisen might be called temperamental. I said I would look into the matter. I spoke later to the Defence Minister and mentioned rather briefly what Gen. Thimayya had told me. I suggested that he might have a talk with the Army Chief of Staff. I gathered later that the Defence Minister had some talks with Gen. Thimayya.

On the 31st August, that is, the day before yesterday, about mid-day, I received a letter from Gen. Thimayya offering his resignation as Chief of Staff, Army. I was much surprised to receive this as our previous talk had not led me to think that this might happen. Also, it seemed to me peculiarly unwise for this action to be taken in the conditions that prevail in India today.

That evening, that is, on the 31st, I sent for him and pointed out to him that his sending me his resignation in the way he did seemed to me not a right thing at all. I advised him to withdraw it and he accepted my advice.

Yesterday morning—1st September—I saw the announcement in the newspapers. I did not know how this

reached the press. I had not mentioned the resignation letter to anyone at all, nor did I mention the subsequent withdrawal of the resignation. I was naturally distressed at the rather sensational publicity given to this because I knew that this would be a matter of great concern to the House.

As I was unable to come here yesterday, I utilised the rest of the day in trying to get some further information and met many of my colleagues as well as officers from the Defence Ministry. I have had further talks with the Defence Minister and Gen. Thimayya. Gen. Thimayya subsequently sent me a letter formally withdrawing his previous offer of resignation.

One of the complaints made in this House as well as outside has been about promotions. I went rather fully into this question. There are strict rules governing promotions in the defence services, more especially to the selection posts. I wish that some method approaching that could be introduced in our civil services also. Selection posts are filled on the basis of merit and not of seniority alone. There are various Selection Boards dealing with promotions from Majors to Lieut.-Cols. Large numbers of people are dealt with here. Many of these are officers who came in during the last great war and a fairly strict screening is adopted in dealing with them by these Boards. Inevitably many are superseded. The method adopted was that 120 of the best men from each year's commission were selected from Majors to be Lieut.-Cols.

Recently, the Defence Committee of the Cabinet made a rule ensuring that every officer in the army could end up as Lieut.-Col. and obtain a Lieut.-Col.'s pension. This gave great satisfaction. These recommendations of the Selection Boards are considered by the Chief of Staff and later by the Ministry. Normally, no change is made and the recommendations are adopted as a whole.

I may add this. When I say, "adopted as a whole", that does not take away the right of the Government to make a change in them because ultimately it is the right of the Government to make any change in any such recommendation, but, as a matter of fact, this right is very seldom exercised in these large numbers of selections.

Different and higher Selection Boards are set up for promotions to the higher grades of the army like Brigadiers and Major-Generals. The Selection Board for Major-Generals consists of the three Army Commanders and the PSOs. The Chief of Staff, Army, is the Chairman of it. Inevitably, many officers are superseded here as the selection is made on the basis of merit and quality of work done. The recommendations of this Selection Board are placed before the Ministry. It is seldom that any change is made by the Ministry or the Minister in these recommendations. Again, I would repeat that it is not because we have no right to do so, but, in fact, we seldom do so. So far as I know, on this occasion no change was made.

Thus, in all these large-scale promotions from Majors and Lieut.-Cols to Major-Generals, all the promotions recently made were through highly qualified Selection Boards who went deeply into each case. These recommendations were accepted.

In the case of promotion from Major-Generals to Lieut.-Generals the procedure is somewhat different. These are supposed to be done ultimately by Government itself, on the recommendation of the Chief of Staff. The Chief of Staff may, and usually does, consult the three Army Commanders. In the present case, a panel of three names was put up by the Chief of Staff. These three were considered by him to be fit to be Lieut.-Generals and, therefore, worthy of being promoted. There were two tests laid down. One was that the person should be capable of functioning in a staff appointment, as Major-General, I think. No 1 in the

