

they have not done so, I hope it will be circulated. They are taking strong steps to see that the people are given protection and no such occurrences take place. They have also said that proper action would be taken and proper rules would be framed against students. There is no time for me to go through the whole of it, but I can give this to those hon. Members who are interested to go through it. Although the Government of Assam was late in taking action, now they are determined to put an end to this nonsense.

Madam, I want that this sort of controversial agitations and linguistic troubles should end. To put an end to such troubles, if necessary we should make certain amendments to the Constitution on the language issue. If necessary, all the States should be abolished and zones should be set up. If that is the only way to do away with all this provincialism, I would welcome even such a step because we cannot go on like this, with this sort of narrow provincialism, these linguistic troubles, these outcries against each other which kill the very root of our nationalism.

Mr. Chairman: I have to make an announcement. The Speaker has been pleased to say that the House has been extended till 6.00 P.M. to give chance to the several speakers who wish to speak on this subject. It is at the desire of the House that this time has been extended.

16.44 hrs.

**BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FIFTY-FIFTH REPORT**

Shri Rane (Buldana): Madam Chairman, I beg to present the fifty-fifth Report of the Business Advisory Committee.

**MOTION RE: SITUATION IN
ASSAM—contd.**

Shri Mohammed Imam (Chitaldrug): Madam Chairman, I belong

neither to Assam nor to Bengal, and therefore I am not guided by passions or prejudices. My main concern is the unity of India, unity of the nation and the safety of the minorities. It is agreed that the recent happenings in the valley of Brahmaputra on a widespread scale constitutes a dark episode in the history of independent India. There is evidence that the people of India speaking different languages, professing different ideologies and religions, are incapable of living together and co-exist, in spite of the fact that our country has taken a lead in teaching the doctrine of co-existence to the rest of the world.

Assam and Bengal exist side by side. Assamese speaking people and the Bengali speaking people have lived together for generations. Still, they are not in a position to reconcile themselves to each other, nor are they in a position to trust each other. Provincialism and fanaticism are growing rapidly and people of one group or one section do not hesitate to indulge in large scale devastation involving loss of life and loss of property, against the other.

A Parliamentary delegation visited this area and held a *post-mortem* examination and submitted their report to Parliament. The facts mentioned therein, their narration, clearly vindicate the demand for an enquiry, an enquiry by a high court judge, a judicial enquiry. Such an enquiry is absolutely necessary to restore confidence among those who have evacuated the State which they considered till now as their home. The facts are obvious and they cannot be denied. More than 10,000 houses were either burnt or looted or destroyed. Scores of lives were lost. People ran in panic to take shelter in the forests. Law and order broke down. Government could not function, and was entirely helpless to protect the minorities. The officers, either through local prejudice or passion, could not function as effectively as they ought to have.

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These incidents were entirely unexpected. There was clear evidence from the beginning that tension was mounting very high between the two sections. There is evidence to show that there was deep mistrust. One section believed that they were being exploited. Another section believed that there was a conspiracy to drive them out of the country. The disturbances commenced on the 20th May. They were not sudden. There was a move to impose the Assamese language on the Bengalis and perhaps the hill tribes. This was resented to by the Bengalis. They said that it should not be imposed against their wishes. But the Provincial Congress Committee of Assam gave a mandate to the Chief Minister of Assam to go ahead with the legislation and see that Assamese language is imposed on the State. The Bengalis felt, as has been pointed out by the Jain report, that this was a plan or part of a plan to drive out the Bengalis from Assam. They felt that their existence was at stake. So, they organised a procession to protest against such a move and in that procession, it is reported, they called the Assamese language in an uncomplicated term. This was the beginning of the trouble. Then incidents began to occur from 12th June and they continued till they assumed a proportion and magnitude which was beyond the control of the local Government.

What happened was this. The State Government became entirely helpless. It practically got paralysed; the administration broke down. The Ministers went to Kashmir on holiday. The Chief Secretary was not there; he went to Kashmir. The Inspector-General of Police was taking rest at Shillong. The local police officers and others, through passion and local patriotism, were either indifferent or conspired and helped the hooligans. That is what the report clearly brings out. So, the fact is there. Though these disturbances extended for over a week in a very intense form, though the minorities were exposed to the onslaughts

of the people who were superior both by strength and in number, there was nobody to protect them or to look after them. For eight days, the hooligans had their own way and the people had nobody to protect them. That was the situation.

I would like to know, what were the precautionary measures taken by the Assam Government, when they knew that there were signs of such an upheaval and explosion? It is stated that there was a rift in the Assam Cabinet itself. It has been stated that there was an anti-Chaliha group and some people were interested in seeing that the Chaliha Ministry was thrown out or at least he was made unpopular, because he was to a certain extent popular with the Bengalis. So, he was forced to take this step, which he would not have otherwise taken. So, the State Government did not do its duty properly. They did not behave as they should have behaved in such an emergency.

Now, it is said by the Prime Minister that they were not responsible. But, in my opinion, a serious presumption is raised against them that they did not do their duty and they did not exercise their power in defending or protecting the minorities. This is a serious presumption and I must say there has been negligence, criminal negligence, on their part. Does not this require some judicial probe? Is it not necessary to find out whether they functioned properly or not? In Kerala, on the ground that the law and order situation broke down, the Central Government imposed President's rule. Here also, did not law and order break down? Did not the Ministers fail in their duties? Did not their failure to do their duties cause so much damage and havoc throughout the country?

Again, I cannot absolve the Central Government from their responsibilities. The Central Government intervened very effectively to change the unhappy state of affairs in Kerala.

