

the DVC has kept in view the sudden shortage of power supply to the Calcutta area, and how long it will take the DVC and Government to give normal supply of power to the Calcutta area.

Hafiz Mohammad Ibrahim: May I point out to the hon. Member through you that the information furnished by me is more reliable than any information published in the papers? Why should he rely on that, and not only on me?

12.35 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: MID-TERM
ELECTION IN ORISSA

The Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri): Mr. Speaker, the House will recall that in the course of the debate on the Resolution approving of the President's Proclamation under article 356 in relation to the State of Orissa, I had occasion to observe that Government in consultation with the Election Commission were considering the question when the next elections to the Orissa Legislative Assembly should take place. It has now been decided that these elections should be held early in June 1961.

Whenever a Proclamation under article 356 is brought into force, the Government's aim is always to restrict the period of the President's Rule in the State to the minimum duration possible. In the climatic conditions of Orissa, general elections during the period of the monsoon would be extremely difficult as during that period considerable areas are inundated and communications are disrupted. If the elections cannot be held before the onset of the monsoon, they can only be held some time in December, 1961, that is to say, about two or three months before the general elections, which would hardly be justified. The choice, therefore, is limited to having elections early in June or at the time

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of general elections in February/March, next year. The Chief Election Commissioner is satisfied that administrative steps to be taken can be completed within the time for an election to be held in the early part of June. As I have already indicated, Government do not desire to prolong the period of the President's rule to about 14 months until the next general elections. This appears particularly undesirable this year when the Third Five Year Plan is being launched and when it would be far better for a popular Government to implement the new Plan in the first year

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam): Hear, hear.

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri: Government have, therefore, decided that in the balance it would be desirable to hold elections to the State Legislative Assembly in the early part of June, 1961.

Shri Tyagi (Dehra Dun): Is it the proposal of the Government to extend the life of this newly elected Assembly for the next five years, or will they have to undergo another general election?

Shri Tangamani (Madurai): They will have this election and then have parliamentary election next March.

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): There is no question of proposal of Government. There is the Constitution. This will last for five years.

Shri Tyagi: Well, then, will it mean that elections to Parliament will be separately held every time, for all time to come, because their five years will be separate from the five years of the Members of this Parliament?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: That may well happen, because that is a thing which may anyhow happen. It has so happened by an odd chance that the full period....

Mr. Speaker: It happened in Andhra.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: You are right. What I am pointing out is this. We cannot always synchronise State elections with parliamentary elections. It so happens that except in one or two cases, they have been synchronised, but in future it may well be that they are held at quite independent times.

Shri Tyagi: Is it the proposal to synchronise them, because last time, what happened was, that the period was extended, so that in the next general election, they came along with the rest of us.

Mr. Speaker: That was by a separate statute.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: That will be done, don't worry.

Shri Chintamani Panigrahi (Puri): Is the hon. Home Minister aware that all the non-Congress political parties made representations to the Election Commission, the Prime Minister and the Home Minister himself, and that there representation has not been considered? May I know whether the Home Minister or the Prime Minister received the report from the Governor of the State who stated in a Press conference that except for one Congressman, all other parties were opposed to the mid-term elections? Is the Government taking this political decision in order to enforce Congress rule?

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy (Kendrapara): Apart from the representation of the parties, I would like to know whether it is not a fact that the period now chosen for election is very uncertain so far as the weather and climatic conditions are concerned, and that the peasants are very busily engaged in agricultural operations. I want to know whether, before deciding on this, the opinion of the State Government in regard to these particular facts had been ascertained. Or, is it because the Government wants, or the Congress Party wants, I do not know, that this political decision is being taken?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I do not know why it is referred to as a political decision. Here is a patent fact, that normally speaking, President's rule should not be applied. At the present moment, the hon. Member seems to suggest.....

Some Hon. Members: Why apply it?

Shri C. D. Pande (Naini Tal): Only for six months.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: If applied, it should be put on end to as soon as possible, it is obvious. It is a patent proposition, and to carry it out, the Constitution lays down six months as a kind of maximum period, unless it be reduced. Therefore, unless there are very powerful reasons to the contrary, one tries to find a way to limit the period of President's rule. That is the assumption. I do not say there may not be powerful reasons, but normally that is the approach. Now, the period of 14 months seems to us a very long period. We do not want extra expenditure to be incurred on these elections and all that, but as a matter of fact, it is not quite correct for the hon. Member to say that all the other parties are opposed to this.

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Most of the other parties, a little while ago, after President's rule came in, shouted for early elections.

Shri Chintamani Panigrahi: No, Sir. You have received the joint petition of the Opposition parties.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: The hon. Member asked me if we had consulted the local Government. I do not know about that, but I have consulted the present Governor who came here, and we had discussed it with him fully, all these aspects. So, I suppose he is the local Government at present, as far as I know. So, the important question is a very simple one, whether it is desirable in the balance. There are certain inconveniences in having the elections early. I hope that in

future our apparatus of elections will be such that we can hold elections when necessary at about six weeks' notice, always, everywhere. If Parliament adjourns now the elections should be held within 4 weeks, or 3 weeks, or less sometimes. We are gradually limiting this period. It is completely wrong to have long long intervals, unless, as I stated, one is forced by natural causes or some other reasons. When there is no overwhelming reason to depart from this particular rule, I do not see why it should be considered as political and political motives be attached to this.

It is true that some hon. Members came to me a few days back—three or four—and said that they would rather have later elections. The parties to whom these Members belong, previously wanted early elections. But they have changed their minds.

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: I am not going to allow anything more. Papers to be laid on the Table.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: I entirely agree that generally speaking the elections should not be postponed. But, in this matter, what prevented the Government from announcing the elections when the Proclamation was made? Is it not because there was an attempt on behalf of the Congress Party to form an alternative government there? They failed; and then this decision was taken later.

Mr. Speaker: That is all right.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I would like to answer that question: 'What prevented Government?' If an alternative government could have been formed, it should have been formed, undoubtedly, not by Congress but by anybody. It is obvious that the first object of the Governor in such circumstances is to see if he could carry on the Government without having the President to come into the picture.

It is the normal function of the Governor to explore that. But the real reason for the delay in announcing this was because we had to find out from the Election Commissioner what he could do and what he could not do. If he said that he could not do anything, the matter would have ended. There is no argument about it. When he made it clear that he could do it, then this was decided.

Shri Chintamani Panigrahi: Four days ago, in answer to a question, the Law Minister said that the Election Commissioner had stated that the bifurcation of the double-member constituencies would not be complete anywhere in India before July and this is being expedited in Orissa because of Political considerations.

The Minister of Law (Shri A. K. Sen): I never said that.

Mr. Speaker: I have received notices of a number of questions saying that the erstwhile Congress Ministers are interfering. Possibly, this would avoid further trouble. That has been cut short by announcing that the elections will take place. No Congress Minister will have any influence unless he comes into power.

STATEMENT RE: CENSUS OF INDIA, 1961

The Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a Statement on the Census of India, 1961. I shall not read out the whole; of it but, if you permit, I shall read out only a few sentences and then lay the whole statement on the Table of the House. [See Appendix IV, annexure No. 15].

The provisional population of India, excluding the populations of Manipur, North East Frontier Agency, Nagaland and Sikkim in pockets of which the census or the collection of totals is still continuing, on 1st March, 1961,