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12.15 hrs.

Title: Regarding delay in holding elections to the cantonment boards in the country.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL (LATUR): I am grateful to you for allowing me to raise this important issue. ...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: Please keep silence in the House. You must all observe discipline. I am not expected to tell you again and again. This is not a school; this is Parliament, the supreme body of the country. I do not like you to behave childish in the House.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL : Sir, the election to the Cantonments in India under the Cantonment Board Act would have taken place some time back, maybe one-and-a-half years back. But the elections had not taken place. The Cantonment Boards which are now in existence in the cantonment areas do not have the representatives of the inhabitants in the cantonment areas. So, they do not function as democratic bodies. The Act was made to see that the Cantonment Boards function as democratic bodies also.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition had written to the Prime Minister bringing this fact to the notice of the Government, that the election to the cantonments should take place in time. Now it seems that the Government is taking a stand that it wants to amend the Cantonment Board Act and after the amendments are made, it would like to hold the elections under the amended Act. In fact, if the Act was to be amended, they could have amended the Act long before the time for holding elections had arrived. It had not done that; even after that, for more than two years, they had not taken steps to see that the Act is amended.

Now, we have a situation in which there is a Commandant of the cantonment area; there is one officer sitting there; one person who is a non-military man representing the people in the area has to be nominated on the Board, a Special Board and that Special Board has to look after the requirements of the cantonment area. It is suggested in the Act itself that the nomination of a non-military person should be done in consultation with the Commandant of that cantonment so that the person who really takes interest and who is suited to function as a member of the Board, will be nominated. But it seems – we have information and if our information is not correct, the Government can explain to us the real position – that the Government is nominating persons on the Board without consulting the Commandants.

If decisions are taken from Delhi and persons are nominated on the Board, not on the basis of suitability of the person, but on the basis of his being a member of a particular party and especially the Ruling Party, that is not really a correct thing to do.

So, we are urging and we are asking the Government to amend the law without any delay. We are also asking the Government to nominate members after consulting the Commandant of the cantonment area. We are also asking the Government – for any reason, if it is not possible for the Government to amend the Act immediately – to hold elections under the existing law; and after the Act is amended, the next election could be held under the amended law.

This is a situation which cannot be easily discussed outside the House because it is a military matter and this matter relates to the cantonment. So, a letter was written by my leader, and we spoke to the persons concerned also. When this matter is not being looked into in a proper manner in which it should have been looked into, we thought it proper to bring it to your notice and to the notice of the House. We expect the Government to respond to what we said on the floor of the House, and also take appropriate action.

डॉ. विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा (दक्षिण दिल्ली) : अध्यक्ष जी, मैं शिवराज पाटिल जी से पूरी तरह सहमत हूँ कि सारे कॅंटोनमेंट के चुनाव समय पर होने चाहिए, जल्दी से जल्दी होने चाहिए। अगर सचमुच में किसी एक्ट में संशोधन की जरूरत है, क्योंकि अभी तक वहाँ डेमोक्रेटिक प्रोसेस पूरा नहीं है और एक्ट में संशोधन लाने की जरूरत है, उसकी वजह से चुनाव नहीं रोके जाने चाहिए। अभी बजट सत्र का काफी हिस्सा बाकी है। इस बीच में एक्ट में संशोधन हो जाए तो ज्यादा अच्छा है। अगर सभी पार्टी एग्री करती हैं, तो आप एक्ट में

संशोधन कर लें। यदि उसमें कोई दिक्कत आती हो तो चाहे आर्डिनेंस निकालना पड़े, वह कर सकते हैं, परंतु यह करने के बाद चुनाव जल्दी से जल्दी हो जाएं, ऐसा हमारा मत है। हम चाहेंगे कि हम इसमें ज्यादा देर न करें।

संसदीय कार्य मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री तथा श्रम मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री विजय गोयल) :अध्यक्ष जी, माननीय शिवराज पाटिल जी और माननीय विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा जी ने जो मामला उठाया है, मैं संबंधित मंत्रालय के ध्यान में उनकी भावनाएं ला दूंगा।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : प्लीज, आप बैठ जाइये। आपके विषय को ज्यादा टाइम लगेगा, इसलिए थोड़े समय के बाद लेता हूँ। इनका विषय भी महत्वपूर्ण है।

श्री रामजीलाल सुमन (फिरोजाबाद) : अध्यक्ष जी, इतना महत्वपूर्ण मामला है, हम भी बोलना चाहते हैं।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आपको मैं पूरा समय दूंगा, आप बैठ जाइये। सभी सदस्यों को समय दूंगा, आप लोग बैठ जाइये।