And, I think some years back when a similar situation arose in PEPSU the Central Government interfered and subjected it to the authority of the President. Now, is it not a fact that law and order broke down in the State of Assam? Is it not a fact that the Ministers and others were callously irresponsible and indifferent, which caused so much damage to the country? When there was nobody to administer, when the whole administration broke down and the people, all the helpless people were at the mercy of those who could not administer, was there no justification for the intervention of the Central Government, when the timely intervention would have saved thousands of lives and a lot of property? I think the Central Government cannot absolve themselves of their responsibility and so I submit with all humility that the Central Government also failed in their duty.

I am sure the Central Government must have been receiving reports regarding the happenings there. It has got its own police and Intelligence branch. It has got its own Governor. Did they not report about the happenings there? I think it is because of the lethargy of the Central Government not to interfere with a Congress Government, which belonged to the same party as the party in power, all these things have happened.

So, I am submitting that there is a very good case for appointing a committee not only to assess the deeds and misdeeds of the State Government but also the failure of the Central Government to exercise its powers at the time when it was quite necessary. The Prime Minister rightly pointed out yesterday that it affects not merely Assam but the entire country, the whole of India. The question of minorities is not confined to Assam alone. It is a problem in every State. Every State has its majority and minority. The minority of one State is the majority of another State. The happenings in Assam creates misgivings and nervousness in the minorities living in other States also.

17 hrs.

Now they feel that when an emergency arises, when their safety and honour are at stake there is nobody to look after them or to protect them. The State Government invariably reflects the opinion of the majority group. The State Government and its employees invariably belong to the majority group. So when a difference or a quarrel arises between the majority section and the minority group, if the State Government, its Ministers and employees remain indifferent or take an active part in the complicity then they are entirely helpless. So, a time has come to review the entire thing. True, the Constitution provides some safeguards. The States Reorganisation Commission's report also has some safeguards. But our experience is that now the safeguards are inadequate. So the committee to be appointed must go through the whole question and see that hereafter the minorities are well protected, their interests are safe and they are given a decisive guarantee.

Only one minute more and I finish. We are all interested in the unity of India. If such incidents repeat themselves in other States, I am sure, the unity of the country is at stake. After all, we have all fought for the unity of the country. All the Princes were displaced so that there may be unity in the country. The country was partitioned so that there may be unity in the country. We have fought all for this. It is a spiritual conception for which we have strived hard. This conception must be cherished and nourished by one and all. If we allow this work to go down, I think we will not be in a position to claim that unity. Conditions must be created to see that people live together, work together for mutual benefit and, all of us must see that, all our people instead of exchanging curses exchange blessings and work for the unity of the country. So I submit that there is an immediate need. It is not a question of appointing a committee whenever an occasion

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arises or at an appropriate time. That appropriate time may come or it may not come. On the other hand, the Committee ought to have been appointed by this time, soon after these incidents and it should have been functioning by this time. There has been delay. So in the interest of the country, in the interest of the unity of the country, in the interest of the minorities I am of opinion and I agree with all my hon. friends that the high power committee should be appointed immediately which will go into all the questions that I have mentioned including the responsibility of the State Government and of the Central Government.

The Minister of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs (Shri Humayun Kabir): Mr. Chairman, I hesitated long before I decided to speak in the debate today. I hesitated, for membership of Government gives certain advantages but also imposes responsibilities and limits greatly one's freedom of speech and action. I finally decided to speak, not as a member of the Government but in my personal capacity, for I am from Bengal and I have loved the land and people and the language and literature from my first conscious days.

I have also known Assam for almost 40 years. I went, while yet a student in a school, as a volunteer to Kamarup in 1922 and since the days of my first acquaintance I have loved its beautiful landscape and warm-hearted....

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Firozabad): May I raise a point of order? Is the hon. Minister speaking as a Minister or as an hon. Member of the House?

Shri Humayun Kabir: I have said so. I am speaking in my personal capacity.

Shri Raghunath Singh: He is speaking in his personal capacity.

Mr. Chairman: I must say that the hon. Minister cannot speak in his personal capacity. He is an hon. Minister and he is speaking as such.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: Because if he is speaking in his personal capacity, he cannot participate in the debate in this House.

Shri Humayun Kabir: I am not speaking in my personal capacity. I accept the Chair's ruling.

Shri Ranga: He can speak in both capacities.

Mr. Chairman: I have said that he is an hon. Minister and he has a right to speak.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I do not understand why an hon. Minister cannot speak in his personal capacity. That does not mean that he gives up or ceases to be a Minister. It is a very common occurrence for a Minister, while speaking as a Minister, even then to say, "These are my personal views".

Shri Raghunath Singh: It is not the Government's view that he is stating.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam): Is he a Member of this House?

Mr. Chairman: I am sorry to have to disagree with the Prime Minister. The hon. Member is not a Member of this House. He is a Member of the Rajya Sabha. He can speak here only in his capacity as a Minister and in no other capacity.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: That fact had escaped me that he is a Member of the Rajya Sabha.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Minister may please continue his speech.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: As a Minister.

Shri Humayun Kabir: When the Prime Minister speaks, the official views of the Government can be

expressed only by the Prime Minister. I am only speaking according to your ruling as a Minister.

I said a moment ago that I have known Assam for almost 40 years. I went as a student to Kamrup as a volunteer in 1922 and since the days of my first acquaintance, have loved its beautiful landscape and warm-hearted and generous people. I have no doubt that whatever may have happened in recent months, the people of Assam like the people of Bengal and other parts of India are by and large warm-hearted, generous and friendly and it is this fact which makes the recent happenings all the more tragic.

