

rite, or to attend at the performance of any worship or rite in any religious institution connected with such trust, or to participate in any religious or charitable ministrations made under such trust,....”.

Mr. Chairman: Now it is four o'clock. We have to proceed to other business. The hon. Minister may continue tomorrow.

16:2 hrs.

**MOTION RE: DEMOCRATIC
DECENTRALISATION**

Shri Ram Krishan Gupta (Mahendragarh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I beg to move:

“That this House takes note of the scheme of democratic decentralisation as formulated in the Report of the Team headed by Shri Balwantray G. Mehta, appointed for the study of Community Projects and National Extension Service and adopted in Andhra Pradesh, Madras and Rajasthan and certain other States.”

जहाँ तक इस मोशन का सम्बन्ध है सब से पहली बात मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि इस टीम को मुक़रर करने की ज़रूरत क्यों महसूस हुई। यह आम तौर पर महसूस किया जाता था कि कम्युनिटी प्रोजेक्ट और नेशनल एक्सटेंशन स्कीम का जो काम है वह तसल्ली-बख़्श नहीं हो रहा है, इसलिये ज़रूरत थी कि एक कमेटी या टीम नियुक्त की जाती जो देश के तमाम हिस्सों का दौरा करती और यह मालूम करती कि किस तरीके से खर्चा कम किया जा सके है, फिज़लखर्ची रोकी जा सकती है और किस तरह से ज्यादा से ज्यादा लाभ उठाया जा सकता है तथा एफिशियेंसी बढ़ाई जा सकती है। इन सब बातों को मद्देनजर रखते हुए इस टीम की नियुक्ति हुई। जो टर्म्स आफ रेफरेंस इस टीम के थे वे बहुत वाइड थे और उस को इस बारे में भी अपनी

राय देनी थी कि किस तरीके से एफिशियेंसी को बढ़ाया जा सकता है और जिले के अन्दर जो मौजूदा एडमिनिस्ट्रेटिव मशीनरी है, अगर वह ठीक तरीके से काम नहीं करती है तो उस को किस तरीके से इम्प्रूव किया जा सकता है।

इस रिपोर्ट को देखने से ही शुरू में सफ़ा ५ से पता चलता है कि टीम का क्या कहना है। टीम ने ठीक तौर पर इस चीज़ को महसूस किया है। उस का कहना है :-

“Admitted, one of the least successful aspects of the CD and NES work is its attempt to evoke popular initiative”.

कहने का मतलब यह है कि जब यह तहरीक देश के अन्दर जारी की गई तो सब से वाह्दिक मकसद यह था कि लोगों के अन्दर इनिशियेटिव पैदा किया जाये, पापुलर इनिशियेटिव पैदा किया जाये। मकसद यह था कि देश की तरक्की के लिये, गांव की तरक्की के लिये जो भी प्रोजेक्ट्स हैं, चाहे वह छोटी हैं या बड़ी, लोगों का कोआप-रेशन लिया जाये क्योंकि किसी भी चीज़ की कामयाबी का दारोमदार सब से ज्यादा इस बात पर है कि लोग मदद करें, सहयोग दें, और उस काम को अपने हाथ में लें। इस टीम ने यह महसूस किया कि इस मामले में हम को सब से कम कामयाबी हासिल हुई है। उस ने कहा कि ज़रूरत इस बात की है कि लोगों में पापुलर इनिशियेटिव क्रियेट किया जाये और किस तरह से यह हो सकता है इसी को मद्देनजर रखते हुए यह रिपोर्ट पेश की गई है। यह रिपोर्ट बहुत बड़ा है। लेकिन आज हमारा ताल्लुक इस रिपोर्ट के वाल्यूम १ से है जिस के अन्दर डेमोक्रेटिक डिसेंट्रलाइजेशन के मुताल्लिक राय है।

जहाँ तक कमेटी की राय का सम्बन्ध है उस के बारे में मैं अपने विचार बाद में हाउस के सामने रखूंगा। शुरू में मैं सिर्फ इतना कहना चाहता हूँ कि हमें देखना है कि आया प्राज इस बात की ज़रूरत है या नहीं। मेरा अपना ख्याल

[श्री राम कृष्ण गुप्त]

यह है और हाउस के बाकी आन्तरेबल मॅम्बर साहिबान का भी यही स्थाल होगा और वे भी इस बात को महसूस करते होंगे कि आज इस बात को सब से ज्यादा जरूरत है। हम सब का इस बारे में जातों तजुर्बा भी है और उस तजुर्बे की बिना पर भी यह कहा जा सकता है कि यह सारा काम तसल्ल बल्खा ढंग से नहीं हो रहा है। इस का सब से बड़ा कारण यह है कि जो एड-वाइजरी कमेटीज बनी हुई हैं उन की पावर्स बड़ी लिमिटेड हैं। दूसरी यह भी बात है कि जो मॅम्बरस मुकर्रर किये जाते हैं, नामिनेट किये जाते हैं वे दरअसल पापुलर एलिमेंट को, गांव की असली ताकत को जाहिर नहीं करते। इसलिये जरूरत इस बात की है कि वहां जो आफिशियल इन्फ्लुएंस अधिक है उस को कम किया जाय और उस का एक ही तरीका है कि तमाम इस प्रोमीजर को बदला जाय और एक डेमोक्रेटिक तरीके से सिंडीकालाइजेशन किया जाय यानी असली ताकत लोगों के नुमाइन्दों के हाथ में दी जाय और वे खुद इस काम को करें। जब ऐसा किया गया तो उन के अन्दर यह फीलिंग पैदा होगा कि गांव के मामलात में उन को कोआप्रेशन की सब से अधिक जरूरत है और वे उस कोआप्रेशन को आप को बिलगली देंगे।

जहां तक स्टेट के काम का ताल्लुक है मेरी यह साफ राय है कि उस का सिर्फ एक ही काम होना चाहिये कि वह एडवाइस करे, गाइड करे, इस रिपोर्ट में जो तजवीज पेश की गई है उस के बारे में काफी कुछ कहा गया है लेकिन जो सब से बड़ा प्वाइंट है वह यह है कि तमाम जिले के अन्दर जो कम्युनिटी प्रोजेक्ट का काम है उस को तीन हिस्सों में तकसीम किया जाये। प्राइमरी यूनिट पंचायत हो, उस के ऊपर पंचायत समिति बनाई जाये। जो कि मौजूदा ब्लाक डिवेलपमेंट एडवाइजरी कमेटीज को रिप्लेस करेगी। उस को ताकत अधिक दी जाये। उस का चेयरमैन नान-आफिशिएल हो और जो मॅम्बर चुने जायें

वे इलैक्टिड हों, पंचायतें खुद अपने नुमाइन्दे चुन कर भेजे। इस के ऊपर जिला परिषद हों जो कि उन के बजट वगैरह को चैक करें, उन को एप्रूव करें और जितनी भी पंचायत समितियों के उस जिले में प्रोजेडेंट हों वे उन के मॅम्बर हों। इस के अलावा एम० एल० एज० और एम० पीज० को भी उस में शामिल किया जाये। मैं महसूस करता हूँ कि कम्युनिटी डिवेलपमेंट की तहरीक को कामयाब बनाने का यह सब से बेहतरीन तरीका है क्योंकि इस तरीके से जो असली ताकत है वह लोगों के नुमाइंदों के हाथ में चली जायेगी, और वे यह महसूस करेंगे कि यह सब काम उन की भलाई के लिये हो रहा है। यह बात तजुर्बे की बिना पर भी कही जा सकती है।

आप जानते हैं कि दूसरे प्लान को खत्म होने में सिर्फ एक साल बाकी है। फिंगर्स अगार मैं इस हाउस के सामने रख तो पता चलेगा कि इस मूवमेंट में जितनी तरक्की होनी चाहिये थी नहीं हुई है और यह भी साबित हो जायेगा कि इस का सब से बड़ा कारण है कि लोगों ने उस के अन्दर जरा बेरुखा दिखाई है, दिलचस्पी नहीं ली है। वे यह महसूस करते हैं कि असली ताकत आफिसर्स के हाथ में है जो मनमाने तरीके से काम करते हैं लोगों को कान्फिडेंस में नहीं लेते। मिमाल के तौर पर आप लोन की बात को लें। इस के लिये ५५ करोड़ रुपये रखे गये थे। आप को जान कर हैरानी होगी कि शुरू के दो सालों में सिर्फ दस करोड़ इस मद में खर्च हुआ। एक दूसरा पहलू भी है। जो स्टाफ था उस को बेहतरी के लिये, उसके इस्तेमाल के लिये आपने ट्रांसपोर्ट की व्यवस्था की और उसके लिये रकम रखी थी और उस को मैं आप के सामने रखना चाहता हूँ कि उस में से कितनी खर्च की गई। इस से आप को पता चल जायेगा कि उन का ध्यान लोगों की भलाई के बजाय अपनी हालत को दुरुस्त करने की तरफ ज्यादा था।

इसलिये मैं यह फिगर्स हाउस के सामने रखना चाहता हूँ। इस के लिये जो रकम मुकर्रर की गई थी वह ६७ करोड़ थी। आप को यह जान कर हैरानी होगी कि उस में से २६ करोड़ के करीब खर्च हो गया। इसके अलावा हाउसिंग के लिये भी रुपया मुकर्रर किया गया था। हमें भी गांवों में जाने का मौका मिलता है। अक्सर वहां पर मीटिंगें अटेंड करता हूँ। आप को इस किस्म की बहुत सी मिसालें मिलेंगी कि हाउसिंग के लिये जो रकम मुकर्रर की गई थी वह ज्यादातर स्टाफ को हाउसेज प्रोवाइड करने के लिये खर्च की गई है। मैं सही फिगर्स तो नहीं दे सकता कि क्या है, क्योंकि यह बड़ा मुश्किल काम है, मगर मेरा यह ब्याल है कि अगर इस रकम को इस में दाखिल कर दिया जायेगा तो इस की तादाद बहुत ज्यादा हो जायेगी। इन सब बातों को देखते हुए मैं महसूस करता हूँ कि आज सब से ज्यादा जरूरत इस बात की है कि इस सिल-सिले को डिसेंट्रलाइज किया जाय क्योंकि, यह बात मैं कई दफा कह चुका हूँ और आज भी दोहराना चाहता हूँ, इस स्कीम की कामयाबी के लिये कोई भी स्कीम किसी ढंग से बनाई जाय, उस के लिये रुपये की इतनी जरूरत नहीं जितनी लोगों के कोऑपरेशन की और पापुलर इनिशिएटिव की। इस लिये मैं महसूस करता हूँ हमें इस तरफ सब से ज्यादा ध्यान देने की जरूरत है।

