

of Government for the working of this Act. It is not possible for us, for reasons which I have already stated, to be sure in every case that we are in a position to appoint a judge as the Estate Officer, particularly as we have a vast number of Defence properties which will be affected by this Act. Therefore, I am unable to accept any of these amendments.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava: May I be allowed to ask a question? Will this Estate Officer be invested with discretion to see that it is only in proper cases that he evicts and not in every case?

Shri Anil K. Chanda: Yes, we will give executive direction to the officer that only in cases where he is absolutely sure about the legal title to the property that he should proceed.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava: My question was not about legal title. Suppose a person is suffering from T.B. and he is in unauthorised occupation or he is fortified by other equities in his favour, will the equities of the case be considered and he allowed to remain there?

Shri Anil K. Chanda: Surely, it does not mean that in every case of unauthorised occupation, he has got to be evicted. The Estate Officer has the power to evict but he has his discretion.

Mr. Speaker: Which amendment is to be put?

Shri Jadhav: No. 21.

Shri Anil K. Chanda: The substance of all these amendments is the same.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

'Page 2, lines 19 and 20,—after "Government" insert "from judiciary".'

The motion was negatived.

Pandit Thakur Das Bhargava: No. 42 also may be put separately.

Mr. Speaker: It was stated that it was the same as No. 21.

The question is:

'Page 2, lines 19 and 20,—for "gazetted officers of Government" substitute "officers belonging to civil judicial service".'

The motion was negatived.

Mr. Speaker: The other amendments are barred.

The question is:

'That clause 3 stand part of the Bill'.

The motion was adopted.

Clause 3 was added to the Bill.

Mr. Speaker: So far as this Bill is concerned, in the earlier stages we have extended the time enormously. Even for the clauses, on the whole, two hours were allotted. Let us have one hour tomorrow for all the clauses.

Shri Jadhav: That will not be sufficient; 40 amendments remain. They are important.

Mr. Speaker: Let us have two hours for all the stages tomorrow.

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (Shri Satya Narayan Sinha): That includes the third reading also?

Mr. Speaker: Yes, everything.

17.04 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: INFORMAL
MEETING TO DISCUSS FOOD
SITUATION

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): I am grateful to you for permitting me to make a brief statement about a matter which concerns all the Members of this House. This morning, in the course of the

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

discussions, you were good enough to suggest to members of the Government that they might consider conferring informally with Members of this House of all parties in regard to the food situation. We will gladly do so. As a matter of fact, also in pursuance of a previous suggestion of yours, I invited some leaders of parties in this House from the Opposition, a few of them also from the other House, and we met for the first time on Friday last in this informal meeting to discuss this food situation. And we met again this afternoon—I mean that this is a continuing committee and not just one discussion. The idea is that we should keep in view not only the immediate situation but the short and even the long-term remedies. That is, the committee though informal, should continue. We thought it better to have this informal committee because it is much easier to discuss matters with informality than under strict rules and regulations.

May I say that in the course of these two days' discussions, personally, speaking for myself, I have found it very profitable to hear the viewpoints of various Members and their suggestions. And, I hope, that they have also profited somewhat from the information that we could place before them. That small informal committee will continue meeting from time to time.

But, Sir, in view of the suggestion you made, we have decided to convene a much larger meeting. I cannot say the numbers; but I may say about 30 or so—25 to 30 Members—of all parties will meet on Thursday, the 11th September, i.e., 3 days from today. I might indeed have asked them to meet earlier but for the fact that an eminent personality is coming here tomorrow and some of us will be rather occupied in talks with him. The 11th was, therefore, the earliest date we can find for that. So, we hope to meet—as I said about 30 or so Members from both Houses—we

thought it better—and I hope that all the Members who are more specially interested, from all parties, in the subject will co-operate in this task. We shall gladly have that co-operation and we shall gladly supply them with all the information we possess on this subject and listen carefully to such suggestions as they make. Now, Sir, as I said, Government wish to share the information they have, past and present—what we have done and what we are doing—and to discuss with them any novel, new approaches and suggestions also.

Apart from this, if at that meeting on the 11th, or after that meeting has taken place, it is the desire of this House or your desire, Sir, we are prepared to have subsequently, on a suitable date, a two-hour discussion in this House. I do not wish any Member or anyone to feel that Government have the slightest desire to come in the way of discussion in this House. Only a few days back—I forget the date—there was a full discussion and we thought that, perhaps, another discussion might take place somewhat later. As a matter of fact, there is going to be a discussion in regard to the food situation in the other House next week, in about 8 days' time; I think today week. But, that, of course, is the other House's affair and not this House's affair. So, while obviously we are not concerned—I mean to say it is not for Government to say anything—about the constitutional or legal aspects, as to what the Central Government's responsibility is and what the State Governments' is,—that is for you to determine, Sir, and we accept whatever your decision may be, if I may say so, it seems to me natural that we cannot discuss questions of pure law and order here.