It is with a deep sense of sorrow and humiliation that I rise to speak today. Sorrow for the tragedy that has overtaken tens of thousands of men and women and children in the beautiful valleys of Assam and driven them from their homes in the uncertainties of camp life in Assam and outside. Even more serious is the loss of confidence these events have engendered in the minds of hundreds of thousands who have lived in Assam for generations and are as much the sons of the soil as any others who inhabit that State. Humiliation that these atrocities should take place in India where we have throughout the ages prided ourselves on our toleration and forbearance and said that unity in diversity is the basic article of India's faith. Humiliation that with this background there should be this outburst of frenzy in Assam and that it should set in motion a chain reaction that has evoked passions and bitterness not only in Bengal but throughout India. We have in recent years indulged in fratricidal strife over issues of religion, language or caste and the Assam tragedy is the worst in a series of unhappy events that have disfigured our recent history. We must therefore search our hearts to find out the cause of the gap between our profession and our practice and devise means to eradicate these causes before they destroy the basis of our national unity.

I must, here, pay a tribute to those in Assam who, in the midst of the holocaust and turmoil kept their sanity and came to the help and assistance of their fellow citizens who speak the Bengali language. Similarly, in Bengal also, many have stood sane and the way in which the City of Calcutta rose to the occasion on the 16th of July, deserves the congratulations of the citizens of India from every part of this vast land of ours. At the same time, I cannot help saying that there has been one national failing in our character throughout our history. We have condemned evil, but we have not resisted it. In almost every case where this kind of incidents happen, it is a small fraction of the community, maybe 2 per cent. maybe 3 per cent, maybe 5 per cent, who take the initiative in evil deeds. The others, while they blame their misdeeds, do not come forward to actively oppose them. The result is, because they acquiesce in evil, this kind of evil things take place. This is a national failing which goes back in our history. I have said this elsewhere and before that even in the court scene in the Mahabharata, when Draupadi is insulted and humiliated, there is Bhishma, there is Drona. They condemn the incident. But, they do not come forward to oppose the evil activities. There is in our character this passivity to the face of evil which we must eradicate if national unity and our national dignity is to be restored.

I will not go today into the causes of the Assam tragedy. They have already been discussed in detail in the House and I think there will be general agreement that economic, political and linguistic factors have combined to bring about the outburst that has disgraced Assam and India. I know that under pressure of poverty and unemployment people who are normally sane and sober, sometimes lose their balance. As a Bengalee,—and Bengalees are proverbially proud of their language and literature—I can understand and sympathise with the Assamese' love of their language and

[Shri Humayun Kabir]

literature. I also know that unscrupulous politicians sometimes use the credulity and the faith of simple men and women and utilise them for advancing their own selfish ends. I also know that where education is not real, men who have gone through schools and colleges often utilise their superior knowledge for selfish and ignoble ends.

Having said that, I still cannot help feeling that the things which have happened should not have happened. There is no excuse, there is no apology for the kind of atrocities that took place in this part of India.

I think we have to recognise two basic facts. One is that there is and there can be in India only Indian citizenship and not the citizenship of any particular region or area. All Indians are sons of the soil in any part of India and any attempt to limit the freedom of study, work, movement or living in any part of India is a violation of our Constitution and a denial of our nationhood. That such claims are at times made is a relic of the past. Formerly, when communications were difficult or non-existent, people lived in their own areas and looked upon everyone outside as alien. In many Indian languages the word 'stranger' or 'Videshi' was in former days applied to the people of another village and men and women of another province were looked upon as belonging to almost another nation. Today, with improved communications and increasing industrialisation, Indian unity which in the past was an ideal of the poet and the visionary has become a solid fact. Science and technology have brought people together and any attempt to separate them is fraught with danger and disaster to everyone.

Shri Ranga: Always Bharat Varsha.

Shri Humayun Kabir: I know my hon. friend will say that there was a sense of unity in the past. Along with the sense of unity there was

also the sense of diversity and difference. This fact that in many Indian languages, the term 'Videshi' was very often used with reference to a person who came from only 10 miles away cannot be gainsaid. Very often, there was that kind of divergence because of difficulties of communication. It was natural.

Shri Ranga: With all respect to my hon. friend who is himself a historian, I must express my difference.

Shri Humayun Kabir: Otherwise, there would not have been this kind of indication.

The second basic fact is that in a vast country like India, there will remain diversities. There were diversities, and there will always remain diversities. Any attempt at imposing a uniformity is bound to lead to resistance and clash. Unity and not uniformity has been the secret of India's amazing success in the past in weaving her diverse peoples into one. Today, with the spread of democracy, the sense of individuality of men and women as well as groups and communities has increased and there is therefore increasing need for respect and toleration for one another's differences. There will always be minorities in India, in fact, if you start defining minorities, we will not know where to stop. A person may be in a minority in a city from one point of view, but may not be a minority in the State and may belong to some other group in another context. Therefore, we have to take measures to see that these divergences do not stand in the way of our nationhood. It is because of lack of national solidarity that these unfortunate happenings in Assam took place.

These two basic facts, on the one hand Indian national unity and on the other the divergences of different elements in the Indian national life—minorities on the basis of language, minorities on the basis of religion, minorities on the basis of caste and communities—can be reconciled only by adhering to the principle of nation-

hood and justice. Our Constitution guarantees equality of opportunity to all and it is only when there are deviations from that ideal that clashes and conflicts arise among individuals and among groups. Justice alone can give a sense of security to every individual and community.

Rehabilitation in Assam is still difficult because people's sense of security has been shaken and it has been shaken because they found that justice was not done. Shri Ajit Prasad Jain in his speech today said that when the Parliamentary Delegation went to Assam, the people everywhere asked for *Abhaya*. He used the word *Abhayadan*, freedom from fear. It seems that he perhaps did not fully realise that rehabilitation can be effectively done only when the fear of injustice and discrimination has been eliminated. That cannot be done till there has been a complete enquiry into the causes of the holocaust. And that cannot be done till there has been a complete enquiry into the causes which led to the sense of insecurity among the people. Therefore, in order to restore that sense of security, an enquiry is all the more needed. A sense of security cannot come so long as wrong-doers go unpunished or remain undiscovered.