दूसरी दुःख की बात यह है कि इस कमेटी की रिपोर्ट पेश किये हुए काफी अर्सा हुआ। मैं इस बारे में ज्यादा डिटेल् में नहीं जाना चाहता, सिर्फ इतना ही कहना चाहता हूँ कि इतना अर्सा हो जाने के बावजूद हम ने इस तरफ कोई कदम नहीं बढ़ाया है। मैं यह बात कहना चाहता हूँ कि हमारा काम सिर्फ इतना ही नहीं कि कमेटी मुकर्रर की जाय वह अपनी रिपोर्ट पेश करे और इस हाउस में उस पर डिस्कशन हो जाय। सब

मे ज्यादा जरूरत इस बात के देखने को है कि जो विफार्मिंश की गई हैं उन को इम्प्लमेंट करने के लिये गवर्नमेंट ने कौन से कदम उठाये आज हम देखते हैं कि एक दो स्टेट्स को छोड़ कर कहीं पर भी इस स्कीम को डिसेंट्रलाइज करने के लिये कोई खास कदम नहीं उठाया गया। जहां तक मैंने समझने की कोशिश की है, मेरा अपना ब्याल यह है कि इस का सब से बड़ा कारण यह है कि आज जिन लोगों के हाथ में ताकत है वह इस बात से शर्म महसूस करते हैं, वह यह नहीं चाहते कि असली ताकत लोगों के हाथों में आये। आफिसर्स वगैरह तमाम चीजों में डामिनेट करना चाहते हैं। राजस्थान के अन्दर बड़े अच्छे तरीके से काम हो रहा है। उन्होंने इस तरफ सब से ज्यादा कदम उठाया है। लेकिन सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट की जिम्मेदारी यहीं खत्म नहीं हो जाती। उस की सब से बड़ी जिम्मेदारी यह है कि हर स्टेट के अन्दर इस स्कीम को लागू करने के लिये पूरी कोशिश की जाय। वरना इस से कोई खास फायदा नहीं होगा। हम ने जब ताकत हासिल की तो उस का सब से वाहिद मकसद यही था कि तमाम ताकत देश की आम जनता में तकसीम कर दी जाय। मैं यह महसूस करता हूँ कि हिन्दुस्तान की ताकत को आम जनता में बांटने का सब से बेहतरीन तरीका यह है कि यह जो सेट-अप है उसे डिसेंट्रलाइज किया जाय। यह इस प्वाइंट आफ व्यू से भी मुफीद है कि आज हमारे मुताल्लिक यह आम नुक्ता चीनी की जाती है कि हम टैक्सेज लगाते हैं। इस बात को कोई नहीं देखता कि जब से टैक्सेज की तादाद बड़ी है तब से डेवेलपमेंट के लिये कितना ज्यादा रुपया खर्च हो रहा है। अगर हम ने यह तरीका इस्तेमाल किया तो यह जो हमारा तमाम क्रिटिसिज्म है वह बन्द हो जायेगा क्योंकि जब हम डेवेलपमेंट की तमाम ताकत लोगों के हाथों में दे देंगे तो वह अपनी भलाई के लिए खुद टैक्सेज लगायेंगे और लोगों को नुक्ता चीनी करने का मौका

[श्री राम कृष्ण गुप्त]

नहीं मिलेगा। इस प्वाइंट आफ व्यू से भी इस बात की सब से ज्यादा जरूरत है कि हम इस तरफ सब से जबरदस्त कदम उठावें।

आखिर में इस कमेटी ने जो बहुत जरूरी बात कही है वह मैं हाउस के सामने रखना चाहता हूँ। आप भी महसूस करेंगे कि जो कुछ मैंने कहा है वह कमेटी की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक कहां तक सही है। सफा २३ पर यह कहा गया है :

"Development cannot progress without responsibility and power."

मैं यह महसूस करता हूँ कि यह बिल्कुल सही है। जब यहां अंग्रेजों की हुकूमत थी तो हमारा भी यही नारा था। हम चाहते हैं कि हिन्दुस्तान के अन्दर तरक्की हो। मैं तो समझता हूँ कि हमारी आजादी का सब से वाहिद मकसद यह था कि हमारे हिन्दुस्तान की तरक्की हो। इस लिये हम ने यह स्लोगन लगाया कि हमें जिम्मेदारी और पावर दी जाय। इसके अलावा यह भी कहा गया है :

"Community development can be real only when the community understands its problems, realises its responsibilities, exercises the necessary powers through its chosen representatives and maintains a constant and intelligent vigilance on local administration. With this objective, we recommend an early establishment of statutory elective local bodies and devolution to them of the necessary resources, power and authority."

मेरी भी यही अपील है। मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह अपील करूंगा पुरजोर लपजों में कि हमें इस तरफ पूरा ध्यान देना चाहिये और इस डिमाक्रेटिक डिसेंट्रलाइजेशन के लिये जल्दी कदम उठाया जाय। मैं तो यह

भी चाहता हूँ कि देरी को अबायड किया जाय क्योंकि हर जगह यह कहा गया है कि तमाम मामले स्टेट गवर्नमेंट्स के हाथों में छोड़ दिये गये हैं। मेरी तो अपनी राय यह है कि एक माडल लेजिस्लेशन स्टेट्स गवर्नमेंट की रहनुमाई के लिये तैयार करना चाहिये और साथ में एक टाइम लिमिट भी कर दी जानी चाहिये जिस के अन्दर इस स्कीम को लागू कर दिया जाय।

Mr. Chairman: Motion moved:

"That this House takes note of the scheme of democratic decentralisation as formulated in the Report of the Team headed by Shri Balwantray G. Mehta, appointed for the study of Community Projects and National Extension Service and adopted in Andhra Pradesh, Madras and Rajasthan and certain other States."

Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi.

If the House agrees, we may fix a time-limit for the speakers. I think ten minutes will do.

Some Hon. Members: Yes.

Mr. Chairman: Very well.

Shri A. C. Guha (Barasat): What is the total time allotted for the debate?

Mr. Chairman: Two hours. Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi.

Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi (Ludhiana): Mr. Chairman, I have read the report with very great interest and appreciation, and I must congratulate the members of the Team, and particularly its Chairman, on giving us a very exhaustive, able and illuminating report on the subject of community projects and national extension services, particularly from the point of view as to how economy and efficiency can be brought therein and as to how popular initiative can be taken and popular support canvassed.

It is no gainsaying the fact that the subject taken up by the Committee is so vast and its aspect so varied that it would not be possible for me to deal with them here now; neither would it be relevant for me to do so. Therefore, I will limit my submissions only in relation to the democratic decentralisation, enlarging the powers of panchayats and taking the popular initiative in all development projects in the rural areas. We have selected for our objective the welfare state, the foundations of which must be very strong and sound. There is no gainsaying the fact that India lives in the villages. Eighty one per cent of the population is rural. The disparity in the income of a ruralite and an urbanite is very high. It would be admitted on all hands that this disparity has not in any way lessened. Rather it has increased under the First Five Year Plan. Under the Second Five Year Plan too, I believe, this disparity is bound to accentuate. Therefore, the functions of the Community development blocks and the National Extension Service blocks are such that they must look to not only how we can raise the standard of living of the rural population, but also how we can raise agricultural production, how we can give them subsidiary occupations for the purpose of eliminating unemployment and under-employment. I submit the functions of the Community Development blocks are very important in developing the economy of the country.

It has been conceded and a portion of the report has been read by the hon. Member who preceded me, the Mover of the Motion, that so far, we have not been able to harness popular enthusiasm in these projects. That has been a very unfortunate aspect. In fact, the hon Member only read the first two lines. If a later portion is read, the House will appreciate how deplorable the condition is in regard to these projects. No doubt, by this time, I concede that they have got, as far as I understand, 3000 Community development blocks extending over nearly 4 lakh villages, covering a

population of 19½ crores. We have very much progressed and all credit goes to the Ministry for all the support they have given to the States in this connection. But, we must all plead guilty to this that we have not been able to secure popular enthusiasm. Dependence is more on the Government agency itself.

The hon. Member who preceded me read a portion. Later it is said.

"An attempt has been made to harness local initiative through the formation of *ad hoc* bodies mostly with nominated personnel and invariably advisory in character. These bodies have so far given no indication of durable strength nor the leadership necessary to provide the motive force for continuing the improvement of economic and social condition in rural areas."

In this connection, I would draw the attention of the House to another report, the Report of the State Evaluation Committee on the working of the Community Development Programme in the Punjab. This Committee was constituted some time back by the Punjab Government to evaluate the working of these projects. It is unfortunate that the opinion of this Committee too is very much against lack of popular initiative. I will read just a portion. On page 5, it says:

"The people are still suffering from the hang-over of the British Administration where for everything they looked to the administrators. That mentality of the common man is still persisting and unfortunately Community Development Organisation has not helped the people to get out of this slavish attitude. Most of the villagers are still poor, illiterate and are living under unhealthy and insanitary conditions and except in a few areas, the Community Development has not been able to inject new life into the dead soul of the villager and make him realise that he himself is the architect of his own future.

[Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi]

Discussing this, they say:

"The Committee having considered the pros and cons of public participation in Community Development have come to the conclusion that in the initial stages it may be necessary to organise a sort of Compulsory National Service by the village panchayats."

Of course, I disagree with the findings that there should be the prescription of compulsory national service. All the same, I would submit that efforts should be made to bring in the enthusiasm of the people. How can that be done?

We have seen that different States have adopted different laws—the three tier system whereby we have got the village panchayat below, we have got the Panchayat samithi in between and we have got the Zilla parishad on the top. I would certainly say that, as stated by the report, we should have a statutory body which would centralise all the development work postulating decentralisation so far as development work alone is concerned. I would submit, in case you really want to build a really welfare state, it should not be decentralisation of development work only, and the statutory body entrusted with development work alone. Decentralisation should be both in the administration as well as the judicial aspects. This is a point on which I give entire support to the hon. Member who preceded me that the Centre should lay down a sort of uniform legislation commensurate with local conditions. Legislation should be of a kind where we have certainly a middle statutory body established on the lines of the Panchayat samithis, which should be coterminous with the Block area, which should have entire power for development. At the same time, I would submit that the Village panchayats should also be entrusted with the judicial and administrative powers which the conditions of the State demand.

As I said, most of the States have

already passed legislation or are in the course of passing legislation. The power of the Gram sabhas has been limited. I would submit that the Gram sabhas should be a kind of City states where the people participate directly. I was surprised to find that certain States have limited the functions of the Gram sabhas. I would stress that the Gram sabha should be body which should have supervision over the work of the panchayat. Not only would I give that power to the Gram sabhas but I would say that the entire people of the Block samithi should be given a chance to meet together. I submit, if you really want to have a welfare state, you should make these statutory organisations more powerful, give them greater power and also funds. I am sorry I have not got the time. I thank you for giving me an opportunity to say these few words.