But, apart from all this, Sir, we do not wish anyone to abide by the strict legal interpretation in this discussion with regard to the food situation. So, I submit that if, after we have held this informal meeting of about 30 Members or so, on the 11th which is

Thursday, it is desired by you, Sir, or by the House, we shall ask you to allot two hours on a convenient date; (Some Hon. Members—Two hours will be too little.) I am making my submission, Sir, and it is for you and the House to decide. One thing, I should like to add for the information of the House. One of the areas which has been before the House and which has been under considerable stress is the eastern districts of U.P. I am not going into the past; I am merely informing the House of the present situation from the point of view of the food crops. We have had the latest information not only from the Government but actually from Members of this House who have come back now from there who say that the crop prospects there are excellent. Very fortunately, there has been precious rain there in the last two or three days which has gladdened the heart of every one there. Therefore, one can speak with a measure of assurance that the next harvest is going to be good.

Shri B. K. Galkwad (Nasik): The hon. Prime Minister has said just now that the representatives of all parties have been included on this committee. As far as my knowledge goes, a representative of the Republican Party has not been included.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I referred to the small informal committee and because it was small it was difficult to have too many people on it but in the larger informal committee which I am suggesting, we hope, as far as possible, to include the representatives of all groups.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Prime Minister's statement has relieved much of the tension. The hon. Members will kindly forget all the instances that may have happened, the talks and other things that have occurred in this House. It is not the desire of any one here or elsewhere to disturb the already disturbed situation. Therefore, I hope and trust in this informal conference much of the things will be settled or almost everything will be settled. In an adjournment motion it

is rather difficult and one has to be a little technical. In the other discussion on the food subject, not only the constitutional aspect such as whether we have jurisdiction or not, whether, food being a very important thing, the Centre can also have jurisdiction and whether it has any obligation under the law or under the Constitution, etc., can be discussed. We can have a wider range. With respect to an adjournment motion, the situation is rather difficult; if the Government is not responsible, ought there to be an adjournment motion or not?

In the general discussion on the food situation, I hope and trust that some concrete suggestions will be made and I would say that if any discussion arises here, let it not add to the tension that exists elsewhere. Let it, as far as possible, relieve the tension that is existing there and relieve the distress wherever it may be. I shall fix up a suitable day, if necessary, after the hon. Leader of the House informs the House and there are some more outstanding major problems which ought to be given the attention on the floor of this House.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: The problems are so big that they will remain outstanding for a long time; they will not be solved by a meeting but the point is that we should go towards their solution.

Shri Nath Pal (Rajapur): We welcome the spirit though we do not yet know what it will do. But may we know if he would use his good offices to influence the Government of U.P. to show the same spirit so that in that State matters are not aggravated there?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I have made yesterday, in public, an appeal to all the State Governments on these lines, more or less.

Shri Ranga (Tenali): It may be a good thing if Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, not necessarily as the Prime Minister, would hold a similar con-

ference with the co-operation of the local Ministers at Lucknow at the State level also.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I would gladly go to Lucknow; it is my own State but I am in a slight difficulty. I am in constant communication, I may say, by letters and sometimes even by telephone and I hope the situation will improve rapidly. But I am in a personal difficulty because I am rather tied up about going to Bhutan within a few day's time.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): My suggestion was, if you could possibly make a request to the Chief Minister of U.P. through the Prime Minister, to call a similar conference in U.P. and try to relieve the tension there.

Mr. Speaker: I am sure he will also take steps.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I have publicly stated that I hope that all State Governments—I was not think-

ing of this bigger conference, but the smaller informal committees—would convene such meetings and invite opposition leaders to such meetings. I have suggested that to the State Governments already.

Mr. Speaker: I can only end by appealing to all sections that something like a 'cease fire' ought to start, so that all agitations may cease, so that there may be a calm atmosphere to decide this matter. I would also appeal to all hon. Members of this House—I am not very much satisfied to see that one of our hon. Members fast from day to day; I would appeal to all of them to withdraw their fast—to co-operate, so that in a calmer atmosphere the whole thing may be judged.

17.17 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, the 9th September, 1958.