

COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

FIRST REPORT

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contai): I beg to present the First Report of the Committee of Privileges.

13.10 hrs.

The Lok Sabha adjourned for Lunch till ten past Fourteen of the Clock.

(The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at ten minutes past Fourteen of the Clock)

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

RESIGNATION BY MEMBER

MR. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that I received a letter dated the 21st September, 1977 from Shri Bhagwat Dayal Sharma, an elected Member from Karnal constituency of Haryana, resigning his seat in Lok Sabha. I accepted his resignation with effect from 21st September, 1977.

14. 11 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH ON SHARING OF THE GANGA WATERS AT FARAKKA

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Hon'able Member of this House would have gathered from the press that an agreement between India and Bangladesh on the sharing of the Ganga Waters at Farakka and on augmenting its flows was finally negotiated and signed at the Ministerial level in Dacca on the 5th November, 1977. I place on the Table of the House a copy of the Agreement which, in accordance with the understanding reached with the Bangladesh Government, was released upon its signature. I must

crave the indulgence of the House for the length of this statement. Apart from the importance and the complexity of the problems raised during the negotiations, I have to cover in it most of the criticism which has been voiced regarding this Agreement and consequently it has become necessary to explain the position in its historical perspective and the facts involved. The historic nature of the Agreement and its extraordinary significance for relations between India and Bangladesh and for sub-continental politics have been recognised almost universally abroad and by broad sections of public opinion in India. With the signing of this Agreement and its simultaneous entry into force a major problem which had bedevilled relations between the two countries and vitiated the political atmosphere in the subcontinent for over 25 years has been resolved.

The Hon'ble Members are aware of the long history and complexity of the Farakka problem. The issues involved in the negotiations of the Agreement affected political, economic and cultural interests and sensitivities on both sides. We were seeking to ensure that while not reducing the flows available for flushing the Hooghly below a reasonable limit, arrangements were made at the same time for augmenting the flows in order adequately to meet our upstream and down-stream requirements. From the Bangladesh side it was argued that they had to protect the existing consumptive uses and avoid adverse effects on the country's ecology and economy in the future. They further contended that in order to preserve the ecological balance the entire flow of 55,000 cusecs during the leanest period of the dry season should be maintained uninterrupted. The negotiations were necessarily complicated and protracted in order to reconcile these disparate and conflicting objectives from both sides.

The negotiating problem was further compounded because international law on the rights of riparians is yet to be codified and thus there is no universally recognised criteria to go by in deter-