Shri Tangamani (Madurai): Mr. Chairman, the Motion before us consists of two parts. The first one deals with the Balwantray Mehta's report. It is one of the best reports that have been produced. Generally, the report is known as a report for decentralisation. Many aspects are there in this report. I shall not go into all those aspects. The general direction of that report is quite right. It mentions three points, namely, that there should be a three tier system of panchayats, panchayat unions and District development councils, that these Panchayat unions should be constituted by indirect election from the village panchayats and that the State Governments should give these Panchayat unions adequate grants-in-aid with regard to the economically backward areas. This principle has been accepted because several people who have studied these Community development projects have been telling us that while we are having a revolutionary objective for the Second Plan and also for the Third Plan, the sort of system that we have smells of Victorian mildness. I think these are the words used by Walter Lippman. Our Evaluation

Committee has also stated that we have not generated enough initiative, but the purpose of this discussion is to analyse the experience that we have gained as a result of implementing of some of the recommendations of this Committee.

In many of the States, law is being made for implementing decentralisation. The States of Madras, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan have been mentioned in the Motion itself. Rajasthan by the Zilla Parishad Act, 1959, has created 232 Samitis and 26 Zila Parishads. Andhra Pradesh, by the Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad Act, 1959, has created 235 Samitis and 20 Parishads. Soon, the Panchayat Act will also be enacted. In Madras, the District Development Act and the Panchayat Act, 1958, have been passed and 21 Development Councils have already come in existence, besides 380 Panchayat Unions and 15,000 Panchayats. Here, the Panchayat Act covers both the Panchayats and the Panchayat Unions. We have got at least 12,000 Panchayats and 3,000 more to come. These are the bare facts.

What I would like to know from the hon. Minister is the experience that has been gained in these three States in actually working out the Panchayat Act. I would like to know more about Rajasthan because a controversy has arisen which was envisaged in the Committee's Report itself, namely the difference between the delegation of powers and decentralisation. This is what the Committee says:

"The delegation of power is often mistaken for decentralisation. The former does not divest the Government of the ultimate responsibility for the action of the authority to whom the power is delegated. This authority under the control of the Government is in every way subordinate to it. Decentralisation, on the other hand, is a process whereby Government divests itself completely of certain duties and responsibilities and devolves them on some other authority."

In our State we were told that Rajasthan had gone the way of complete decentralisation, while our State is going the way of decentralisation-cum-delegation. We find that in the very composition of the Panchayat Act itself. From the experience gained so far, I would like to know which would be the proper way we should proceed. The issue is a very complicated one and during the recess I am sure many of the Members would have gone to the various blocks and studied the working of the Panchayats and the Panchayat Union Act also.

Let me briefly refer to the experience of Madras State which may be of some interest to the House and the Minister. That Panchayat Act which was passed in 1958 envisages the formation of 15,000 Panchayats by the end of 1960. Even before this new Act came, by the Panchayat Act of 1950 we had already 10,000 Panchayats. Under the new Act, any village or group of villages having a population of 500 will constitute a Village Panchayat, and Panchayats with a population of 5,000 and annual income of Rs. 10,000 or more will be called Town Panchayats. We expect the entire State to be covered by Panchayats by the end of this year. So far as Panchayat Unions are concerned, they are being formed in three stages. One-third of them will be formed by 2nd October, 1960, some more by April, 1961 and by October, 1961 the entire State is expected to be covered. So, the set-up there, according to our Minister and our very enthusiastic Secretary, is that we will be having one corporation, 66 municipalities, 21 development councils, 380 Panchayat Samitis and 15,000 Panchayats. And 1,50,000 people will have to be trained who will form the base and be able to operate these development schemes.

With this structure, when the actual training takes place, we find many revealing things happening. There is always resistance from the Revenue Department to divest itself of existing powers. Thus, while the new Panchayat Act of Madras gives more powers to the Panchayats as we desire,

[Shri Tangamani]

it also takes away certain existing powers. For instance, the Panchayats had power to dispose of disputes like a District Munsiff Court, where the amount did not exceed Rs. 100 or Rs. 200, but that power has now been taken away.

Secondly, the people who are the Panchayat Officers, who have been running these Panchayats in the past, have now got reduced powers, and are more or less subordinate to the revenue authorities. So, we must arrive at a formula by which the abilities of these officers, at the district, middle or State level, are fully utilised. Now there is a tendency to somehow throw them out and make them Secretaries to some Minister or another.

At the Panchayat level there are village officers. In certain areas there has always been a tussle between the village officers and the Panchayat President. In our State, originally these village officers were progressive, even leading the revolutionary movement. The Katta Bomman struggle itself started because one of the village officers incited the zamindar not to pay certain rents to the then East India Company. Subsequently, the law has come in such a way that these village officers cannot contest any of these elections. So, they become a separate entity, apart from the Village Panchayat. There must be some device by which these village officers are absorbed.

We may give ever so many powers to the Panchayats, but we must see the actual working. In our State the Government is planning that there must be an income of at least Rs. 6 per head. Supposing there is a village with a population of 500, the amount will be Rs. 3,000. How much work can be done with it? They must have at least two whole-timers, whose salary alone will take away Rs. 1,500 to Rs. 2,000. So, whole-timers have to be set up, but the Panchayat must not be burdened with paying their

salaries. They must come under the State machinery itself. Then, day-to-day administration will become much easier.

We conceive that the Panchayat Samiti should be constituted by indirect election from the Village Panchayats. In other words, the Panchayat Members who have been elected must elect a person who will go to the Panchayat Union. But what is happening is that the Panchayat President automatically becomes a member of the Panchayat Union in many parts of the country. If we accept that position, to conform to the Mehta Committee Report, the President who becomes automatically a member of the Panchayat Samiti, must be directly elected from his area. The electorate that elects the members of the Panchayat must elect the Panchayat Union member also.

I would like to know in concrete terms the experience gained in the three States, and more particularly in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, so that it will be helpful to the other States. It is going to be a very difficult process and the obstacles in the way must be removed which will be helped by experiences exchanged between the States.

16.40 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy (Kendrapara): In the brief time at my disposal, I shall confine my remarks to the progress made in the scheme of democratic decentralisation, since a decision has been taken in this behalf. I feel that it will be rather a misnomer to call it democratic decentralisation because no devolution of power is contemplated in the scheme, nor has it been advocated by the Mehta Study Team. Nor have these democratic organisations which are proposed to be set up in the rural areas any say in the economic planning of the country or in shaping the social and political

objectives. Therefore, by shouting these high-sounding slogans of democratic decentralisation, we are just creating a misunderstanding.

What is contemplated is that in the local development schemes, the people of the locality should directly participate and should be associated to a great extent. Even in this matter, I would say that the recommendations of the Mehta Study Team are very objective. They have taken all aspects of rural life into consideration, and they have also taken pains to see the working of the panchayats as they existed then, and the community development blocks in different parts of the country and also the bureaucratic machinery that exists in our country. Taking all these things into consideration, they recommended a three-tier system beyond the State level, namely the district council, the panchayat samiti and the panchayat, through which a regular democratic pattern could evolve, and the people in the villages would feel the responsibility of taking their share in the economic reconstruction of the country.

But, what do we find? I have here before me a document called 'Legislation on Panchayat Raj—A comparative Study' prepared by the Ministry of Community Development. This document itself shows that very little has been done even to attain this limited objective. I have nothing to say against Rajasthan or Andhra. I have a report from a responsible gentleman who recently made a study of the system in Rajasthan, and I am very glad to learn that not only the people who have been associated in the panchayats in Rajasthan but the people in the higher sphere including the Government there are very anxious to see that the system proves a great success. But I find that hardly five or six States have so far passed legislation, and there are a few States which are just appointing committees to go into this question; some are introducing legislation, and there are two States, namely West Bengal and

Bihar, which have not at all felt concerned about these things and perhaps, have not moved at all. This is the position in the States, because it is a matter which is entirely in the State sphere. But what is the record of the Centre? The Centre has some Union Territories under their own control, where they could have easily introduced this system. But, we find from the document, towards the end, that in Manipur and Tripura, in the year 1960, they have just extended the U.P. Panchayat Raj Act of 1947. I do not know why this was done, and who took so much love for the U.P. Panchayat Raj Act of 1947. I do not know why this special preference was shown for this Act.

Shri Ranga (Tenali): The Commissioner must have gone from U.P.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: That is the point. The officers who have gone there most probably have been drafted from these areas, and they probably do not know any other law prevailing in the country.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: He was the former district magistrate of Agra.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: In Rajasthan and other places, on the contrary, in the year 1959, we find that these schemes are being introduced. Similarly, we find that in Himachal Pradesh and other areas also, practically nothing has been done in this behalf. Therefore, it is not only the State Governments who have not moved in the matter. What is the Central Government doing in this matter? That is a point for serious consideration.

The Minister of Community Development may be very anxious, and he may be delivering hundreds of lectures all over the country impressing upon the people the necessity of this, that and the other. But what is the result? What is his own record in this regard? I want to know specifically whether any attempt has been

[Shri Surendranath Dwivedy]

made by the Ministry of Community Development to introduce this three-tier system in the Centrally administered Territories, and whether there was any objection or obstruction from other Ministries or departments of the Central Government; if there were obstructions and objections, then also, it is a serious matter for consideration.

Although we all welcome and we all want that the scheme should be made a success, yet, from the little that I have studied, I have a fear that by insisting on variety and by not trying for uniformity all over the country, we are introducing more chaos than any improvement over the present system.

The Mehta Study Team specifically stated:

"If this experiment of democratic decentralisation is to yield maximum results, it is necessary that all the three tiers of the scheme, that is, village panchayats, panchayat samitis and zilla parishads should be started at the same time and operated simultaneously in the whole district."

That was their specific recommendation. But we find from the legislation passed, that some of the States are not at all anxious to introduce the zilla parishads. Some of them are insisting on the panchayat samitis only. In some States, even the block has not been considered to be a good unit for development purposes. In Mysore, for example, they have taken the tehsil or taluk as the middle unit between a district council and the panchayat. In a taluk, there may be three or four blocks. In Assam, they do not consider the zilla parishads a necessity; they are introducing *mahkuma* parishads whose jurisdiction is a sub-division.

In the election to the panchayats also, there are very interesting things. We want that the adult population

should be associated with these schemes, but I am told—I stand to correction, if I am wrong—that in the Bill which is proposed to be introduced or is already in vogue in Madhya Pradesh....

An Hon. Member: It is already in vogue.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: I am told that it is already in vogue. According to that Act, the adult population have not been associated. They are not to vote for the panchayat, but only the families in the village; each family in the village will vote for the panchayat; the adult people have, therefore, nothing to do with it.