list of three was fully qualified. But there was one difficulty and that was that he had not actually commanded an infantry division. This, of course, was not his fault; he had had no chance. There was a further difficulty: that the fact that he had not commanded an infantry division may come up later in case the question of further promotion arose. The Chief of Staff, nevertheless, on the whole, favoured No 1 in this connection, though he had recommended Nos. 2 and 3 also as fit for promotion as Lieut.-Generals. The Defence Minister thought that it would be better to promote No 2 and 3 as Lieut.-Generals now and to give immediately a chance to No 1 to command an infantry division, so that he might have that experience and further that as soon as a vacancy occurred he should be appointed Lieut.-General and given the requisite seniority from now. Thus, he would not lose his seniority by this delay in appointing him as Lieut.-General. There was no supersession of No 1. If he did not have experience of the command of a division now, a difficulty might arise later when the question of his commanding an army corps arises. The Defence Minister consulted me as Prime Minister about this matter, and I agreed with him, more especially as No. 1 did not ultimately lose anything by this procedure and is ensured of his future.

In all these hundreds of promotions right up to the top, there was no interference by Government, or the Ministry, in the recommendations made by the selection boards of the Chief of Staff. The only slight variation made was the one referred to above. Thus, the idea that any considerations other than merit came in is completely untrue. Naturally, large numbers of officers were not promoted, but the decision was of the selection boards. Those who were not chosen naturally felt disappointed. In any system of merit promotion this is bound to happen.

I have stated above that General Thimayya has withdrawn his resigna-

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

tion. No other resignations have been received by me. The facts, as stated above, would indicate that many of the criticisms made are not justified. Nevertheless, the tension that arose leading to certain unfortunate developments was a matter of concern to me. Such things should not happen in the defence services at any time, and more especially when we have to face a serious situation. Temperamental and like differences cannot be allowed to interfere in the vital work which our Defence Ministry and the defence services have to do.

There is one other aspect that must always be borne in mind. Under our Constitution and our practice, the civil authority is, and must, remain supreme. But that civil authority should pay due heed to the expert advice that it receives. During the last two years or so, our defence services and our defence factories have made great progress. The production has gone up greatly and our ordnance factories now dealing with major projects and thus utilising their spare capacity. Certain well-deserved amenities have been given to our officers and men in the defence services. And I am happy to say that their discipline and morale are excellent.

The unfortunate incident that has happened recently should not make us forget these basic facts. I should like to pay a tribute to the Defence Minister for his great energy and enthusiasm which he has put in in his work and which has resulted in so much progress. Also, I would like to express my appreciation of the good work done by our officers and men in the new production activities. I intend maintaining my personal contacts with the defence services and help in removing any difficulties that might arise.

Acharya Kripalani (Sitamarhi) May I, with your permission, say a few words?

Mr. Speaker: Is it necessary to say a few words now in view of the statement?

Acharya Kripalani: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Very well.

Acharya Kripalani: The statement of the Prime Minister is good so far as it goes. But, I am afraid, that it will not put at rest the rumours that have been afloat in the public, as well as in the press. There have been charges and counter-charges and there are rumours afloat, and the problems involved are of a serious nature. The Prime Minister referred to the healthy and efficient functioning of our armed forces and the public confidence in their capacity to defend the nation in any event of foreign aggression. It is, therefore, necessary that the matters that have become the subject of public controversy be thoroughly discussed in the House. I concede the inconvenience of public discussion, but surely there can be no objection to a secret session of the House where there can be free and uninhibited discussion of the whole matter, in which all sections of the House, including the members of the ruling party, can participate freely. This is the only way in which the clouded atmosphere of uncertainty can be cleared and public confidence in the defence forces which has always existed in the country can be again restored.

Shri Raaga (Tenali): May I say a word? I am glad to have this assurance from the Prime Minister that the threatened resignation, or the resignation, of General Thimayya has been withdrawn. It is rather strange that the Prime Minister, strangely enough, failed to pay the same kind of tribute to General Thimayya and the other Chiefs of Staff, as he has paid to his colleague, Shri Krishna Menon. I sincerely hope he will take an early occasion to make good this very important omission. I do not claim to know much about the defence services. But I do know that many

people who are in the know of things have come to form a very high opinion indeed of the competence, sense of patriotism and sense of duty of General Thimayya. He has rendered great services to our nation. Other nations also paid tribute to his services when he was working on our behalf on the Korean front, to mention only one fact. It is most essential that we try our best to maintain the morale of the defence forces.