I therefore welcome the Prime Minister's announcement, especially the announcement he made today, that there will be immediately a series of enquiries, both judicial and otherwise, into the actions of miscreants wherever disturbances have taken place, and that this will be followed as soon as possible by a more fundamental enquiry by persons of the highest integrity and status into the causes which made such a tragedy possible. An immediate enquiry and punishment of evil-doers is necessary to bring back to the people a sense of security. A more far-reaching enquiry is necessary and must be undertaken soon, and the sooner the better as sectional enquiries cannot reveal the deep and underlying causes without which a people normally so friendly and

warm-hearted as the Assamese could not behave in the way they did.

In conclusion I would appeal to all Members of this House, whether from Bengal or Assam or elsewhere, to remember that this tragedy concerns the whole of India and not the people of Bengal and Assam alone. If the unity of India is challenged in one place, it is challenged everywhere. If it is done on the basis of language today, it may be done tomorrow on the basis of religion or because of some other factor. Thousands of years ago, we have it in the Bible, Cain was asked: "Am I my brother's keeper?", and when Cain repudiated responsibility for his brother, he branded himself as an enemy of man. Today we must behave not like Cain but in a spirit of brotherhood and national unity where every one of us must be responsible for the actions of others, and share in the shame as well as in the glory of what our brothers and sisters do.

Shri Basumatari (Goalpara—Reserved—Sch. Tribes): The unfortunate occurrences that took place in Assam are a matter of shock and deep concern to all. It is of deep concern to all that so many people lost their lives and so many of them were rendered homeless. This problem should not be taken as a problem only of Assam and Bengal. It should be taken as a national problem as stated by the hon. Minister just now.

The need for unity has been stressed in the course of the discussion, but when Members stand up and speak we find that they have not been able to reconcile themselves. This is not the time to consider what happened, who were killed and how many were killed. This is the time to consider how to solve the problem. If we want to solve the problem, we want the unity not only between Bengal and Assam but in the whole country.

Many things have been stated here, and a section of the people has been

[Shri Basumatari]

abused, particularly the students. I cannot blame only the students. Students are of tender age, and they do not know. Hon. Minister Shri A. K. Sen has told us how the students of Assam had shown discipline there. If you compare the students of Assam with the students of other States, you will find that they maintain better discipline. So, I cannot blame the students only. If they are mishandled, then it is the leaders of the country who are to blame.

The Prime Minister and also Shri Bhattacharya said that the students took the most aggressive part, but I disagree. Maybe the students took part, but who misled them? Is it not the professors and the teachers of the colleges? So, if something is to be done to these misdoers, I think Government should think about the professors and the lecturers there. Therefore, I do not like to blame the students.

Let us now see how this situation has arisen. Much has been said about the language question. The language question is not a question for Assam alone but it is there all over India. It is because this language question that so many States have come into being. So, what is wrong if Assam thinks that it should have its own language as the official language? I am myself a tribal, and I have got my own language, but I cannot, like my hon. friend Shri Hynniewta, hate some other language or not like to learn another language. I feel that the more the languages you learn, the wiser will you be. So, I have no prejudice against any language. I want to learn more languages, and I have learnt more than one language.

An hon. Member from Bengal said that there was some suspicion in the minds of the Members from Bengal about the census figures. In the census of 1931, the figure was something, but in the census of 1951 the figure was quite different. If you go into the details, you will find that the state-

ments made by them and the reasons put forward by them are wrong. The census of 1931 was controlled by Bengali officers, or I would not like to say only Bengali officers, but mostly by foreigners. There, the plain tribals comprising five different communities who constitute more than 8½ lakhs were taken as non-Assamese speaking, but they had no other language than Assamese as their medium of instruction, though, of course, they had their own dialects. They were taken as non-Assamese-speaking. Also, the Muslims were taken as non-Assamese-speaking. You know that most of the Muslims came from East Bengal now. 16 lakhs in 6 districts in the Brahmaputra valley were taken as non-Assamese-speaking. But since the attainment of Independence, they knew when they opted to India that they must live here and must stay here and maintain contacts with others. Therefore, they thought it is better for them to learn the language of the soil. Therefore, they took their medium of instruction as Assamese, and educated their children in that language. Also, the Rajbanghis who comprise about 3½ lakhs were also taken as non-Assamese-speaking, in 1931 census. Why did this happen? This happened because it was controlled by the officers from Bengal who accompanied the East India Co. and the British White people and also the officers or managers of the zamindars. They might have told the enumerators that they were not Assamese-speaking. But they have no language and no dialect other than Assamese. They were all now taken as Assamese-speaking in 1951.

If you go into the details, you will see that this confusion will go. Without criticising the enumerator and the Government, my hon. friends must see the reasons. I wish they would examine these things themselves before saying any such thing on the floor of the House, because everybody is a responsible Member here. It is not a question of being done by the

Government of Assam or others playing some tricks. Thus the figures in the census of 1931 is quite different from in the census of 1951.

Anyhow, whatever that may be, I do not think this is the time when we should go into this controversy. The main problem before us now is one of rehabilitation.