Again, the panchayats also vary from place to place. At some places, only 500 people constitute a panchayat, whereas in other places about 3,000 or 4,000 or 6,000 people constitute a panchayat. So, what are we going to do actually? If we are serious that at the lower level there should be some uniformity in the administrative and developmental spheres, then it is the duty of the Central Government to evolve a pattern that should be followed in the different States. If that is not done, there may be variations.

An Hon. Member: But panchayats also differ from place to place.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: There may be variations. It depends on the income, the financial resources and so on. Even the Mehta Study Team had taken this into consideration, and had stated that where the financial resources were very limited, the Centre could give more assistance. Therefore, the argument that a particular village is sparsely populated and so on does not hold any ground, because to such areas, Central assistance will be available for resources. Therefore, I would think that it is highly necessary that a uniform pattern should develop all over the country.

Another point which I want to make is this. In the villages, the people are

not very much enthusiastic about these panchayats and co-operatives. They have their previous experience, because panchayats were introduced in this country not to associate people with direct participation in development or administration, but they were working as agencies of the bureaucratic administration.

Shri Ranga: Even now.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: My hon. friend, Shri Ranga, says that even now in many parts they are functioning as such. When this is the situation, I think it is necessary that these panchayats in these villages must feel that they have the resources and the power and responsibility to do things. You must allot sufficient finances to develop the area. That must be done also in a uniform manner. That is why the Balwantrai Mehta Committee also suggested that, if not more, 40 per cent of the local revenue must be set apart for that. I would suggest that all over the country one-fourth of the entire budget amount should be set apart for rural development purposes. If that is done, if sufficient funds are available, if these people have, according to the present contemplated legislation, direct responsibility to discharge, wherein the executive officers will carry out the wishes of the elected panchayats, I think the entire atmosphere in the villages would change and the new life that we want to create in this country will be possible; otherwise, if the approach is halting, over-cautious and hesitant, I would say that they better not try it, better not introduce more chaos into the present system; because our Constitution is a centralised one, it does not contemplate giving power to the people of the villages. The Constitution also does not give any statutory support to these new organisations. I think the time has come when we should seriously consider whether we should not amend the Constitution so that it gives some statutory support to these new organisations that we want to develop in this country.

Shri Ranga: I am afraid I would have to mention in the very beginning that I cannot agree with the approach made by the previous speakers. It looks as if they are very keen on getting rid of the federal system of our Government and empowering our Parliament here and the Minister concerned and the Planning Commission not only to make laws but also to create an administration which will steamroll provincial autonomy and set a kind of pattern here with the aid of the Planning Commission, the Ministers and Parliament and impose it upon all these various States, giving them no chance at all to make any experiments.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: Nobody suggests that.

Shri Ranga: If my hon. friends would only read once again their own speeches, they would find that the import of their speeches leads only to that and to nothing else.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: No.

Shri Ranga: I speak subject to correction.

I shall not be surprised if the Ministers also at the Centre would fall in love with this kind of approach that there should be a pattern set here, a plan uniformly to be imposed on all the States according to a kind of timetable and a programme suggested by some kind of a Committee like the Balwantrai Mehta Committee. I wish to say that I stand here not to endorse this....

The Deputy Minister of Community Development and Co-operation (Shri B. S. Murthy): The Ministry has not so far undertaken such a task.

Shri Ranga: I thank him.

Secondly, some of our friends say that Rajasthan's experience is very happy. May be so. Our experience in Andhra in those days it used to be the Madras State—when we were starting those village panchayats 30 or 35 years ago was also very happy in the beginning. I was myself res-

[Shri Ranga]

possible with the co-operation of that dynamic worker, Shri P. Narasimha Rao, in organising village panchayats in 700 villages out of 960 in my own district of Guntur. And that was in spite of the opposition of the then British Government. Therefore, we were very enthusiastic about it. At the first election and to some extent during the second election also, we thought we were able to conduct our elections in a happy atmosphere. Thereafter, what has happened is that village factions have come on to the top. They have taken this political instrument in their hands and begun to make a mess of the social, economic and political life of our villages also. Therefore, we have got to think about that particular complication. We are suffering from it in Andhra today. In very many villages, the President is chosen by drawing lots, because they are equally balanced; in many other villages, by bribing one or two panchayat members from this side to the other; in many other villages by 'stealing' these people as it were and taking them away and keeping them somewhere, in temporary imprisonment, and also forcing them to vote in a particular manner; and in several other cases, by bribing the election officers.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: That is done in some of the Assembly elections also.

Shri Ranga: Does that justify it?

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: Does it also justify abolition of the Assemblies?

Shri Ranga: Let me give my experience. Let us get to know what is happening. The officers themselves are bribed. They deplete the majority to a minority and so on. It depends upon the comparative poverty or the richness of these various groups. All these things are happening.

In the light of this unhappy experience, what is it that we should try

to do? One suggestion that I have been making over all these years, in the light of this unhappy experience..

Shri Kalika Singh (Azamgarh): Unhappy experience about the villagers' behaviour?

Shri Ranga: Of this particular system of election.

I have been suggesting that in addition to the principle of election by majority, the principle of drawing lots also should be introduced. I would like to suggest that if there are to be 15 members in a panchayat board and there are 15 wards, in each ward 3 people may be elected by majority vote and out of these 3, one may be selected by drawing lots. Similarly, let these 15 people get together and let 3 people be elected again by these 15 either by proportional representation or by whatever system you like. From out of these 3, one may be selected by drawing lots as the President, another as the Vice-President and the third as the Chairman of the important Committee, the Finance Committee or Works Committee or whatever it is.

The advantage in this would be that there would not be these terrible factions caste-wise and various otherwise and even political pressure in order to make sure the election of any particular man, first as a member and next as President. When you withdraw these pressures and bring in the element of chance or God, you will make it absolutely useless for these people to think of bribing anybody or coercing any person in a caste-wise manner or political fashion. Then there would be chance for a number of good people to come in.

After all, the management of the village panchayat does not depend on so-called qualification of education or various other things that you think of. It depends upon commonsense and also character and local reputation. Therefore, if you introduce these two

elements together, give an opportunity for chance also to play its own role and withdraw this terrible pressure it might be possible to have elements which would behave a little better than what has been happening today. I would like an experiment to be made on these lines.

Secondly—Shri Tangamani has tried to analyse it rather carefully—there is the question of delegation and decentralisation. What actually is happening is that all these village panchayats are given some powers but subject to the final authority of the State Government; so much so that the State Government can bring in its own politics—and it does bring in its own politics. We will have to minimise this. You cannot completely eliminate all politics. At the same time, it has got to be minimised.

My friend seems to be wondering what I mean by it. There are Ministers and Ministers; there are parties and parties; there are factions and groups within the same party. All these people are interested in importing pressures into these things. There are these, 'Show cause why such and such a resolution that you have passed should not be rescinded; show cause why the President should not be removed; show cause why the Vice-President should not be removed, why such and such a member should not be removed because they have not attended so many meetings. There are a hundred and one ways of controlling these village panchayat boards which are open to the Ministers. And, Ministers are using and misusing them. Not only the Ministers; there are so many and one other people behind the Ministers. Today there are the sub-Ministers, the Deputy Ministers, official Ministers and non-official Ministers. All these people are there.

Shri B. S. Murthy: I am a Deputy Minister.

Shri Ranga: Fortunately for him, my friend happens to be in the Cen-

tre and not in the State. (*Interruption*). I am not concerned with personalities. I am concerned with what is happening, with our own experience. There are ways and ways to prevent this. One of them is this. Just as you have the University Grants Commission, let there be a Panchayat Grants Commission consisting of judicially-minded people, presided over by a High Court Judge or a retired High Court Judge. Whatever funds the Government has to give to village development be placed at the disposal of this Commission as you are doing in the case of the University Grants Commission. (*Interruptions*).

Shri Nath Pai (Rajapur): One for the whole country?

Shri Ranga: I am talking about every State. I am not bothered about the whole of India. This is one idea which I would like to be explored.

Then the third thing is with regard to elections. As I said, a lot of pressure comes to play with regard to elections. Not only then; thereafter also if no-confidence motions have got to be moved and permission has got to be given and somebody has got to decide whether the proper procedure has been followed or not. We should not burden the Ministers concerned with the burden and terrible responsibility of deciding these disputes. Therefore, I suggest a Commission. I am very keen on it, it should be a quasi-judicial one; it should not be burdened with any ministerial responsibilities; it should not be dependent upon the fortunes of elections and all the criticisms of these things that we find in all the States. So, if there is someone there, a High Court Judge or somebody else, he may be aided by a number of representatives of the village panchayats, the zila parishads. As and when a particular case comes up, then, as you choose your jurors from a panel you can choose these advisors. Those advisors the affairs from whose district come up for discussion and decision need not take part in that particular discussion. But, nevertheless, these people will be there to

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advise the judicial officer. Let that judicial officer decide whether a particular election has been held properly or not, whether any permission has to be given to move a vote no-confidence or not or whether any notice has to be served on any of these people.

There should also be an independent accounting and auditing service for all these village panchayats. When I am talking about these village panchayats, I am using the term in a generic fashion. I am also including in the phrase the panchayat samities and zila parishads also. All these three must be there. I have many more things to point out but I cannot say them now.

In conclusion I would like to suggest that all political parties should take a vow publicly that they would not interfere in the management of the elections and in the affairs of these panchayats—this three-tier system. What was happened recently is this. So far as the village panchayat elections were concerned the parties kept themselves away because they wanted these village factions to go on castwise and all the rest of it. Once they have fought the elections and when there are 20 or 25 panchayats in a particular samiti area, then they begin to apply the pressure among these 20 or 25 people. Then they are isolated and taken to religious centres and both the sides make these people take vows that they would remain loyal to their respective sides and all sorts of mischief does take place. Therefore, I do not want any political party to come in the way. Let them take a vow publicly; and if anybody were to misbehave then, of course, he will stand to be condemned by the public opinion. Let them at least take that decision.

In this connection, some time ago Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan was suggesting the same thing. We, in the Swatantra Party, were ready to accept that suggestion. I may tell you I myself have had intimate experience of the manner in which these village

panchayats have been organised and helped to function during the last 30 or 35 years. I know that this is the best possible course that can be followed and that is why I was ready to accept the suggestion of Shri Jaya Prakash Narayan.

I do not think that this Parliament should take too much of interest in the local affairs to such an extent that it would go away. Let us at least be clear on this and agree on this as political parties and national representatives of this country. Let us all say to ourselves that we shall not interfere with or interest ourselves in the politics and electioneering of this three-tier system from the village panchayat right up to the zila parishad.

Mr. Speaker: Shri M. D. Mathur—I will give chances to hon. Members from Rajasthan and Andhra and then come to the others. Let these hon. Members first give their experiences.

