

Pandit G. B. Pant: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

(Some hon. Members left the House)

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Sir, you will forgive me just to intimate to you with great regret after this exhibition of the Government's temper in regard to civil liberties, we consider it our duty to leave the House.

(Shri H. N. Mukerjee left the House)

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PARLIAMENT (PREVENTION OF DISQUALIFICATION) BILL*

The Minister of Law (Shri A. K. Sen): Sir I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to declare that certain offices of profit under the Government shall not disqualify the holders thereof for being chosen as, or for being, members of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker: Whichever hon. Member wants to leave his seat may do so gently. No hon. Member shall leave or stand while I am standing. I am exceedingly sorry that hon. Members do not observe rules of decorum in this House. No hon. Member shall stand while I am standing. Even the Members of the opposition have left the House in an orderly manner. I cannot understand why hon. Members on this side should make such disorder and go out making a lot of noise.

The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to declare that certain offices of profit under the Government shall not disqualify the holders thereof for being chosen as, or for being, members of Parliament."

The motion was adopted.

Shri A. K. Sen: I introduce the Bill.

INDIAN TELEGRAPH (AMENDMENT) BILL

The Minister for Transport and Communications (Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, as passed by the Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The basic objective of the amending bill is to terminate the present individual hiring contract system between the Telephone Department on the one hand and our subscribers on the other, and to substitute in its place statutory rules for the governance of this relationship. It would be readily appreciated that the entering into of individual contracts on each occasion, when a telephone has to be provided or some other change has to be made, entails considerable unnecessary work and makes for delays which we are anxious to avoid. The old arrangement was all right when the number of telephones was relatively small and the larger telephone systems were run by private concerns. At that time it was necessary to have individual contracts laying down the rights of the two parties. The situation has now changed completely in so far as the entire telephone system is now run by Government. Apart from this, the number of telephone connections has shown a rapid increase in recent years, and the present arrangements for individual hiring contracts have proved very cumbersome and dilatory. Hon. Members may be interested to know while on 31st March 1947 the number of telephones was 1,23,149, on 31st March 1957 the number exceeded three lakhs.