Many of the Members from the other parties were blaming the Congress only. But I may tell you that it is not so much the Congress as the other parties like the Communists and others did. I remember some of my friends from the other parties, as for instance, a responsible Leader of the Communist Party speaking at Goalpara when he was there. I heard him myself, saying that 'By blood everybody has got his State. Why should we not strive?' This was the statement by the leader of the Communists. (*Interruptions*). My hon. friend can read the speech if he wants. Again, what about the PSP? The leader of the PSP also spoke in the same line. I do not understand why my hon. friends of opposite should try to hurl the blame only on the Congressmen. It may be that some two or three of them might have joined this movement, but I am sure no Congressmen joined these atrocities. I know it. Of course, if you want to blame, you can blame the Government there saying that they were not in a position to control the situation. If you want to blame them for that, then I am one with you and it failed in some places. But it is not the Congress people who joined the atrocities and made some fiery speeches, because they had a case for themselves. What is the use of making fiery speeches, when one has a case for oneself? They have a clear case for the language. It is a pity that we should have to fight for our language in our own home. The problem in Assam is quite different from that of other States. Today we have heard different speeches from Assam itself. Shri Hynniewta said that it is better to go out from Assam than learning Assamese. We are not

imposing any language there. The Resolution of the APCC itself says that Assamese will be introduced as official language only in the plains districts, and not in the hills and the Cachar district. If there is some lacuna in that Resolution then there are suggestions to rectify it, we can sit together in a round table conference and discuss. So there is no question of imposition of the language. So if you, knowing the facts full well, criticise like that, I do not think there is any justification in it.

Therefore, I would urge upon the people, especially the Members from West Bengal, to consider what we should strive for. At this stage, when the question is of rehabilitation, I thought that hon. Members like Shri Atulya Ghosh and Shri C. K. Bhattacharya would not have spoken in the way they did. They were going back to the past, what happened in 1765 and so on, that three districts were taken from Bengal and all that. It is wrong to say so. The British Government did it for their administrative advantage. So why do you blame the Government of Assam now? When the States reorganisation question was there, I was one of the persons who had the honour to tender evidence before the SRC. The Bengalis tried to include Goalpara with West Bengal. But it was proved by majority, by the census, that the district of Goalpara could not be taken out of Assam and given to Bengal. If in spite of all this, my hon. friends from West Bengal shall put up their claim to take Goalpara district with Bengal with various arguments, I do not think it is a wise proposition.

I welcome the Report submitted by the Parliamentary Delegation. They want some judicial inquiry to be instituted there. I support it fully. I also endorse what the Prime Minister said. I oppose the proposition put forward

[Shri Basumatari]

by the Opposition Members for constituting an Inquiry Committee from here. An Inquiry Commission from here cannot do anything. It is the State of Assam, the Government of Assam and the officers of Assam who can do justice effectively. I want that the evil-doers should be punished, not only punished but punished severely, if not today, tomorrow. But if it is a question of sending people from here to do the enquiry, the question of prestige and this and that comes.

Mr. Chairman: The hon. Member must conclude now.

There are several other Members who wish to speak. I cannot give him more time.

Shri Basumatari: You have given me only few minutes

17.24 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

Shri Basumatari: I request for five minutes more.

I would request the Members from West Bengal specially to remove their suspicion and sit together and discuss and solve the problem. I appeal to them not to raise the question of census, which is very controversial. By that, the question of rehabilitation cannot be solved. I would also request them to be restrained in their speeches even here. By making such speeches here, you cannot rehabilitate the people there. Rather you create a situation which aggravates the condition there. If you do not believe us, how can you rehabilitate those people? I want psychological rehabilitation. I want friendship to be restored. I beseech every Member from West Bengal not to hurl harsh words, not to express his emotional feelings against what has happened in that manner.

I was, of course, not happy when Shri C. K. Bhattacharya referred to a book yesterday. I could not get it then and so I could not say anything.

But I have read that book and I have got it here. It is a book where co-operative farming was suggested. This is a book giving the relationship between the *Matikar* (to whom the land belongs) and the tiller of the soil. My hon. friend could not understand it or get the time to go through the book and finish it but he picked up only one or two sentences. That is harmful. Of course, I do not think the words are very good but the meaning is praiseworthy. Some of the words may be bad. I say that without going through the book one should not refer to it. Thank you.

Shri Vasudenan Nair (Thiruvella): Mr. Speaker, you were good enough to nominate me for the Ajiit Prasad Jain Committee. Unfortunately, due to some unavoidable reasons, I could not go to Assam at that time. All the same, I was in Assam in the last week of July, just after the disturbances. I need not here relate the details of the events and the incidents that have taken place in Assam and I need not go into the details of the atrocities committed on the minority community in Assam. In the report itself, there is the codification of the major events and other hon. Members have given many facts and figures which are enough for the purpose of this discussion.

What happened in Assam was a tragedy. But my appeal is that this tragedy should at least serve as an eye-opener for the Government and the leaders of all political parties and the entire people of our country. If it is so and we take immediate steps to see that such a tragedy is not repeated not only in Assam or Bengal but in other parts of the country, then this debate, I think, would have served a very useful purpose. We all like to see that this tragedy in Assam is the first as well as the last one in the history of our country on such a large-scale. I do not mean to say that there was no such event before. In Assam itself, we were told by many hon.

Members—we also came to know of it—that in 1949 and in 1955 there were some incidents, smaller incidents, in Assam and similar incidents might have taken place in some other parts of the country. For instance, I received some memoranda last year from some of our people working in our steel cities—Rourkela and Bhilai. I sent them to the hon. Home Minister. He was good enough to ask the I.G. of Police, Madhya Pradesh to go into them and then he wrote back to me that these complaints—of course not all of them—were not correct. What is going to happen to our country, if there is going to be a chain reaction and such kinds of incidents?

Coming back from Assam, in Calcutta, I met some of the people from the South—from Kerala, for instance. I should say that the relationship of the people from the south, especially people from Kerala, with the Bengali brethren is very good. But even those people have now a sort of a feeling that something may happen, that there is a danger to the safety of the minorities not only in one part of the country but in several parts of the country. At least these events have given this kind of a feeling to the minorities living in the various parts of our country.