Shri M. D. Mathur (Nagpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is really regrettable that in spite of two years having elapsed, almost all States, except 3 or 4, have not agreed to respect the wishes expressed in the Balwantray Mehta Committee report, although the subject was discussed in Parliament also. So far as the States that have accepted the report are concerned, they have also done it in their own way and Shri Dwivedy pointed out the example of U.P. and one or two more States. I, therefore, stand to appeal to Parliament that unless and until the Constitution of India is so amended that the Panchayat Raj system finds a proper place in it, we will not be able to have a regular pattern as suggested by the Balwantray Mehta Committee.

So far as Rajasthan is concerned, I am grateful to my colleagues here who had a word of praise for Rajasthan and its working of the scheme of democratic decentralisation. We have not taken this scheme only as

an experiment; but we have taken it as a faith. If democracy has to stay in India it can only stay if it is further decentralised and taken to the lowest level. Unless and until there is decentralised administrative apparatus we will not be able to enthuse the people at the village level to carry on developmental activities as envisaged in the Community Development programme or otherwise. It is necessary that the suggestions of the Balwantray Mehta Committee should be accepted.

If we read the Balwantray Mehta Committee report today we find it is completely obsolete so far as certain developments that have taken place in the villages are concerned. Today we have a system in Rajasthan as suggested in the report. We can criticise the report for this. It has suggested that an official should be the Chairman of the Panchayat Samiti and the Zila Parishad in the form of the S.D.O. and the Collector. In this year 1960, nobody can accept an official to be the Chairman of a non-official elected body, particularly when one wants to introduce non-officials to carry on the developmental programme. Therefore, there are many things suggested by the Balwantray Mehta Committee which cannot be accepted in the present context of development in this country. I say that there is at least one good and strong point of the report which should be accepted. Formerly, the development of the panchayat as well as the area development were being carried out in this country through the development block agencies. When it became an administration it came to be carried out through the official agency. After working for a number of years, the development programmes stood at the cross roads and therefore, this committee was formed to investigate and see how we could enlist people's participation in the village developmental activities. They could not go ahead unless and until people's representatives and the villagers themselves are made responsible for them and they are given duties and

powers. After thorough investigation this Committee ultimately gave this report. Today the panchayat, samiti and the zilla parishads are the three tiers in the system recommended by this Committee. They should be headed by the elected Chairmen. I agree with Shri Tangamani when he says that in Rajasthan we have deviated from the report of this committee. The sarpanch or the chairman who becomes a member of the panchayat samiti is directly elected on adult suffrage. The panchayat samiti is the real executive apparatus as envisaged by the Mehta Committee in carrying out the developmental activities in the State and it is therefore directly elected by the people. If he is directly elected, he has greater strength when he works in the samiti than a man indirectly elected or nominated. Therefore, in Rajasthan we have deviated from this report on this point.

In India people say that we have guided democracy and under guided democracy we have delegated decentralisation. This point had been raised. This is mostly the criticism that is coming these days. It is correct to some extent. When democracy is ushered in guidance is necessary. But in this decentralisation there has never been any agitation demanding powers for the panchayat or the villagemen. It was done because the community development administration could not go ahead with development work in that area through the official agency. Ultimately the Mehta Committee gave expression to a feeling of failure and said that we could not enthuse the people. The *shramdan* movement became a sort of an adventure and a failure. Therefore, we said ultimately that a community can be developed only by a community and these are the basic institutions—the village panchayat, the panchayat samiti and the zilla parishad—which should be formed. The zilla parishad is a supervisory or advisory or directive body. There is the second filter where the Members of Parliament and the State legislatures sit and discuss

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these things. So, the panchayat samiti is thus guided. As a matter of fact, the panchayat samiti is an executive apparatus of this scheme and that should be a strong body.

Another point is whether we have delegated the power or we are decentralising the power. So far as Rajasthan is concerned we are not delegating any power; we have decentralised power. The budget of the Panchayat samiti in Rajasthan comes to Rs. 10 crores and it is completely in their hands; the State Government has no authority. There is a separate audit for that. Shri Ranga suggested it just now. We have a separate Service Commission and a cadre of service for the panchayat samiti and the zilla parishads under the Rajasthan Act. This Commission is an independent body and is not under the State Government. Retired High Court Judges and revenue board members are appointed as members of the Service Commission and whenever recruitment for a particular district takes place, the Chairman or the *Pramukh* of that district serves in that commission and recruitment take place. If these institutions have got only delegated powers, the whole purpose of the panchayat raj system will fail. The villages should be made to take the initiative and the people in the villages should feel that they are masters of their destiny so far as the subjects transferred to them are concerned. About nine months back elections were held and it was called an experiment and we have been having this experiment of democratic decentralisation for the last nine months and I am proud to inform the House of this fact. People used to criticise the villagers and say that they were not educated and the people in the lower strata of society would not be able to decide things for themselves and discharge their duties and that there would be chaos. The chaos are somewhere else and they are not on account of these people. If you have faith in your men, the cumulative wisdom of the people at large is definitely better

than the wisdom of any single officer, a single individual, however trained he may be.

We have found, Sir, that these villagers have managed themselves very well. Of course, there are difficulties. Difficulties are there even at the highest level. Everywhere, even in your Assemblies, the Parliament and everywhere there are frictions. Why should we be afraid of frictions and difficulties? We do not say that the Parliament should be dissolved because there are differences of opinion. We do not say that any legislature should be dissolved because there are differences between the various parties, the Congress Party and the Opposition. It is only when we come to the question of delegation of power, the question of decentralisation that we say it should be dissolved.

We in Rajasthan, Sir, observe 2nd October as a historic day, a day of importance. Next to 15th August, when power was transferred to the people of this country, the only day which we observe as sacred is 2nd October when we delegated that power to the people at the village level. On 15th August power was transferred to our people by the British, power came from London to Delhi. Then, under the Constitution we transferred that to the States. Now that democracy has been further taken to the village level, to the panchayat samiti level, to the panchayat level. Therefore, in this scheme it is necessary that we must have full confidence in our people. Let them work, let them falter, let them commit mistakes; but I am sure that if they are permitted to work they will work very well. They have worked very well in Rajasthan, and the people of Rajasthan are proud of the decentralisation scheme which was envisaged by the B. G. Mehta Committee.

There is one more point which I would like to place before this House for its consideration. The whole

thinking takes place here at the Centre and that pool of thinking is transferred to the States. The States may then take it further up to the district level, the panchayat samiti level and the village panchayats. It stops there. There are various other committees like the youth committee, the mahila committee and other insti-active, then the real purpose is not active, then the rural purpose is not served; whatever thinking we have, whatever glow or spark we may have here, when it reaches the panchayat level either it is completely extinguished or if there is any light or force in it, it is not carried to the people at large.

I would like to mention one thing. We are now having the Third Five Year Plan. In Rajasthan, in Andhra, in those States which have completely decentralised their administration as suggested by the B. G. Mehta Committee or have gone ahead of their recommendations, there is a problem. The First Five Year Plan was an introduction to planning. The Second Five Year Plan was a Plan for the people but not by the people. But the Third Five Year Plan should be really a Plan for the people and by the people. The people of Rajasthan now claim, the members of panchayat samitis numbering 3,000 to 4,000, that it is for them to plan in the sectors allotted to them. They ask, why should the States or the Centre plan for them in those subjects which have been transferred to them under the law? Therefore, we are now attempting to have village plans. Definite instructions have been issued and we are trying the experiment of making village plans on a mass scale. You have to plan for more production, social amenities etc. These are the two sectors which come under the village plan. Therefore, today our village level workers, national extension officers sarpanch and others go to the villages, convene village sabhas and ask the heads of families how many acres they have, what are their demands, what are their necessities etc., so that they are

able to place before the village sabhas their needs. In that way we can plan for every village and ultimately it becomes a district level or panchayat level plan. If only you do that, real planning in the country can take place. Only in that way you can enthuse the people to put in their maximum effort for more production.

Therefore, democratic decentralisation is not only a scheme for a co-ordinated development plan as envisaged by the community development programme but it is also definitely a reform in the local self-government administration in India. If we want to see that Gandhiji's dream of panchayati raj comes through, it is only through democratic decentralisation.

Shri Jaipal Singh (Ranchi West—Reserved-Sch. Tribes): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I hope I shall be forgiven for being forthright in my reactions which have been known to the hon. Minister for sometime. I have always said that the idea has been good, and I thought that I would give the Government a chance to work out its plans, I have been disillusioned. I have told the Minister at some other place that I felt that the money that has been spent on Community Development and in national extension service is a fraud on the exchequer. This is a very serious statement. It is not as though I did not want that money should be spent on welfare work. It is not that. But I do feel that, in good faith, perhaps, we have attempted to superimpose it on the people we wish to serve.

I come from an area where you have not to teach, as Shri Ranga has perhaps had to teach, many years ago. This panchayat system has been there in the tribal areas from time immemorial. But since Independence what have we done? We have uprooted that system. It was something that was of the people belonging to the genius of the people; we legislated, the Panchayat, Act and the

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like. We overnight tried to think that we could bring in something—a wonderful scheme it may be, and it was well meant—but it has misfired.

My main grievance is that the sum Rs. 300 crores which we plan to spend in the Third Five Year Plan is a thing which the people do not seem to support; the people do not seem to be behind it. About the Plan itself, I do not see much wrong with it. I can only talk of my own home area. I do not pretend to talk of the whole of India. I would not do that. My hon. friend Shrimati Renuka Ray has made a study, and when I appeared before her team I told her the same thing. I felt that in this missionary endeavour to bring good ideas to the rural community, we have imported a battalion of foreigners. They were indeed not foreigners; they were our country-men. But to the community they sought to serve they were aliens. That is my difficulty. I am not one who would just theoretically oppose the idea of trying to work in the rural areas. But I do not feel that our foundations are up in the apex and not at the bottom. I do feel that we should build up from the bottom these sanctimonious ideas of trying to do good to the villages and the like. It is very nice to talk about it in Parliament, in the legislative assemblies and in the social welfare boards political parties and the like.

Mr. Speaker: Has the scheme been introduced in Bihar?

Shri Jaipal Singh: The Panchayat Act has failed.

Mr. Speaker: Was it introduced, and failed? Or, it was not introduced at all?

Shri Jaipal Singh: The legislation is there, but it has not worked. Now that you have asked a question, I would like to tell you that five years ago—(interruption).

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. I am talking about the three tier system that was recommended. The subject-matter of this debate is the recommendation of the Mehta Committee and the working of the scheme in those particular areas. From hon. Members who have gone to those areas and found out that the system is not working, this House has an opportunity to have their experiences. Otherwise, in other cases where it has not been introduced at all, there is no good referring to ancient panchayat systems.