I agree with the Prime Minister that the civil authority must be supreme. We have had that great example of the relations between President Truman and General Mac Arthur. I give it all importance that is due to it. We want to maintain similar relations in this country also. But, at the same time, we want to be assured that the Prime Minister would be as keen about maintaining the prestige of the Chiefs of Staff as he seems to be anxious to maintain the prestige of his colleague in this House.

**Shri Mahanty (Dhenkanal):** I want to raise a point of order.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order. The hon. Members will kindly hear me. I do not propose to allow a long discussion on this subject, in view of the statement yesterday when Acharya Kripalan, and other hon. Members gave notice of some adjournment motions. I gave opportunity to each hon. Member who tabled the motion to say a few words. We waited for the hon. Prime Minister to come and make a statement. It is now for me to decide whether I should just disallow the adjournment motions to be discussed in this House or whether I should give my consent to the adjournment motions being raised here. I have heard sufficiently....

**Shri Mahanty:** Sir, may I raise a point of order.

**Mr. Speaker:** Therefore, I am not prepared to allow any further discussion of this matter.

**Shri Jaipal Singh (Ranchi West—Reserved—Sch. Tribes):** Sir, may I submit.....

**Shri Mahanty:** Sir, you are not entitled to do so. May I raise the point of order? My point of order comes under Rule 80 as reproduced in the Bulletin, Part II, No. 2916, reported to contain your own directive. May I read it out?

**Mr. Speaker:** What is the point of order?

**Shri Mahanty:** The point of order is that the Chair is not entitled to disallow an adjournment motion. It is left for the House to decide.

**Mr. Speaker:** No.

**Shri Mahanty:** Let me submit. It is your own directive. May I read it out?

**Mr. Speaker:** What is the directive?

**Shri Mahanty:** That means, I should read it. It says—

“Where the Speaker is satisfied *prima facie* that the matter proposed to be discussed is in order under the rules, he will give his consent to the moving of the motion and at the appropriate time call upon the member concerned to ask for leave to move the adjournment of the House. If objection to leave being granted is taken, the Speaker will request those members who are in favour of leave being granted to rise in their places and if not less than fifty members rise accordingly, he will declare that leave is granted. If, however, less than fifty members . . .”

**Mr. Speaker:** There is no question about that at present.

**Shri Mahanty:** “. . . rise, the Speaker will inform the member that he has not the leave of the House.” May I submit that you are satisfied *prima facie*.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am not satisfied.

**Shri Mahanty:** I do not raise this matter in a sense of levity. What I am saying is that it is on record that you had been pleased to observe yesterday that this is a matter of serious public importance.

My second point of order is that while you were considering the admissibility of the motion on very technical grounds, you have permitted the hon. Prime Minister to make a statement which went into the merits of the question. We are not discussing the merits of the question at this stage at all. What we are considering is whether the motion is admissible under the rules. You had held, yourself, that the matter was of urgent and serious public importance. Now with all humility I venture to submit that it is not in your hands to say whether it should be admitted or not. It is for the House to decide whether it should be admitted or not.

**Shri Jaipal Singh:** Yesterday you were pleased enough to permit me to alert you that the adjournment motion was in two parts. The first part, I think, is met by the statement that the hon. Leader of the House has made. But the second part still remains. I hope you will remember the point I raised yesterday. Acharya Kripalani's adjournment motion, as it was developed in what little he said, was in two parts. The second part is, I may say according to the hon. Prime Minister's language, that whatever is happening now is due to a temperamental process. So far as that is concerned, that still remains.

**Shri Asoka Mehta (Muzaffarpur):** The fact remains that the Chief of the Army Staff had tendered his resignation. He may have withdrawn it, that is another matter. So, here is a matter which is of urgent public importance. That fact has not disappeared. As Acharya Kripalani pointed out, we might discuss it *in camera*.

**An Hon. Member:** Why *in camera*?

**Shri Asoka Mehta:** We are quite prepared for it if that is the view of the hon. Prime Minister. But merely because the hon. Prime Minister has stated what he considers to be the version of the facts as he sees them, surely the rest of the House is not automatically satisfied. The adjournment motion must be permitted or we must be allowed to say whatever we have to say now or a special opportunity must be given to us. This is not a matter on which the hon. Prime Minister has the last word, having said what he has said.