Sir, I should congratulate the people of Calcutta for the restraint that they have exercised for the kind of peace that they have maintained up till now. On the 16th of July, there was a *hartal*. All the papers reported about that. On that day, I should say, all the major political parties in that City and the Government of West Bengal saw to it that no untoward event took place, that no attack on minorities took place. Till now we have seen that in the city of Calcutta nothing has taken place. We would like to see that this kind of tragedy does not repeat in any other part in our country.

Now, we very often claim that we are the biggest democracy in Asia. It is quite all right, the democratic forces in our country are quite strong and for the last so many decades that

democratic movement has gone deep in the life of our people. But I would like especially the Prime Minister and the leaders of the ruling party to see how of late very reactionary forces are coming up in our country, reactionary forces, communal forces and chauvinistic forces are coming up. I should say, they are trying to assert themselves. Is not that our experience?

Sir, I do not want to make this debate to appear as if I am trying to make political capital or anything like that, but I would like the Prime Minister just to look at the fact that the ruling party itself has helped in breeding these communal and reactionary forces of late. What has happened in our country is that, of late, even the ruling party has taken a step which has helped the revival of even the Muslim League. I am placing this before the House only for the Prime Minister and the ruling party to see that their own actions are helping these communal forces. Some of their policies are helping these reactionary forces. After all, after this flirting with the Muslim League in a particular State in India, after embracing them, we have seen that in some places like Bengal or elsewhere, they are reviving their activities.

Mr. Speaker: How is it relevant here? I cannot allow it.

Shri Vasudevan Nair: The communal forces in our country....

Mr. Speaker: Unless these Muslim Leaguers went all the way to Assam and then asked the people to commit all this, he cannot say like that. Let us confine ourselves to the subject. Let not hon. Members take advantage of this debate and enter upon a discussion covering all aspects of the country. If the hon. Member knows about Assam, let him speak; otherwise, I shall ask him to resume his seat.

Shri Vasudevan Nair: My point is, unless we take a very stringent step in this particular case, there is a danger of such things being repeated. That is all my point. This enquiry or action

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which we are demanding in this case, against the culprits in Assam, will help the democratic forces in our country; will give a warning to the dark forces and will be a warning to the reactionary forces all over the country. That is how I am looking at the problem. That is my point. The step that we are demanding—a high-power body, with a Supreme Court judge or judges to conduct the enquiry—will be a step that will help inside Assam those sober forces who want to prevent such things happening or who behaved very bravely during those disturbances and it will help the other forces in all parts of the country.

I was surprised that, after seeing all these things in Assam, the Parliamentary Committee failed to recommend a very essential step, namely, an overall enquiry. All their arguments lead to that. I thought that Shri A. P. Jain is like a doctor who has really diagnosed the disease but who refuses to administer the real drug. All his facts and arguments lead to the setting up of an enquiry committee. The other people who have gone there and have reported say the same thing and what they have reported lead to the same conclusion. I am very glad that the Prime Minister has in today's statement made it clear that there is going to be an enquiry. That statement should be wholly welcomed. But we would like him not to dilate, not to wait and see, because such a high-power enquiry is not going to stand in the way of rehabilitation. Such an enquiry is not going to do any harm to the sober forces in Assam.

The real point that we have to consider is this. I am not against Assam. I am not against the Assamese people. Who says that this enquiry is against Assam? This enquiry is not against Assam or the Assamese people. Of course, for the time being, the popular forces were overcome by reactionary elements and anti-social elements. That is a fact. So, we are not going to put the entire Assam people in the

dock. On the other hand, the reactionary forces and the culprits should be afraid of such an enquiry. After the enquiry, I am sure that Assam will come out as a province, or as a people, cleared of all the doubts and suspicions that have been roused in the entire country.

So, this enquiry is not an enquiry against the Assam people. In one particular place, I came to know of a particular man called Kam ni Sharma who was threatened by some rowdy elements that he would be killed because he organised a meeting in a place called Rangiya. Some people did not like it. He was an Assamese gentleman. The Assamese did not like it. Because of the heat of the moment, because of some anti-social elements, he was going to be killed. But at the risk of his life, he organised a meeting. But at the risk of his life, he stood by the Bengalis. In another village called Jalakkutti, an elderly Muslim gentleman actually came out with his gun and said, "I will shoot you if you are going to burn the houses of Bengalis". So, there are such instances also. Such forces have to be strengthened. From that point of view, this kind of inquiry is very necessary.

We know the feelings of our brothers and sisters in Bengal. We can never imagine that such a veteran in the ruling party like Dr. B. C. Roy will ever come out with such a demand when he knows that for the Central Government or for the Assam Government, there are some difficulties. But he was forced to come out with such a demand, because that is essential. Such an immediate inquiry is inevitable in the present situation as it exists in West Bengal. I think it is being discussed in the West Bengal Assembly also. It has been moved by all parties together. So, it cannot be turned down like that.

I came to know of certain things which have to be gone into. You know that a boy was shot down. Next day,

the dead body of that boy was taken from Gauhati upto Sibsagar, a distance of 350 miles. There is a reference to it in Shri Jain's report also. I learnt that all over the way, in every important junction, the truck was stopped, people gathered together and speeches were made. It was a regular procession with the dead body. Who allowed this dead body to be taken in the open like that? Was the Ministry consulted? Was it done on the responsibility of some officers? Any sensible Government can understand that in the situation on which was existing in Assam at that time, such a step will only inflame the people. This happened on the 5th and from the 6th onwards, the very same thing—burning and looting—happened. That has to be gone into. Where were the Ministers? Were they consulted?