Shri Jaipal Singh: I do not know how successfully the scheme has worked in Rajasthan or some other State. I am only concerned with how I can work it and how it has worked in my State. That is of importance to me. Perhaps, in Rajasthan they have done a wonderful thing, they have worked miracles; that is all right. But I do want to know the very idea of decentralisation. I do not know what they meant by democratic decentralisation. Decentralisation must always be democratic; it cannot be otherwise. We use the word 'panchayats'. The best translation of the word 'democracy' is 'panchayats'. What I am trying to maintain is, the panchayat has been there, as far as I am concerned in my area, from time immemorial. There is no question of decentralisation. What I am only trying to urge on my hon. friend there is the fact that you build it up right from the bottom instead of trying to import outsiders—that is what is happening now. Whether it is by legislation or otherwise, we have to work and get on with the genius of the people. That is my main submission.

For example, in the Third Five Year Plan, they are going to be given Rs. 300 crores. That is not a small amount. Shri Ranga, a fairly responsible Member in this country and not unknown to this House, said a few minutes ago that all political leaders

ship take a vow—to do what? That in this particular respect, they will not be political. Is not that an admission, Sir, that hitherto the whole scheme has been working on a political basis? To me that is a very very serious thing. It is not that we do not want these things to develop and to continue or the national extension services to be there. But I am afraid, from the personal experience I have had—field experience, not academic experience; I am not going by the reports Government produce before us; I am going by what I have seen—I feel that it is very very largely political. So, if that is to prosper, certainly decentralise the thing. That is the only hope the scheme has. The only way in which we can succeed is that the people are part of it and that the people are behind it. Otherwise, with all the window-dressing that has gone on in the first two Five Year Plans, we are just feeling ourselves.

As I said, I want to be forthright. It might hurt certain people, but I come from an area where people do not read reports.

Mr. Speaker: But their spokesman reads.

Shri Jaipal Singh: Sir, I congratulate you for crediting me with that amount of energy that I read the pyramid of literature that emanates from the particular Ministry and other Ministries. I do read them and I am a fairly responsible citizen of this country. I do not read them because the literature relates to my own area. I read them because they educate me and it is good for me to read.

All that I would like to say is that we must trust our masters. Who are our masters? A couple of years hence, we shall be going to the villagers saying: भाई भाई वोट दो! They are our masters. The sooner we realise that, the sooner our hon. Minister and every Member of the Treas-

ury Bench realises that, the sooner in the States they realise that people are not going to be fooled by window-dressing that has been done in the past, the better it will be. Granted mistakes have been made in the past, I do believe there is scope for the Plan.

So, Sir, I am not one who would oppose the perspective ideal. Mistakes have been made in the past. We have been to a large extent sententious, idealistic we may put it, and doing a certain amount of window-dressing to the outside world and perhaps, window-dressing to deceive ourselves. But I do think now we are growing up, we are trying to become mature. We mean business and I think if we have to be democratic, we do really seriously mean that we are to build up a Welfare State. I think what has been suggested is all to the good and if we are all behind it and the people can be behind it then certainly we have it.

Mr. Speaker: How long will the Minister take?

The Minister of Community Development and Co-operation (Shri S. K. Dey): About thirty minutes.

Mr. Speaker: Then I must call the Minister just now.

Shri Narasimhan (Krishnagiri): Before that may I put a question? How does the Minister and the Ministry reconcile themselves to the position of the District Collector presiding over the Development Councils consisting of Parliamentarians, Legislators and other elected people? Will it not lead to clash between the incompatibles for no fault of their own?

Dr. M. S. Aney (Nagpur): As I heard the speeches of hon. friends.

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who moved the Resolution I felt that there is some sense of sadness in what they were speaking. It seemed from the speeches, and even from the Report itself, out of which this Resolution has been culled, that somehow or other the development programmes have not made the progress which the people expected, that they have not yet given the expected results and, therefore, something is needed to give a new impetus to them in order to make them more popular and make them more useful and beneficial. And one of the remedies thought of by Shri Balwantrai Mehta is democratic decentralisation of schemes.

Well, I do not want to say anything against it or for it. Some criticism of the scheme has been made by my hon. friend by asking the pertinent question "What is the meaning of using 'democratic' in addition to the word 'decentralisation'?" for decentralisation naturally is democratic and so the word "democratic" is superfluous. But my difficulty is this. You are asking for decentralisation of schemes. That means decentralisation of power. Power is centralised somewhere and it has to be decentralised and placed in the hands of somebody else. That is what we want to day. Then you have to see that there is sufficient enthusiasm among the people placed with power to carry on the work which is entrusted to them, and that enthusiasm will help us in making our community schemes very successful. That is the idea at the moment; it may be. But there is one difficulty. The peoples' minds are generally influenced by ideals placed before them by men, not only who live in the villages; but by those, who are supposed to lead the nation. Now the nation naturally, therefore, looks up to those who are guiding the nation today, the Government of India today. And what is the policy of the Government of India today? That is the question

they put to themselves and they answer it in their own way. The Government of India's policy today, according to the declared wishes embodied in resolutions which have been passed and policy disclosed in the various measures which the Government of India have taken is certainly not of decentralisation. That is the point. In fact, the very ideal of following the socialistic pattern carries with it some kind of idea of nationalisation which means the centralisation of power in our activities as much as possible and keeping it in our hands. Not only that. We hold big meetings, conferences and congresses and impress upon the people "this is the ideal that we place before you and every Indian should be influenced by that ideal, fired by that ideal and do his best to implement this ideal in the best possible way".

That is one kind of propaganda that we are carrying out today, that is, the ideal of centralising the power, taking it into the hands of Government as much as possible and leaving very little in the hands of the people. Power that should be in the hands of the people is being taken in the name of doing good to the public at large. I do not want to dispute that. It may be that that is being done with a view to do good to everybody in this country. That may be true. But what is the ideal before you? The ideal is opposed to that of decentralisation of power as centralisation of power actually is being seen in every important measure that we take. In fact, the three measures which we have discussed during the last three days about land reforms. And all these things were frequently defended on the ground that Government is taking all these things not for the sake of their own benefit but for the sake of the poor people who had nothing in their hands. So, that is the ideal placed before the people by the Government itself and by all those who, like ourselves, stand by the Govern-

ment, namely, it is time for us to lose our own powers and try to put, as large a measure as possible of it in the hands of the Government. This is what we call centralisation. With this big cry of centralisation going on, here our institutions are lacking for want of popular enthusiasm. Therefore decentralisation must come in. In this case of contradiction, I find that the remedy we have will be very difficult for its success. Anyhow, I wish that it may succeed or some other method be found out.

I would have enlarged upon this aspect, but I know my time is very limited and another more important person is to speak.

Shri S. K. Dey: Mr. Speaker, Sir, when this subject was proposed to be discussed in this House specially during the last session I was very happy because this was one subject besides agriculture to which I was, as a person, concentrating all the attention that I possibly could including the attention of the staff of my entire Ministry.

When we talk in terms of extending the democratic process and the sovereignty which rests in this House to the people down below over distances of thousands of miles spread over our 550,000 villages, it is of the utmost importance that not merely the people to whom this process is being extended but also those who have been elected by the people as their representatives in this House of Parliament, in the State legislatures and in other institutions have a full opportunity of understanding the implications of the steps that are being taken so that when the system, howsoever desirable we may decide it to be from this House, is threatened by forces which are pitted against it, proper protective measures can be administered by people who wish progress of democracy in this country all along the line.

Therefore, I looked up to this debate as a great opportunity because the

country will have an opportunity of knowing what the hon. Members of this sovereign Parliament think about this particular process and what importance they attach to it. I did not wish to burden this House with the theory, philosophy and the objectives of democratic decentralisation as it has been called in the past by the Committee which was set up by the Government or of *panchayati raj* as we call it now, because I discovered only last night that I imposed on this House during the Budget Session a tax heavy enough which lasted for about 1½ hour which was devoted, I find, entirely to the description of *panchayati raj* as we are trying to implement in this country. I therefore assume that it is acknowledged and accepted by this House that the democracy and the sovereignty that are enjoyed by this House should travel all along the line, right up to the village level. I presume it is accepted that the democracy that will ultimately survive and endure in this House shall be determined by the democracy that is practised not merely in the institutions below but even in the family.

I wanted to tell this House exactly what we have done during these two years. It has been suggested by some friend here, by Shri Ram Krishna Gupta, that there should be a model legislation by the Centre. I am quite sure that this House will appreciate that whenever any model thinking as such or so-called, is sent out by the Centre, it has the immediate tendency of suppressing the initiative of the States and preventing them from thinking, because there is a natural tendency on the part of the States to feel that the Centre must have sent out this legislation after all the thinking that could possibly have been done, and because the Centre consists of the greatest authorities in the country. Conditions vary widely from one area to another. We have Kerala on the one hand and NEFA on the other, and various conditions interpose in-between. Naturally, no legislation which applies effectively to one part

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of the country could apply to another part of the country. We naturally felt, and I hope I have been right in making this as an assumption on behalf of the House, that the best role that the Ministry could play would be to continue discussing with individual State Governments as they proceed with the formulation of their legislation, and make available to each individual State Government the pooled thinking on this subject that has gone behind in other States. And that is precisely what we are trying to do from month to month. We are not merely sending out to the States streams of new ideas that are being evolved by individual States, but also the experiences in the working of the *panchayat raj* system in the States which have already undertaken them, as for instance Rajasthan, Andhra and some other State which are now going ahead with them. This is one thing that we are doing.

Secondly, it has been suggested, I think by Shri Surendranath Dwivedy, that the Centre, instead of trying to evolve a uniform pattern for the whole country, is trying to spread confusion by allowing the States to go ahead in their own way. I am quite sure this House will appreciate that the Constitution confers an autonomy on the States, and it would be extremely . . .

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: Sir, there is a misunderstanding on this. I quite well know that it is under the State sphere. But the States, in the National Development Council, have agreed to this proposal. What I suggested was that when they have agreed to this proposal, there must be a uniform pattern of development. There is no question of imposition on the States. On their agreement only things have to be done.