**Shri Frank Anthony (Nominated--Anglo-Indians):** May I make a submission?

**Raja Mahendra Pratap (Mathura):** I beg to say that this is very serious. Once glass is broken, even if it is joined again it remains broken. When the resignation has come from the Commander-in-Chief it is a very serious question. I beg to suggest that Shri Menon may be given the Foreign Office portfolio.

**Shri Frank Anthony:** One point that I wish to underline is this. As my hon. friend, Shri Asoka Mehta has said, the hon. Prime Minister has accepted the fact that General Thimayya had submitted his resignation. Now I do not know whether you will be pleased to call for the letter of resignation. I submit with great respect that until the phraseology of that letter of resignation is before us neither you nor the House can decide whether the issues involved were of a serious, critical or a trivial character. I personally find it impossible to believe that a person of the status and character of General Thimayya would have submitted his resignation on trivial or personal reasons. Therefore I feel that his letter of resignation must come before us. I agree with Acharya Kripalani and feel that something very serious has happened in the Defence Ministry. I am not pointing my finger at any one. I feel that in the interest of the House and of the

country we should have a discussion. If necessary, it may be an *in camera* discussion.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta—Central): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am rather disturbed to note the trend of the discussion which has followed the statement given by the hon. Prime Minister. Actually, if you believe me, I had an idea that there would be no occasion for any of us to speak. As for myself, actually I am under doctor's orders not to speak. But even so (*Interruption*) I am compelled by what has been said by some of my hon. friends in this House to participate in this discussion very shortly.

The hon. Prime Minister has told us that the Chief of the Army Staff, after having put in his resignation, has been persuaded to withdraw it. The hon. Prime Minister has told us very rightly that the civil power is the supreme authority in this country under any kind of acceptable democratic form of administration.

An Hon. Member: Nobody denies that.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Free India has developed a tradition of co-ordination and co-operation between the civil power and the military arm. The hon. Prime Minister has told us that for temperamental and other reasons, some resignations were sent to him in a kind of a huff and those resignations have been withdrawn. It stands to reason, particularly at a time when we all appear to be concerned about the defence of our country, that we should not be speculative over.... (*Interruption*).

Shri C. D. Pande (Naini Tal): What is this "appear to be concerned"? It is bad language.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: ...questions regarding the possible reasons behind the back of the mind of the Chief of Army Staff, when at a particular point of time he was persuaded to offer his

resignation even though he has later on been persuaded on much better grounds to withdraw it. On the contrary, I feel that if there is any tenable subject for discussion, it is this subject, namely, that it is very perturbing to the state of this country that the news of the Chief of Army Staff's resignation percolates to the press and is exploited by certain elements in our country for publicising that there is a kind of a particular partisanship in the administration which militates against the proper co-operation between the civil arm and the military arm. It is that particular aspect of the matter which requires, if anything, to be discussed in this House in a secret or open session; I do not care what. But as far as the adjournment motion is concerned, I do not see how after the attitude which you have taken so many times, and on this occasion quite rightly (*Interruption*), you can consider it to be an adjournment motion which you can permit. But specially in view of the kind of discussion which is taking place I want to get from the hon. Prime Minister another reassurance in regard to the position which we are going to uphold in this country, that is, that there is supremacy of the civil power and that there is a continuing co-ordination between the civil arm and the military arm and that there should be steps properly taken to prevent the kind of leakage which has led to this sort of sensation mongering and which even finicky hon. friends of mine have taken recourse to. That is all that I want to say.

Shri Khadilkar (Ahmednagar): May I say...

Mr. Speaker: I have heard sufficiently about this matter.

There are two points of order which were raised by Shri Mahanty. He said that yesterday I already gave my permission and that I held that this was a fit subject for discussion on a motion of adjournment. He presumes that I gave my consent.

**Acharya Kripalani:** Before you give your ruling, may I rise on a point of information?

Yesterday, one of our Communist hon. friends, very vocal, said:

"We only want to say that when the hon. Minister replies, we should like him to say whether there is any significance in the fact that General Ayub is coming today, this gentleman, Thimayya, offers his resignation today and there is a whole scouting of the affair by Cariappa. We should like to have an answer."

