[Shri Swaran Singh]

other action can be taken in Rangoon or Singapore and in other places. It should be our endeavour to do everything that is possible, for a variety of reasons, the most outstanding reason before our desire really to honour all those great patriots, all those great leaders who have served India and who have led the freedom movement, and we will certainly do everything that is possible to perpetuate their name and to derive inspiration from the great sacrifices that they made.

18.04 hrs.

STATEMENT RE : COMMUNAL HARMONY

THE PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF ATOMIC ENERGY, MINISTER OF PLANNING AND MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, communal incidents which in recent months have marred our national life in certain parts of the country, have caused deep distress as well as anxiety to this House, and to all right thinking people in the country.

Secularism and democracy are the twin pillars of our State, the very foundations of our society. From time immemorial, the vast majority of our people are wedded to concepts of secularism, religious tolerance, peace and humanity. It is understandable that they should feel outraged and deeply disturbed at the aberrations which appear here and there and affilict small sections of society, and which arouse or exploit communal passions or promote disharmony, tension and violence. It is a matter for satisfaction that even in areas where trouble has occurred, the general public at large, whether belonging to one community or another, has lived in a state of complete harmony and peace. Indeed, there have been many instances in which people of one community have saved the lives and property of their fellow-citizens of another community.

The incidents which have occurred should, therefore, arouse the indignant disapproval of our people. I am sure this House will deplore and condemn these incidents and join me in conveying its sympathy to those who have been the unfortunate sufferers of such violence and crime at the hands of misguided elements.

As th House is aware, Government have recently appointed a Commission to go into these incidents. The object of the Commission will be to ascertain the causes which led to them and to recommend measures to prevent recurrence of such disorders in future.

The House is also aware that it has been recently decided to reconstitute the National Integration Council. I have invited leaders of various parties in Parliament and outside to join the Council, so that we can all sit together and deliberate over the problems posed by communalism, and linguistic and regional tensions. Government look forward to the constructive co-operation of all political parties and indeed, of all leaders of society to help in this task.

India has the privilege of being the world's largest composite society, and the home of many great and ancient faiths. Communalism is an evil which divides man and fragments society ; it does aganist our very genuis and cultural heritage. It holds a threat to the Unity and integrity of our country which must be our foremost concern.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the citizenship of India is a shared citizenship. Danger to even one single citizen, to whatever community, caste, religion or linguistic group he may belong, is a danger to all of us and, what is worse, it demeans us all. I am sure the House will join me in an appeal to the people of our country to come forward and work for solidarity and common national purpose. Every man, woman and child should be able to tread on Indian earth without fear and with pride of heart in belonging to this great motherland.

SHRI P. K. DEO (Kalahandi) *rose—*

MR. SPEAKER : No more discussion on this.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai) : Sir, I just want to place a document circulated by Pakistan Embassy on the table of the House.