Some people were trying to impress upon us that this was a bolt from the blue. I do not at all subscribe to that viewpoint. Even a Deputy Commissioner in Gauhati was telling us that it came as a flame and it went out as a flame. It is very good to say like that. If it was such a flame, how can it remain from the 4th—it started even before the 4th—upto the 20th nearly? Was it such a flame that it could go on for a number of days like that from one district to another? This has to be gone into.

The pattern is the very same. That was what struck us from the very beginning. It was burning and looting everywhere—the same kind of pattern. Some instructions might have been there to the various people in the various parts. All these things have to be gone into.

I want this high-powered delegation to go into the past history also a bit, because I was interested to read in a publication that even in 1947, the then Chief Minister, Shri Bordoloi, told a deputation of Government employees of Sylhet:

“The newly accepted policy of his Government was that Assam was for the Assamese”.

This is reported in the *Shillong Times* of August 29, 1947. It is reported that grieved by this statement, Mahatma Gandhi felt called upon to remark in one of his prayer speeches:

“I have noted the views expressed that Assam belongs exclusively to the Assamese. In India if that spirit were to enter in every province, to whom then would India belong?”

Mahatma Gandhi, after hearing the statement of Shri Bordoloi, is reported to have stated like this in a prayer meeting. So, he could see even at that time that if this is going to be the approach, if this is going to be the policy, there will be potential dangers. What will happen in 1960, he could perhaps see in 1947. Then he said:

“In India if that spirit were to enter in every province, to whom would India belong? People of all provinces belong to India, and India belongs to all.”

This is from a speech by Mahatmaji in his prayer meeting.

Today some people from the ruling party quoted Akbar Hydari's speeches, the Governor's speech. Some hon. Members have quoted some other speeches also which indicate that the approach is sectarian, the approach is a wrong approach. So, these things have also to be gone into by a higher power commission.

The responsibility of the Government was referred to by many hon. Members here. It was said that the Chief Minister was ill, the Finance Minister was not there and so on. What happened to the other Ministers of the Cabinet. I think there are 8 Ministers in the Assam Cabinet. So, how is the Cabinet functioning in Assam. All these things have got to be examined. My feeling is that the Cabinet in Shillong is not in a position to feel the pulse of the people

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in Gauhati or what is happening in the Assam valley. Because they live in the hill top, the Ministers do not seem to know what is happening day to day in the Assam Valley. That has also to be examined.

Acharya Kripalani was speaking of political cliques. This is a very pertinent point. We are hearing of cliques almost every day. I for my life never thought that cliques can play such havoc with the life of our people. There may be cliques and cliques inside cliques. Anyway, this kind of things can do a lot of damage to our country, that has been proved by the Assam tragedy.

Mr. Speaker: I think he must conclude now.

Shri Vasudevan Nair: The Central Government also cannot absolve their responsibility. We have seen that the Central Government can act very effectively on occasions when they want to act. Of course, on this occasion the Defence Minister was sent there on the 3rd or 4th when the situation was almost out of control. In May there was trouble and in June there were stabbings, assaults and all that and on such occasions, if the Central Intelligence, with all their paraphernalia, could not do anything, why should we have them? Why should we spend money on them? Were we receiving reports from them? Or have they just slept over the matter? This is criminal indifference, as far as the minority community in Assam is concerned, and the Government of India have to bear the responsibility for the present situation there.

The Prime Minister talked of *Prayaschitha*. I think the Central Government should do *Prayaschitha* and the State Government should do *Prayaschitha*. Why should you not ask the Assam leadership to do it? I was pained today to see some of our friends from Assam trying to explain away the incidents. Of course, they said one sentence "It was unfortu-

nate". The word "unfortunate" in English can be used on every occasion. When anything happens you say "it is unfortunate" or "it is regrettable". These two are very good words to cover all sorts of things. So, this "unfortunate" business should go.

When some incidents of a serious nature have happened, whatever be the reasons, they have to be gone into. When I was in Assam one big doctor came to us and said the Bengalis burnt their own houses! What can we speak to such a gentleman? They do not understand the seriousness of the entire matter. Whenever there is something wrong they think in terms of Bengalis and Assamese, instead of thinking of the unity of India. They were always trying to explain away and minimising things. This approach has to go. I would appeal to the Members from Assam, and Bengal, after this Parliament session, to just go and see the problem for themselves. They can go to the refugees and live with them for some time. Some Members from other areas can also go but I may say that the primary responsibility should be that of the Members from Assam as well as from Bengal.

If the political leadership of all the political parties in Assam has failed, I should say, during the riots, then at least in rehabilitating them they should make up for it. They should give help to their Bengali friends. They should go to the villages, stay with the people and create the proper atmosphere. Let us see that this tragedy is the first and the last in the history of the country.

Shri A. C. Guha (Barasat): Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are discussing today one of the most tragic events that have occurred during this 13-year period of our independence. Apparently the issue is between two linguistic groups living in Assam, or in a somewhat wider sense between West Bengal and Assam, but the real issue is India as a whole. The hon.

Prime Minister in his winding up speech on foreign affairs as also in his opening speech on the Assam debate yesterday said that on the integrity of India there cannot be any compromise. That must be the first thing to be protected and to be respected. In the Assam incidents that integrity has been jeopardised.

The incidents that have happened in Assam are a sort of an indicator to the trend of the political life of the country. Today the hon. Law Minister has stated that what has happened in Assam more or less exists in other States and in every other part of India as an undercurrent. Things might have come in the form of a flood in Assam but in other parts of the country also similar feelings and tendencies are prevailing. The Assam Government's policy statement issued recently stated that a deep-seated socio-economic malady was the cause of these troubles. What is the deep-seated socio-economic malady?