This is what our Communist friend says, these are the allegations made that this action was taken at a time when General Ayub Khan was coming here and that General Cariappa is involved in the matter. All these allegations and counter-allegations are being made, and we must know what truth there is in all this. If there is any truth in this contention, I think there must be a court-martial of our General. It is not a matter which can be blurred over simply like this. . . . .

**An Hon. Member:** It is an aspersion.

**Acharya Kripalani:** . . . when such charges are being made against General Cariappa.

**An Hon. Member:** What about General Thimayya?

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** May I say something, to begin with, in answer to Prof. Ranga? He said that I ought to have referred in terms of appreciation to General Thimayya in this note. As a matter of fact, I have referred to army officers and men, and I think General Thimayya is a very gallant and experienced officer who has done very good service to this country. But I do not congratulate him for his letter of resignation. That is perfectly clear.

**Shri Ranga:** You have congratulated the wrong man then. Why have you asked him to withdraw his resignation?

**Shri Vajpayee (Bairampur):** Ask General Thimayya to resign, that is all.

**Shri Braj Raj Singh (Ferozabad):** It is a very serious matter. If he thinks that he ought not to have resigned, then the resignation should not have been withdrawn.

**Shri Asoka Mehta:** It is a very anomalous position.

**Shri Ranga:** It creates a new position. He has asked for the resignation to be withdrawn and he is not prepared to pay the same tribute to him that he has paid to his Minister. Either his tribute to the Minister is wrong or the other one is wrong.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** Mr. Speaker, I do not know, I really do not understand why some hon. Members on the opposite side are somewhat excited about this matter. I said, and I repeat, that General Thimayya and our senior officers, especially Chiefs of Staff, are people who have done good service, whose experience, whose gallantry we have appreciated, and we appreciate. And that is why we have got them there. Otherwise we won't have them there. It is because we appreciate their services that we have put them there. That is why I went out of my way to get him to withdraw that letter. But that has nothing to do with my remark that I do not congratulate him, or anybody, for sending a letter of resignation. Let that be quite clear. It is and it was a most extraordinary thing to do. I have said only mildly what I have said.

**Shri Hem Barua (Gauhati):** And that too after he had discussion with you.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** It does not matter. I say, whatever the circumstances, it was an extraordinary thing to do. The House should realise this.



This kind of thing is not often done, normally speaking, or abnormally speaking. Therefore I said, having given my due meed of praise to General Thimayya, as I said in my statement presently, that resigning at this stage, at this moment, was not a right thing to do.

**Shri Asoka Mehta:** Why is it condoned? Why is an extraordinary thing condoned?

**Shri Ranga:** One or the other is wrong.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** Shri Asoka Mehta asks, why is it condoned? I do not condone it. Who said I condoned it? I have said that I think it was a wrong thing. But many wrong things done, whether in the flush of the moment or whatever it is, have been pointed out that it is a wrong thing, and one does not pursue a man for that when he has many virtues, when he has served the State in many ways and is still serving.

**Shri Hem Barua:** Has he expressed his regret for this unwise step?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** Acharya Kripalani referred to some remarks made by some other Members opposite on the last occasion. If I may say so with all respect, they were not at all proper remarks, about General Ayub Khan and all that. Many things were said yesterday which, I submit, were not proper, this way or that way. For instance, Acharya Kripalani himself talked about political considerations in regard to promotions. I invite Acharya Kripalani to come and see the files of every man promoted, himself. I invite him to come and see them.

**Acharya Kripalani:** May I say that while I was speaking, and you corrected me I said that this was what was being said, though I do not know the real truth. I have no

reason to disbelieve the Prime Minister. But it is not my charge. It is the charge that is made in the press and that is made by the public. And you remember, Sir, I said in a democracy we have to give some consideration to public opinion, however misguided it may be, and also to the press, and you said 'yes'.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** Acharya Kripalani is a respected leader of a respected party. He is not either the public press or a public meeting in Ramlila Grounds. He is not the mirror, I hope, of every rumour that is thrown about in the City of Delhi or elsewhere.

It is quite right for him to draw attention. But I invite him here and now, and any one else in this House, to come and examine every file on promotions, because. . . .

