

growers. The yield has been hardly two or three quintals per acre instead of eight or nine quintals. Because of failure of the crop, people, finding no means of living, have committed suicide in the districts of Guntur and Prakasam.

I, therefore, urge upon the Government to remit the crop loan granted to marginal cotton growers and reschedule the long-term loans. A subsidy should also be given to the cotton growers to continue their agricultural operations. Steps may also please be taken to rehabilitate the families of the deceased and the crop loans due in such cases be written off.

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Syed Shahabuddin.

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN (Kishanganj): Sir, the Wakf Act, 1954... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I have explained everything. Go to the Election Commission and ask them, not here.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Finished, Not allowed. Whatever they may shout, I do not allow...

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Shahabuddin is going on record, nobody else.

(*Interruptions*)\*

MR. SPEAKER: I have given my ruling already.

(*Interruptions*)\*

MR. SPEAKER: I have explained everything and I have given my ruling...

(*Interruptions*)\*

MR. SPEAKER: No, nothing doing. I

have disallowed your motion...

(*Interruptions*)\*

MR. SPEAKER: No running commentary on it.

(*Interruptions*)\*

MR. SPEAKER: I do not have to give any reason.

(*Interruptions*)\*

MR. SPEAKER: I do not know. Ask the Election Commission.

(*Interruptions*)\*

MR. SPEAKER: Ask the competent authority.

(*Interruptions*)\*

MR. SPEAKER: Government has nothing to do with it.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Ask the Election Commission, not me.

(*Interruptions*)

(viii) **Demand for further amendment of the Wakf Act, 1954 and in the meantime, the universally accepted provisions of the 1983 Act enforced immediately**

SHRI SYED SHAHABUDDIN (Kishanganj): Sir, the Wakf Act, 1954 was last amended in 1983 but the amended Act has not yet come into force, except two provisions. Responsible Muslim organisations and leaders had objected to some provisions of the Act and suggested further amendments. It was expected that these amendments shall be enacted soon. Now more than five years have lapsed, though the proposed amendments have been

[Sh. Syed Shahabuddin]

screened and finalised by a high power committee. In the meantime, many beneficial provisions of the 1983 Act have remained unenforced to the general detriment of the Wakf properties.

The importance of the Wakf as an institution and as an instrument for the social, economic and educational development of the Muslim community cannot be over-emphasised. The Governments, Central and States both, are well aware of the need to protect the Wakf properties and to utilise them for the welfare of the community and progress of the country.

It is, therefore, requested that the amendment Bill be introduced at the earliest and, in the meantime, those provisions of the 1983 Act which have been universally accepted be brought into force immediately, without any further delay.

11.25 hrs.

CONSTITUTION (SIXTY-SECOND  
AMENDMENT) BILL

AND

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE  
(AMENDMENT) BILL

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Now we shall take up items 7 and 8 together. Shri B. Shankaranand.

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE AND MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): Sir, I beg to move\*:

"That the Bill further to amend the Constitution of India, be taken into consideration."

"That the Bill further to amend the Representation of the People Act, 1950 and the Representation of the People Act, 1951, be taken into consideration."

As Hon. Members are aware, the subject "Electoral Reforms" has been keenly debated both in the parliament and outside. We do have a well established electoral system. Our election laws are supported by statutory rules and orders covering all aspects of the preparation and conduct of elections. We have been successfully holding elections since Independence. A review of all these elections showed that the electoral process and the system have been under certain stresses and strains which, if allowed to remain unchecked, may undermine the very democratic process and the system itself.

India is one of the biggest stable democracies in the world. A large percentage of our population lives in rural areas. Though the people are not highly educated, they are wise and mature. When it comes to the question of exercising the right to vote, the Indian voter, whether in an urban or a rural area, is mature and politically aware. He is conscious of his right to vote and also that this right is a precious one. There has, therefore, been considerable international admiration for the way in which the democracy is functioning in our country.

However, as I said, our own review of the past experience has emphasised the need for improvement in the electoral process. The Election Commission has formulated several proposals for electoral reforms. The Government has taken necessary steps all along to bring about improvements by making new enactments for the purpose. In this connection, Members would recall that in order to deal with the evil of political defection, the Government under the dynamic leadership of Shri Rajiv Gandhi took a bold step of amending the Constitution by Fifty-Second (Amendment) Act in 1985. Another significant step was