It has been stated that in Assam there is the question of employment, that Bengalis have been monopolising almost all the Government services. We have got a summary of the Civil List of Assam. Out of 2,293 posts or something near about 1,583 posts are occupied by the Assamese-speaking people and only about 700 posts are occupied by the non-Assamese-speaking people, namely, the Bengalis and the Tribals. I do not think that would be anything beyond the proportion of their population.

Moreover, of these 700 employees in Assam Government service most of them are pre-1947 entrants. After 1957 the recruitment rules have been made so difficult that a non-Assamese-speaking citizen of Assam would find it very difficult to get into the service of the Assam Government.

Yesterday, Shri Borooah mentioned some figures about the services in Assam. I think they must relate to the All-India services, recruitment through the Union Service Commission for posts like Superintendent of Police

and other things. I am sorry he did not mention anything about the local Government employees. There is hardly any unemployment among educated Assamese.

Then, in business I think the Bengalees have got very little share, except for some small traders in some distant villages or in some towns. In fact, the economic life of Assam is neither in the hands of the Bengalees nor the Assamese. So, there should not be any economic reason for such an upheaval.

The previous speaker has mentioned something about the outlook of the Assam Government, the policy announced by the first Chief Minister of Assam that Assam was for the Assamese. Even after the protest of Mahatma Gandhi, a similar statement was made by responsible men in Assam.

My hon. friend Shri Basumatari has stated that the 1951 census was correct because the tribals and the Muslim migrants had all entered themselves as Assamese-speaking.

Shri Basumatari: Plain tribals. Yes that is fact.

Shri A. C. Guha: I think he put the figure of the plain tribals at eight lakhs. I am not sure whether the figure is correct. I think it may not exceed two lakhs or something like that.

Shri Basumatari: No.

Shri A. C. Guha: As for the correct figure, I will not make any definite statement, he may be in a better position to know, but I am sure eight lakhs is a very exaggerated figure.

Shri Basumatari: The plain tribals comprise five communities, and my community alone has a population of two lakhs in one district, namely the Goalpara, and 2,05,000 in Kamrup District.

Shri A. C. Guha: I think in this connection the House should also know something about the land tenure and education policy of the Government. Shri Basumatari has also admitted that three Bengali-speaking districts were tacked on to Assam when Assam was constituted as a separate State in 1874.

Shri Basumatari: It was Shri Atulya Ghosh who said yesterday and not I that three districts of Assam were with Bengal in 1765.

Shri A. C. Guha: Of course, I agree that is no fault of the Assamese, but of the British. But one of these three districts was Goalpara. How has the number of Bengalees been going down year after year? In 1948 there were 252 primary schools having Bengali medium. How did that number go down to only one when the States Reorganisation Commission was enquiring into the matter?

Acharya Kripalani: Birth control!

Shri A. C. Guha: Birth control by primary schools?

Educational grants were being given for primary schools on the condition that Assamese must be made the medium of instruction. I think my hon. friend Shri A. P. Jain will bear me out when I say that in the whole of the Assam valley including Goalpara Bengali-medium primary schools have almost all been closed down. There may be a few, a dozen or so. Still, in the five Assam valley districts and in Goalpara there is a large number of Bengalees. Wherever the Bengalees have settled, naturally they would have some schools to teach their own children. Why have all these Bengali schools been closed down?

18 hrs.

Then, there is the land tenure system also. The House may be interested to know that land tenure

in Assam except in a few cases is mostly one-year-tenure. After every year, the tenant has to renew the land tenure, and this renewal of land tenure is a difficult thing, unless the tenant declares himself to be Assamese-speaking.

Shri Basumatari: No. This is wrong. There are two categories; one is *kutch*a and the other is *pucca*. The *kutch*a area is not confined only to the emigrants or the Bengalis, but it is confined to the plain tribal areas also in the six plain districts.

Shri A. C. Guha: Yes, I admit but I say renewal of land rights is rather difficult for non-Assamese speaking tenants. There was a definition of the indigenous people, and land tenure was much easier for the indigenous people, and it was very much difficult for the non-indigenous people. The definition of indigenous people is that they must be permanent residents of Assam, and speaking Assamese. That was why the Bengali Muslims, that is, the East Bengal Muslims who migrated to Assam declared themselves as Assamese-speaking.

Shri Basumatari: I think Shri Amjad Ali knows it better and he will bear out with me.

Shri A. C. Guha: Otherwise, they would not get the land for which pupose they had migrated to Assam.

In this connection, I would like the House to remember one thing. These Bengali Muslims in East Bengal fought the might of the entire Pakistan Government for the protection of their own language and faced bullets. They asserted the rights of the Bengali language, and the Bengali language has been declared in Pakistan as one of the two official or national languages, namely Urdu and Bengali, even for the purposes in the Central Government of Pakistan. If it is said that those Bengali Muslims from East Bengal, on going and settling in Assam, easily declared themselves

as Assamese-speaking, and surrendered their own language out of free choice it is impossible to believe that. Unless there had been some sort of compulsion on them, economic or otherwise, they would not have declared themselves as Assamese-speaking.

Shri N. C. Laskar (Cachar—Reserved—Sch. Castes): There is a Government circular also. I can produce it.

Shri A. C. Guha: There are Government circulars and Government orders. I have also got copies with me. Otherwise, I would not have raised this point. I did not like to produce these things, but when we are going to have a permanent solution, when we are

going to have a judicial enquiry into the causes leading to all these things, I think these things should be made known to the House, so that the House may take a correct view of the situation prevailing in Assam, and what has led to these troubles. The States Reorganisation Commission's report has mentioned

Mr. Speaker: It is now past six o'clock. The hon. Member may continue tomorrow.

18.03 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Saturday, the 3rd September, 1960/Bhadra 12, 1882 (Saka).