**Acharya Kripalani:** May we have the letter—if it is so plain—the letter of resignation? Let there be a secret discussion, if necessary. I do not want any public discussion of this matter. I make this suggestion very humbly so that every Member of this House, even a Congressman, may be able to speak, freely, which he cannot do here.

**Raja Mahendra Pratap:** I beg to suggest that this discussion should be in a closed House, not before the public. The galleries should be cleared and then alone we should discuss it. This matter is very serious. What are you talking here, Sir?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** I am dealing, Sir, with the points, separately, and I am venturing to suggest—because this was Acharya Kripalani's point, whatever the basis of his information was, that promotions have been made for political considerations—I invite Acharya Kripalani, or any committee of the House appointed by you to go and look at every file dealing with promotions. Here is an

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open invitation, Sir, so that this matter may be dealt with thoroughly and fully, which is far better than any discussion elsewhere. Go to the source, form your own opinions; I will not be there; see the files.

Now, Acharya Kripalani has suggested an *in camera* debate. It is rather unusual in such matters to have debates, *in camera* or other. But I accept his invitation, but no *in camera* debate, but a public debate. Talking about an *in camera* debate with five hundred Members present here is rather stretching the term. But if there is going to be a debate about these matters, army matters, if people want it, it is unusual, I would not suggest it, but I do not wish to come in the way if hon. Members feel like that. But I will not have an *in camera* debate but have a public debate.

Acharya Kripalani: If there is to be a debate, the letters must be produced here.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Hon. Member is very excited about letters.

Acharya Kripalani: I said letter of resignation.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: You can see every file in Defence if you want it. But I would expect Acharya Kripalani and Shri. Asoka Mehta not to make insinuations.

Acharya Kripalani: There are no insinuations.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: What they have said, I have said here. It is not an insinuation. It is an open charge about political considerations coming in. Here I invite them to come and look at every file, everything and then I hope, whatever they see they may tell the House.

Shri Asoka Mehta: I cannot understand the Prime Minister using the word 'insinuation'. I made no insinua-

tion at all. These things are there in responsible newspapers. I can give any number of cuttings from responsible newspapers where these things have been said. All that Acharya Kripalani did was to draw the attention of the House. I cannot understand the Prime Minister using the word 'insinuation', when we are only discharging our duty.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I am sorry. I am also discharging my duty in drawing attention to things which are lightly said, which should not be said in this House.

Mr. Speaker: I have heard enough about this matter. Yesterday when this matter was brought up before the House by way of adjournment motions by responsible persons based on the report in a newspaper, I felt that unless we have the version of the Government, I could not rely upon the statement of the newspaper. I also said that under ordinary circumstances I do not rely upon mere newspaper reports. But as this matter was very serious and if it should be true, it would involve us in very great difficulties, particularly in view of the circumstances in which we are situated at present, I wanted to hear the facts from the Government before I could come to a conclusion as to whether I should give my consent for raising a debate on this matter here.

Shri Mahanty objected by way of a point of order that I already gave my consent yesterday and what only remained here is asking 50 Members and if that is so I need not have waited for the Prime Minister to come here to ascertain if 50 Members will rise in their seats. Even without the Prime Minister, 50 Members could have risen; I knew that much. It is only for the purpose of finding out the truth about it, I wanted to know. If yesterday I had this information, there and then I would have dismissed the adjournment motions. It is

very unfortunate that a responsible newspaper should have come out with this news not knowing that that resignation had been withdrawn. (*Interruptions*) Order, order; no interruptions. That is very serious.

**Shri Hem Barua:** That has been proved by facts.

**Mr. Speaker:** It is not proved by facts. (*Interruptions*) Hon. Members have no right to interrupt. All that I am saying is, the paper was issued only yesterday morning with this news. The previous evening General Thimayya had been sent for and according to the Prime Minister, he said he was withdrawing his resignation. It was necessary.

**Shri Hem Barua:** That paper is right.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order. I am really surprised that hon. Members here are taking sides with newspapers. We are more interested. (*Interruptions*).

Order, order. Nobody has got a brief for any newspaper here. All that we are concerned with is. (*Interruptions*) Order, order.

**Acharya Kripalani:** We are looking at the motto—Truth triumphs.

**Mr. Speaker:** Many things appear in the newspapers. So far as this matter is concerned, we are dealing with a very delicate situation in this House. Let no other impression appear.

