

but I should certainly say that the Communists thrive because certain conditions are in existence in this country and those conditions are poverty, disease, squalor and want of facilities which the citizens think they are entitled to get as a matter of right. It is those conditions in which Communism may thrive and unfortunately they do thrive in different parts of India.

When we discuss the food problem tomorrow, this problem will come up in greater details. Unless we are able to tackle this problem, I am afraid the situation in the country, taken along with the international situation, will further worsen. I hope that in the course of the discussions that we will have during this session, it will be possible for Government to place before the House its constructive proposals, especially with regard to the economic side, and satisfy the House and the public that everything possible is being done for the purpose of combating the present grave menace.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** I am reluctant to intervene and take up the time of the House when, as has been pointed out, hon. Members do not have so much of time to give expression to their views. I am not going to address myself to the various subjects that have been raised, but rather put before the House for its consideration certain aspects of this discussion.

It has been said repeatedly that various matters have not been mentioned in the President's address, or have been inadequately mentioned. I submit that the President's address is not a survey of all the problems of India, important or unimportant. The President's address, if I may say so, is not modelled after the address of the President of the United States of America. It is supposed to be a brief statement indicating the general relations of India with the world, and the work we have to do. It cannot, in the very nature of things, therefore, take into consideration all these various matters that are raised, which are important no doubt. It is, generally speaking, not a controversial document, except for the fact that Government policy may be controversial. It is a brief document, certainly not a comprehensive document. I would beg the House to remember that. It is undoubtedly a statement of Government's policy. It is, in fact, the Government's address although the President delivers it. Some hon. Members imagine that it is a private address of the President. It is nothing of the kind.

**Shri Kamath:** Oh, no.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** Not Mr. Kamath, of course, who so well knows Constitutional law. I have even read in some reputable newspapers something to that effect. It is nothing of the kind. It is a brief statement, as far as possible made in a non-controversial spirit, of the broad lines of Government's policy. Therefore, much of the criticism is rather beside the point, although the points raised may be important.

One of the points, that is important certainly, was mentioned by my hon. friend who just spoke; that is about Kashmir. If I may say so, important as the Kashmir issue is, there is nothing that the President could have said about it. Much has been said about it and as the House knows, the issue is, at the present moment, before the Security Council of the United Nations and it is a little difficult for the President, or even for Government, to say much about it at this particular stage. I have said a good deal about it elsewhere and in this House on several occasions. When the occasion arises, I would inevitably come to this House and inform it of any new development.

One or two other matters have been referred to. About the elections, may I assure my hon. friend and the House that, in so far as this Government is concerned, we have taken every step that we can and we will take every step to ensure that the elections are absolutely free and fair, and that every group and party has the fullest opportunities and equal opportunities. We have impressed this upon the Election Commission and I believe the Election Commission itself has taken great care to see that it is functioning in that way and that it will continue to do so. About some incident that happened in Banaras, I know nothing about it. The provincial Government or the local authorities may have had some special reasons on special occasions. It has nothing to do with the elections. Elections are pretty far off.

He mentioned also something about rehabilitation and the refugee situation. I am perfectly prepared to agree with him that the situation of the displaced persons is very far from desirable. He mentioned some cases of deplorable and sad happenings. Undoubtedly that is so. It is no good denying that. But, we have to view the situation as a whole and decide what we can do about it. Accepting the criticism of my hon. friend, I would, nevertheless, submit two or three broad generalisations for the consideration of this House. We have had to face this refugee problem

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

of a magnitude which I doubt if any other country in the world has had to face. I submit,—for the moment I am talking about the refugees from Western Pakistan—that the results that we have achieved are creditable to Government. I submit that compared to the way in which the refugee problem has been dealt with in any country, our results have been creditable. I do not say that they are satisfactory; that is a different thing entirely. I say that they compare well. There have been refugee problems and there are refugee problems today in many countries in the world, Germany, Japan and many countries of Europe, after the war, and even before the war. Refugees from the last war are still continuing in camps in many countries in Europe. That is point number one.

The second point is in regard to Eastern Pakistan, West Bengal and Assam. Again, the situation is not at all satisfactory, I admit completely. Nevertheless, I would submit to this House that it is rather extraordinary that large numbers of migrants are returning to their homes. No doubt, if you provide them with far better conditions, they will not return. No doubt, if you provide employment to the unemployed persons, they would choose to remain here. But, the point is, under stress of circumstances, large numbers of Hindus from East Pakistan and large numbers of Muslims from West Bengal and Assam left their homes through fear, apprehension, whatever it was. At that time, nothing else counted except immediate fear. I can assure you that something has happened to make them go back. They have, on the whole, preferred to go back to remaining here, and the number of people who have gone back, both Hindus and Muslims, is really astonishing. Even in my most optimistic moments, I did not expect this big flow-back which is happening for the last six weeks or so. That, surely, does not mean that conditions are satisfactory and that they have no difficulty to contend against. All that is true. But, nevertheless, it does show that there is an improvement in those conditions. Every other information that we have got also tends to show that there is a definite improvement whether it is in the number of dacoities or insecurity of life, etc. Much of what my hon. friend has said, is true; I am not denying that. But, I say these things flow from a large number of factors including basically and fundamentally certain conflicts that exist between India and Pakistan. Not that it is so only here; it is so all over the country.

which raises big issues into which I am not going at present. I do submit that the situation in Eastern Pakistan, West Bengal, etc., is far better from the point of view of the migrants and displaced persons than it has been in the last six months or so.