Shri S. K. Dey: That is precisely what we are trying to do, namely, that in the fundamentals there is unity of approach. What are those fundamentals? The first is that there must be

a genuine transfer of responsibility to the people and their institutions. Secondly, what are the levels at which decentralisation is taking place? Thirdly, what are the safeguards that have been adopted to see that the popular institutions would not be unduly controlled and directed by the Government apparatus above? These are some of the fundamentals which we must safeguard at the Centre. And we are trying to do it. Continually we are trying to do it, that is, before a piece of legislation goes to the State Legislature we are trying to see whether it satisfies these basic points, and if it does not we try to bring the discrepancies, as we find them, to the notice of the State Government. And have made. It is not merely the States that so far they have been very responsive to whatever suggestions we have made. It is not merely the State of Andhra and Rajasthan and Madras that have gone ahead with legislation on Panchayat Raj system. The Mysore State has enacted legislation. They have gone ahead with the election of panchayats, and election of representatives to the higher institutions. Orissa has enacted legislation and is expected to implement this programme very shortly. Assam has enacted legislation. But for the new difficulty that has arisen in Assam, there would have been considerable progress by now. Even pending proper elections under the legislation, the Assam State went ahead with an *ad hoc* pattern of panchayats, samiti and mahakma parishads. It has been objected to that in Assam, we have permitted the State to go ahead with mahakma parishads instead of Zilla parishads. Personally I do not see any objection at all to Assam going ahead with the mahakma parishad. If, eventually, we find and they find that a mahakma parishad is a misfit and it should be a Zilla parishad, it could be done by a simple amendment of the legislation which can be done without undue difficulty. What is important is whether they really mean business and

are transferring power to the village bodies, block bodies and whatever other bodies they appoint above the block level; This is being done by the State Government. We have tried to ensure that there is no loophole in the legislation.

On the question of transfer of power, it has been said by Shri Ranga that there will be a considerable amount of control exercised by the State Government on them and therefore, there should be a judicial commission appointed and that judicial commission must be entrusted with the responsibility of dispensing the Government funds between the different panchayats in the State. Certainly, I have very high confidence in the judiciary in this country. But, I do not believe that, once the judiciary is placed in the position of administering funds between hundreds of panchayats in the country, they, eventually, would be any different from an administrative organisation. Therefore, a judicial organisation, if it is to be appointed at all, must be there for other purposes, not for administering funds but to see that the appointment of staff in these block panchayat samitis and the parishads are made according to certain, proper, correct criteria. That is being adopted by different States in different ways. I have no doubt about it that just as we have here in the Centre the Union Public Service Commission, and we have the State Public Service Commissions, in the same way, eventually, there will have to be a Panchayat Public Service Commission. There is no alternative to it. It is coming. Some States are thinking seriously about it.

In other matters about elections and other disputes, there can be an independent tribunal or an independent Commission looking in to these matters, as we have an Election Commissioner here. I have no doubt this also will come in due course. What we are concerned with at the moment

is to see that these bodies are brought into shape. I have no doubt there will be many teething pains in the process of developing these bodies. But, let us not have any illusion that Panchayati Raj is going to be a talisman and that it is going to be a substitute for technical and administrative efficiency. It is certain that if, to an efficient block organisation, we can add the strength and experience of efficient and honest popular representative institutions, the work will be accelerated enormously. It is also true that even if there is an indifferent block organisation, or, let us say, a dishonest block organisation, if there is a popular organisation alongside which exercises control over it, that indifferent or inefficient or dishonest government organisation be pulled up and made to function on correct lines. All these things are coming. We wanted to make sure that these bodies come into shape and that the people who come into these institutions are given proper training in understanding the processes of democracy in which the government organisation has a particular role and the people's organisation has another particular role and the two are complementary, not being a substitute for each other, not being inter-changeable for each other. That understanding must first be conveyed and transmitted effectively to all these institutions and those who come to man these institutions.

The second thing is to create administrative and technical competence even in the representatives of the people who are coming in there, so that they can form sub-committees at the Panchayat and Block Panchayat Samiti level and the Zila Parishad level, thereby assisting and complementing the efforts of the Block staff in more effective implementation of the Block programme for different subjects like production, welfare, communications and other matters. That training programme has been undertaken all over the country in all States. We know for a certainty that unless we are able to build up technical efficiency in the country, and also

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build up our resources,—for instance, even in food production we have to build up seeds, fertilisers, insecticides, implements, proper servicing arrangements for implements—Panchayati raj is not going to be a substitute for this materials. But in the Third Plan all steps are being taken to see that all these resources for agriculture, public health, animal husbandry, industries etc., are developed. We are now trying to see that simultaneously people's organisations also get technically and administratively developed to take the fullest advantage of all these facilities and of all the organisations that are going to be placed at their disposal.

Shri Jaipal Singh raised a question about work in his own area. I claim some credit for knowing fairly intimately the work that has been done by the community development organisation in the particular area from which he hails. I can say with a considerable degree of confidence, because I have gone to that area on a number of occasions, perhaps as many times as I have gone to any place in this country, may be even more, that a considerable amount of work has been done in his area. The question of improved methods of cultivation did not arise at all before the community development programme began in his district, in his constituency and other areas around. For the first time, people are using improved seeds, fertilisers; for the first time they are knowing what insecticides are, how to grow nurseries, how to use improved implements. We are spreading out medical services to the villages. Large expansion has taken place in the education of boys and girls, expansion has taken place in the field of women's work, which is really a heart-warming experience to see in that particular area, and I have recommended to the whole country that they experience that we have had in this particular area in women's work is a model for us. With all this, if he says that nothing has happened there, and that it is entirely a fraud,

I am very sorry. There has been some fraud, I have no doubt about it and there are some cases already going on.

Shri Jaipal Singh: I never said nothing had happened.

An Hon. Member: He wants more.

Shri S. K. Dey: He has particularly emphasized one factor, that Panchayat is an institution which is very well known, that it is almost in the blood of the people in that area, and asks why it is that work is not being done through the Panchayats. I am asking myself exactly the same question that he has put me, and that has been the crux of my efforts with his State Government, to see that the Panchayati raj system, which has been recommended by the Mehta Committee and already accepted by Rajasthan and Andhra and now being worked out by various other States, is also undertaken at an accelerated pace in the State from which he comes. In fact, I have been begging the Members of the State Legislature and Parliament from that State, to lend me their support, to lend their Chief Minister their support, to see that this programme is taken up, to take up the very programme mentioned by him that whatever is being done now should be done by the Panchayats. And I have no doubt that in his area people will do it even better than people in other areas, because there the system of Panchayats is almost a part of the blood stream of the people. That is the proposal we have been struggling to push through with the Bihar Government all these months. I hope my hon. friend will lend me his weight, lend the Chief Minister his weight, to see that this process of legislation in his State, with which he is in full agreement, can be accelerated.

Shri Ranga had mentioned that political parties should take a vow that they should not fight elections at the panchayat and higher levels. Certainly, this House will, I hope, agree with me when I say that I have no

jurisdiction over political parties as they function at the level down below, and it is not possible either for any Minister or for anyone in this House to enforce such a discipline on the political parties. I realise very fully the validity of the suggestion that my hon. friend has made, namely that politicians must try to keep away from these institutions. I suppose he meant politicians who go there not because of any ideology but with a view to creating chaos in the situation. There can be good politics and there can be bad politics. In fact, I would like all the politicians in this country to go out into the countryside and teach the people what democracy means. That is good politics. That is the politics of today, and I would like all the political parties to go there and try to cross each other in disseminating knowledge on the working of democracy, so that people know what exactly to expect of themselves and of the representatives that they have elected to all these institutions.

I was mentioning earlier—I forgot to continue it—about the progress that we have made in this panchayati raj legislation and other matters. I mentioned that Orissa and Assam have already enacted their legislations. Now, U.P. has got its legislation before the State Legislature, and it is likely to be finalised in the near future. As far as we have information here, the Madhya Pradesh Government referred this matter to their State Legislature, and the legislature referred this matter to a Select Committee. We are expecting that their legislation will also go through very shortly. The Punjab Government have done exactly the same. The old bilingual State of Bombay, for obvious reasons, could not go ahead with the panchayati raj scheme. As soon as the State was bifurcated, the new States of Gujarat and Maharashtra have appointed committees to go into this question, very high-powered committees charged with the responsibility of making specific recommendations, on the basis of which legislation can be framed. I

have no doubt about it that they are going ahead at a very accelerated pace; we are in very close touch with them, and I have no doubt that both Maharashtra and Gujarat will give a good account of themselves. I have also no doubt that Bihar also will go forward with a little more assistance from my hon. friends in this House and friends outside. What is probably required is a little letter understanding of democratic decentralisation or panchayati raj, as we call it.

Amongst the vocal people in the State, the Chief Minister is not quite a free agent to do whatever he pleases or whatever he believes in. He has to carry the people with him. There are the members of the State Legislature who have to accept it and who have to understand it. Who is going to explain this matter to the State Legislature? Who is going to explain this matter to the people down below as to what is meant?

There is a general feeling that while in the past, a collector could do whatever he wanted, now he is being subjected to some pressure, the tehsildar is being subjected to some pressure, and the other revenue officers are going to be subjected to some pressure, and the same sort of pressure is going to be built up everywhere. So far as a good government servant is concerned, he is very eager that the overwhelming burden which is almost crushing him and crushing his back is shared by others. A bad government servant is not afraid of anything else in the world as much as of being exposed by a popular organisation.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: What about the Centrally administered territories?

18 hrs.

Shri S. K. Dey: I shall come to that a minute later.

Therefore, everywhere, the Development Commissioner and other Government officers who are really

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doing an outstanding piece of work have been giving the fullest support to this concept of panchayati raj. They are trying to see that this Panchayati Raj legislation is properly framed and is enacted as early as possible. But on the other hand, there is opposition also from a large number of people who have so far lived by shouting slogans, who have lived by riding the shoulders of unwary people. They are mortally afraid of these new schemes that are coming up, where starting from the panchayat up to the State level, every action of Government shall be subject to popular pressure. I would like the House to imagine just as a proposition how the Central Government would run if Parliament had been an advisory body and the Central Government were allowed to function with the government officers almost independently except for the advice that they would accept from this House—which they would choose to accept. It would be impossible to run any Government on this basis. And yet somehow or other, there is a feeling amongst quite a large section of people in this country that the village people are so ignorant and so useless that you cannot entrust any responsibility to them. Take a simple proposition. The village people are today being asked to elect Members to Parliament, many of whom they may not know personally, who will have the right in this sovereign House even to surrender the sovereignty that they have. If the right to surrender even the sovereignty which this House possesses is not there, there is no sovereignty at all. If we can entrust the responsibility to the people to elect representatives who can be completely sovereign, I cannot understand the anomaly and absurdity when we say in the same breath that the village people are not wise enough and competent enough to elect panchayats which will be able to spend a thousand or two thousand rupees or implement their agricultural programmes or animal husbandry programmes.

Now that section of people is not a very small minority. They are a very large group of people. And behind them are many people of very great influence with obvious resources and un-obvious resources. They know that the two things, panchayati raj and *sahkari samaj*, go side by side, and if these can succeed, riding over people's shoulders on short payment is not going to succeed. And we cannot expect this revolution to take place without even skirmishes. A large number of people in this country have already started propaganda before the panchayati raj system has been born. The fact that this Ministry is trying now to carry out the mandate of this House and concentrate itself on seeing that this is the first item on our agenda to be taken up, namely panchayati raj, enabling the panchayati raj to take up enhanced agricultural programmes—is not liked by many people in this country, quite influential both in the written world and in the spoken world, who say that the Ministry is completely wasting its time when it talks in terms of panchayati raj and is only trying to do this in order to hide its failure.