**Shri Ranga** referred to encomiums to Gen Thimayya. This is not necessarily the occasion. There is no meaning in hon. Members trying to show that so far as the Government is concerned, it is not managing its departments properly and hon. Members must instruct the Government as to how they should respect one or the other of their officers. In that case there will be discipline.

**Shri Ranga:** It is our duty. There are two parties to this particular question. He paid a special compliment; he went out of his way. There was no need for him to have paid that compliment. He should have paid the other compliment also. Why do you blame me?

**Mr. Speaker:** I would remind all hon. Members that we are trying to get along with parliamentary democracy here. If any hon. Member thinks that the Government of the day is not dealing with its own staff properly, it is for him to muster sufficient strength in the country, come back, dislodge the Government and take charge of it. I am not going to allow such interruptions.

**Acharya Kripalani:** You might as well stop all discussion if everything has to be decided at the polls.

**Mr. Speaker:** I know what the limits of discussion are. If the character of each individual officer of the Government comes up here, except those whose character has to be investigated in this House under the Constitution, if individual hon. Members take up the case of individual officers here over the head of the Minister, I will not allow it. They have got a right to accuse the Minister, but not to take up the case of individual officers here. I am not going to allow that, whatever that might be.

**Shri Ranga:** Why do you go into all these?

**Mr. Speaker:** In view of the statement of the hon. Prime Minister that this matter has been patched up, I do not think that, situated as we are in the present circumstances, it would be right for me to allow a discussion in this House. It will not serve any useful purpose. Whether any further discussion at any later time ought to be allowed or not, we will be continuously on the watch and see whether any discussion is necessary and whether any later developments come in. So far as these matters are concerned

[Mr. Speaker]

on these adjournment motions, I do not agree to give my consent to any of these adjournment motions. The hon. Food Minister.

Shri Mahanty: My point of order has not been disposed of.

Mr. Speaker: I have disposed of his point of order.

Shri Mahanty: I maintain I should be satisfied not regarding the merits, but whether it is admissible under the rules or not, that is, the letter of the law.

Mr. Speaker: I was not satisfied. I only wanted to hear the other side.

Shri Jaipal Singh: Sir, before you proceed further, there is one thing that I want to be perfectly clear about. The Prime Minister just now said that he was hostile to any....

Mr. Speaker: I am not going to allow any discussion on this.

Shri Jaipal Singh: I want your clear ruling: whether the Prime Minister has got any right to tell this House that there would be no *in camera* discussion on any subject, whether on this subject or that? It is not his wish.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member is a veteran parliamentarian. Any hon. Member in this House is entitled to have his own opinion. Ultimately what counts is my decision. I have not said that.

Shri Jaipal Singh: I wanted to know.

Mr. Speaker: It is all hypothetical. His mere statement that there need not be any *in camera* discussion is not the final word.

Acharya Kripalani: Are you going to allow a public discussion when the Prime Minister has no objection to it?

Mr. Speaker: I am not at present allowing any public discussion on these adjournment motions.

Acharya Kripalani: Even when the Prime Minister has no objection to it?

Mr. Speaker: Let me see later on. Not on these adjournment motions.

Acharya Kripalani: The principal party has no objection. What is your objection?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member has not understood the spirit in which objection was not raised.

Acharya Kripalani: I have understood the spirit.

12.48 hrs.

#### CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

##### FOOD SITUATION IN WEST BENGAL

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): Under Rule 197, I beg to call attention of the Minister of Food and Agriculture to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The food situation in West Bengal and the steps taken or proposed in this regard."

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri S. K. Patil): As the hon. House is already aware, the West Bengal Government withdrew their Price Control Order and the Levy Order on 24th June 1959. Since the withdrawal of these orders the arrivals in the market have improved considerably. Immediately on the withdrawal of the orders, the prices of rice and paddy started rising in spite of increased arrivals. From the beginning of August, however, the prices have started declining. The wholesale price of coarse rice in Contai, for example, has declined from Rs. 29 per maund on 7th August to Rs. 23.50 per maund on 31st August, or a fall of Rs. 5.50 per maund. Similarly, the price of rice in Sainthia has declined from Rs. 31