My hon. friend referred to the question of citizenship. There is no doubt, of course, that people who have come to India, those displaced persons who stay in India, are bound to have citizenship. If the law is inadequate, the law should be changed. The real point that arises is more in connection with the elections, and the date to be fixed. Now, this House once changed the date for the preparation of the electoral rolls, during the last session, I believe, with the result that almost all the work that had been done was not entirely wasted, but largely so. It upset the work entirely; because we had been working up to a certain date, we had to start afresh and do all that again. If you go about changing these dates, it means enormous labour, enormous expense and fresh delays. Therefore, this changing of dates has to be carefully considered. The number that my hon. friend gave, I do not think, is accurate. He indicated that fifty lakhs of people have been disenfranchised. I do not think any such number has been disenfranchised, because from any calculation, a very large portion of this fifty lakhs came before that date. Another difficulty arises at the present moment. Quite a considerable number of people are going back daily. On the average, the surplus going back may be as much as 2,000 a day or 1,500 a day. The situation is, therefore, a fluid one. One is not quite sure as to who will go back and who will not go back. Therefore, it is a little difficult to lay down hard and fast rules at the present moment. It may become better a little later. My point is that all those who stay are bound to have full rights of citizenship even if it requires a change in the law.

Secondly, in regard to the elections, it is not easy to change the date again and again. It is not a question of the displaced persons only. A far greater number than the refugees will attain majority if you add a few months. Persons who were twenty may attain the age of twenty-one and you will say that so many have been disenfranchised. The whole thing is upset. This is bound to happen. You cannot have absolutely accurate rules that the moment one becomes twenty-one, he votes.

One thing more. A lot has been said about Government's treatment or the lack of interest in regard to the

Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. Well, I do not think it would be quite correct to say that it is due to lack of interest etc. But it is true to say again, that much that ought to be done has not been done and is not done because, ultimately, of lack of resources and other difficulties. We can appoint a Commission if you like. It is easy enough to appoint a Commission. But as the House knows, the appointment of a Commission is a way out sometimes out of a difficulty, for it makes people think that we are doing something though we really do not do much. But deliberately we do not want to delude the public when we do not have the wherewithal to do much good. But I may inform the House that so far as the appointment of the Special Officer—I don't know what it is called in the Constitution—the Special Officer for the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes, the President has decided upon such an appointment and if it has not already been announced it will be announced very soon.

That is all I have to say.

**Shri Kamath:** What about the legitimate complaint that so far as the Scheduled Tribes are concerned, their total population for purposes of election, according to the President's order, is far less than what the last census shows?

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** That is a matter of calculation. We will go into it carefully and find out the position.

**An Hon. Member:** Nothing has been said about the democratisation of the set-up in Parts B and C States.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** Nothing has been said so far as I am concerned about many subjects mentioned here. I was not dealing with the debate, but only pointing out a few things. Of course the point mentioned by the hon. Member is a very important one and I have no doubt that attention will be paid to it.

**Shri Nasiruddin Ahmad:** After the very moving speech made by Dr. Mookerjee, I feel I should say one or two words. Dr. Mookerjee said that the Pact has not succeeded well. But I think it has well succeeded. I submit that the refugees from East Bengal are leaving daily by thousands. With regard to the conditions in East Pakistan, I heard the following from a very important member of the Hindu com-

munity living in East Bengal and who is a Member of the Pakistan Constituent Assembly and who was travelling by the same train as I was travelling. I asked him point blank, what is the condition of Hindus in East Bengal and he said it is normal. I asked him whether there was any trouble and he said there are troubles here and there, as there are bad people everywhere. But apart from that, he said, life is normal, and he says he will remain there and he thinks that others should go back. With regard to the difficulties of refugees in West Bengal, the situation is entirely due to the huge problem the like of which no country has seen. To tackle about 30 lakhs of refugees is a colossal thing for a government whose resources are weak. Dr. Mookerjee has again discovered that there has been some amount of dissatisfaction amongst the people. I believe that so long as he was in the Government there was no dissatisfaction. The dissatisfaction began since he left the Government. I therefore, think that this dissatisfaction, if any, was due solely or at least largely to his departure from the Government. I submit, therefore, that he should come back and join the Government and stem the tide of dissatisfaction and improve the state of affairs.

Now, I come to the postponement of the general elections. With regard to this, I think there has been certainly a departure by the Government. There was certainly a very emphatic declaration that the elections must be held by April—May next. But there has been a change. I submit, that it is not a very good thing to make bold declarations, that elections should be held in April-May and then change it to November-December. I also find a strange phraseology being used by Government. They speak of fixing a date for the elections and fixing a "firm" date for the elections. This is a nice coinage by somebody, probably connected with the minting department. I submit that whenever a date is fixed, it must be a firm date. It means that a firm date is fixed. I submit that language is akin to that used by circus proprietors and cinema proprietors. They say, "to-day is the last day" and the next day they say, "to-day is positively the last day". We should not have these changes in the dates and justify them by using strong language. So far as the elections are concerned, I think we are rather moving in an awkward direction. During the debate on the Constitution relating to this