My hon. friend, Shri Surendranath Dwivedy, asked me why we from the Centre have not taken up the question of establishing panchayati raj in the Centrally Administered Territories. Now, how can I have a zila parishad in a Territory which is three blocks, which is not even a tehsil? Let us take the case of Delhi. Delhi has 5 blocks, which is not even a subdivision. Can we have a zila parishad? We cannot. We have had panchayats in Delhi. We have had, therefore, to think in terms of a separate body with a non-official Chairman given almost full responsibility for administering the programme. That is how the programme has been done here. The same thing applies to Tripura; the same thing holds good in the case of Manipur, because these are very small territories. We are trying to see that the panchayats,

which are the base of the institution of panchayati raj, are created in every State, in every one of the Centrally Administered Territories and that these panchayat institutions are given the full responsibility for implementing the programme within their area.

Once this has been implemented fully it should be a very much simpler matter to have higher forms. In any case, higher forms can only be up to the block level and not beyond that. In territories like Himachal Pradesh we have already the Territorial Council which has been delegated considerable responsibility for matters of development. There again we are in difficulty and we are trying to explore how this panchayati raj system can be integrated with the scheme of the Territorial Council. I hope hon. Member, Shri Dwivedy, will appreciate that it is not so very important today so far as the centrally administered territories are concerned. The question of Zila Parishad does not arise except for Himachal Pradesh. There is no place for it in a practical way. But, what is important is to establish panchayats.

It has been suggested by an hon. Member that we should not try to devolve only powers for development but we should also delegate powers for administration. But, I would say, let us first try to get these new bodies trained to take up responsibilities for development of their own areas. Once they have done that, they can take up administrative responsibilities, for the administration of law and order and other matters at a later stage. There should be no difficulty in doing that. But, if, to start with, we entrust them with responsibilities for law and order, responsibilities for administration, responsibilities for the judiciary and the responsibilities for development, then, the weight would just be crushing.

It has been suggested that the village people are faction-ridden. I think Shri Ranga mentioned it, and

said that this panchayat raj is going to create a lot of trouble. We felt that because they were faction-ridden, it is absolutely necessary that the institutions at the village level and the higher level should be given special responsibilities for the programme. In the past, these village institutions used to utilise most of their energies in factions for the simple reason that they had not enough of work to do. It is just like in a family where there are no children and there is no work for the husband and wife, even the husband and wife begin to quarrel with each other. And, that is exactly what has happened in these village institutions. Once we remove this parallel functioning of governmental organisation on the one hand and popular institutions like the district board, on the other, and entrust the entire responsibilities together with the entire staff of government handling development matters to these bodies, then, these bodies are either to survive by their performance or they are to sink because there is no other choice. At the village level there is no question of ideology. At the village level there is the government staff and there is a programme and there is a growing need, the yawning need of the people. It is for the people's representatives at that level to get the maximum harnessing of the people's resources to carry out the development programme. If they do not do that they will have no excuse to offer to the people. We have to point out that panchayati raj system will root out the party faction with which we are confronted in the villages.

Shri Narasimhan asked a question whether the Collector should preside over the District Development Council. As my hon. friend, Shri M. D. Mathur mentioned, to some extent, the panchayati raj system recommended by the Balwantray Mehta Committee is out of date because in most of the States they are going ahead appointing non-official chairmen to the Block Panchayat Samitis and also non-official chairmen to the Zila Pari-

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shads. In the State of Madras they have done a considerable amount of thinking. I come straight from Madras. I came back three days ago after an intensive tour of Madras. It has done an outstanding piece of work in training the people, in extending the agricultural programme, in getting people acquainted with the programme for the scheme of panchayati raj. For reasons of their own, they have decided, as an interim measure, to have the Collector to act as the Chairman of the District Development Council, as recommended by the Balwantray Mehta Committee. For obvious reasons, I cannot impose on the Madras State my own views howsoever I may desire that Madras should have acted to the contrary so far as the Chairmanship of the Zila Parishad is concerned. I have no doubt that eventually these people's organisations, once they begin to function will develop so much momentum and strength on their own that there is no Government in the country which can resist the inevitable development that must take place, namely, that the whole Government organisation at whatever level it functions will have to be placed subordinate and responsive to the people's organisation functioning at that level.

I am very grateful to you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me this opportunity of hearing the views of the hon. Members of this House and giving them some of my views and the views of the Ministry on various matters raised. We shall try to examine most of the questions that have been posed here and I shall take the opportunity of bringing the gist of it to the attention of the State Government and I would also take the opportunity of emphasising on the State Governments the special importance that is being attached by this House to this scheme of panchayat raj.

श्री रामकृष्ण गुप्त : अध्यक्ष महोदय, जहाँ तक रिपोर्ट पर हुई बहस और उस के

जवाब का तान्लुक है, उस से साय जाहिर है कि डैमोक्रेटिक डिसेंट्रलाइजेशन के बारे में एक ही राय है. . . .

Mr. Speaker: Let me put it to the vote of the House. Otherwise we may have to disperse for want of quorum. Hon. Members have been patient so long.

श्री रामकृष्ण गुप्त : मैं सिर्फ इतना ही कहना चाहता हूँ और मुझे इस बात की भी बड़ी ख़ुशी है कि माननीय मंत्री ने भी इस बात का यकीन दिलाया है कि इस के लिए इस स्कीम को लागू करने के लिए पूरी कोशिश की जायगी। मैं थोड़ा सा सिर्फ इतना ही कहना चाहता हूँ कि उन्होंने अपनी स्पीच में यह भी जाहिर किया कि मुल्क के अन्दर एक ऐसा बड़ा सैकशन मौजूद है जो कि बड़ा एनफुण्डल और पावरफुल है और जो कि इस स्कीम के कामयाब होने में रुकावट डालता है। मैं चाहता था कि इस के बारे में और ज्यादा रोजगारी डाली जाती लेकिन यह तो आप भी अंदाजा लगा सकते हैं कि वह सैकशन कौन सा हो सकता है और किस एलिमेंट को वह रिप्रिजेंट कर सकता है। जाहिर है कि जिसको इस पावर के डिसेंट्रलाइजेशन से नुकसान पहुंचेगा वह सैकशन इसके रास्ते में कावट डालेगा। इसलिए मेरी अपील है कि इस की तरफ पूरा ध्यान दिया जाय। इस के लिए मैं एक छोटी सी मिसाल भी पेश करना चाहता हूँ। माननीय मंत्री ने इंडिविजुअल स्टेट्स के बारे में भी यह बतलाया कि वहाँ पर क्या क्या तरक्की हुई है। जहाँ तक पंजाब राज्य का सवाल है आप को यह जान कर हैरानी होगी कि वहाँ इस बारे में कि किस तरीके से बिल पेश हो और कैसे यह काम किया जाय एक स्पेशल आफिसर मुकर्रर किया गया है यानी मेरे कहने का मतलब यह है कि वहाँ इस के लिए कोई कमेटी बर्गरह भी नहीं बनाई गई जो कि इस मामले पर विचार करे। इसलिए

में उनका ध्यान इस तरह दिलाना चाहता हूँ कि यह पावरफुल एलिमेंट जिसका कि उन्होंने खुद अपनी स्पीच में जिक्र किया और मुझे बड़ी खुशी है इस बात में कि उन्होंने इस स्कोम के लागू होने में जो असली खतरा था उसे महसूस किया और मुझे आशा और विश्वास है कि उसको काबू में रक्खा जायगा। असली डेमोक्रेसी उसी रोज कामयाब होगी जिस दिन हम रिसर्पिबिलिटी और पावर डेवलपमेंट के वास्ते लोगों को गुकमिल तौर पर ट्रान्सफर कर देंगे।

Mr. Speaker: Before putting the motion to the vote of the House, I propose exercising an extra-ordinary right given to me under the Rules and for the first time. Under Rule 360 the Speaker may himself, or on a point being raised or on a request made by a member address the House at any time on a matter under consideration in the House with a view to aid Members in their deliberations, and such expression of views shall not be taken to be in the nature of a decision.

I called Shri Rami Reddy who comes from Andhra Pradesh so that he may speak and give first-hand information to this House but was not here. One hon. Member spoke from Rajasthan. Of course Shri Ranga spoke and another hon. Member spoke who had to sit day-to-day with these people unlike Shri Ranga who has got an all India work. I thought Shri Rami Reddy would be in a position to give some details.

So, I chose intervene and say a few words on this occasion and it is the first time that I am addressing the House. Recently during the recess, I undertook an extensive tour in my district. I had an opportunity of visiting two samiti meetings. I never knew that they were developing small parliaments in those places. On each occasion the meeting was very well attended. The samitis are between village panchayats and zila parishads. There are a number of

samitis. Each taluq has got three or four samitis. The samitis consist of presidents of village panchayats. As I said, they were attended very well on each occasion and they exhibited a great amount of interest.

Why the previous extension scheme and the boards did not work was that the officers were conducting all the work. For ten villages there was a village development worker and there was a Block Development Officer for a block assisted by a number of extension officers. At the Centre there was the Collector assisted by district officers. For a long time, till recently, people were under the impression that it was all the business of the officers, the government servants. But I see that now a change has come over. The villagers have begun to feel that these persons are to assist them, they are their subordinate persons.

As a matter of fact, the first hour in the samiti meetings is devoted to questions just like the Question Hour here. I was extremely happy to see that there were small parliaments developing in the form of samitis. The block development officers and extension officers were all there to answer the questions. They were also putting Supplementary questions to these officers. I was extremely happy. Every one of them would one day come up here.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy: It may be because that is your constituency.

Mr. Speaker: If Shri Jaipal Singh had any doubts, it was exactly because under the old system money was not given to panchayats. Today all that money is spent there. The block development work is given away to the samitis and they have absolute right to spend the money. I think this will create more enthusiasm on the part of the persons there. They will feel that they are the masters.

[Mr. Speaker]

This scheme is working very well. I find that they distribute the work, they give priorities to various schemes. I hope and trust that this scheme would be adopted elsewhere also. Till now it has not succeeded because the people were under the impression that it was all the business of the government servants, the Collector on one side and the block development officers on the other. Now they know that the money is in their hands, the government servants are there only to assist them and they could be utilised for this purpose.

I shall now put the motion to the vote of the House. The question is:

"That this House takes note of the scheme of democratic decentralisation as formulated in the Report of the Team headed by Shri Balwantray G. Mehta, appointed for the study of Community Projects and National Extension Service and adopted in Adhra Pradesh, Madras and Rajasthan and certain other States."

The motion was adopted.

18.18 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, the 4th August, 1960/Sravana 13, 1882 (Saka).
