

1968 to 30th June, 1971 ; and

(b) the percentage of indigenous content in each case ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI GHANSHYAM OZA) : (a) A statement showing the number of Agricultural Tractors produced every month by existing 5 manufacturing units, from 1.4 1968 to 30.6.1971 is laid on the Table of the House, [*Placed in Library. See No. LT-880/71*]

(b) The percentage of indigenous content achieved by each of the units is as under :

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| M/s. International Tractors Company of India, Ltd, Bombay. | 80.3% indigenous content. |
| M/s. Tractors & Farm Equipment Ltd., Madras. | 88.2% indigenous content. |
| M/s. Eicher Tractors India Ltd., Faridabad. | 82.0% indigenous content. |
| M/s. Escorts Ltd., Faridabad. | 88.2% indigenous content. |
| M/s. Hindustan Tractors Ltd., Baroda 50 HP | 85.0% indigenous content. |
| 35 HP | 57.0% indigenous content. |

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12 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REPORTED POLICE FIRING ON PRISONERS IN ASANSOL JAIL

SHRI KRISHNA HALDER (Anogram):
Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of

Home Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and request that he may make a statement thereon :

'The reported police firing on the prisoners in the Asansol jail resulting in the death of nine under-trial prisoners.'

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, on August 5, 1971, at about 2.00 A.M. a warder of the Asansol Jail who was on duty heard a crashing sound and when he approached the place along with another warder, both of them were attacked by some prisoners with a piece of angle-iron and iron rod. The warders raised an alarm, on which the Jailor and the other jail staff rushed inside. They found that the eleven Naxalite prisoners, who had been confined in two cells in the jail, had escaped from their cells and were running towards the north-west perimeter wall, in a bid to escape from the jail. On seeing the jail staff closing in on them, they clambered to the roof of the kitchen and began to hurl brick bats on the warders. The jailor failing to persuade them to come down, ordered firing of two rounds of blank cartridges ; and as this had no effect, he ordered firing of another round of buck-shot cartridge. As even then the prisoners did not come down from the roof of the kitchen, the jailor ordered some warders to climb the roof. A tussle ensued between the 11 Naxalite prisoners and the warders ; some prisoners jumped down from the roof. The jail staff made a *lathi* charge resulting in all the 11 prisoners being seriously injured. 10 warders were also injured, two of them seriously. 9 of the injured prisoners died.

2. Government take a grave view of this episode and propose to order an enquiry through a Retired judge of a High Court.

*SHRI KRISHNA HALDER : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I shall speak in my mother tongue, Bengali.

The reply of the hon. Minister is not satisfactory and it is of very ordinary nature.

* The original speech was delivered in Bengali

Our party is totally against individual murders and terrorism. We are also against political murders.

We have serious political differences with the Naxalites or extremists. We are always prepared to face the extremists on political level.

During the President's Rule in West Bengal, political prisoners in various jails, are being brutally murdered. Such type of murders have been happening in West Bengal for the last several months. We strongly condemn such type of murders. We actually do not find proper words to condemn these murders.

During war time prisoners of war are treated according to international law. Under that law the war prisoners are treated well. But the treatment that is given even to war prisoners, is not being given to prisoners in jails in our country, although ours is an Independent country. The warders in jails are responsible for the protection of the prisoners. But, unfortunately, the under-trial prisoners in jails are being brutally murdered by them.

For the last 3-4 years in India, particularly in West Bengal, under-trial prisoners are being brutally murdered in jails. Even in places like Delhi, Hazaribagh and Andhra Pradesh brutal murders have taken place in various jails there.

For the last six months in West Bengal we have been noticing that those prisoners in jails have been murdered who truly believe in naxalite ideology. But there are some prisoners in West Bengal Jails who pass for naxalites but they are actually anti-social elements. It has come to our notice that these anti-social elements receive different treatment in Jails.

We have seen how prisoners in various Jails of Midnapur have been murdered. The Government instituted an inquiry into the murder of prisoners there. But the result of that inquiry has not yet been made public.

During the British regime many political prisoners on a number of occasions made attempts to escape from the Jails but never

in those days we heard of such murders. In case of arising such a situation in Jails in those days, the British authorities always instituted an early inquiry into the matter. We therefore wanted an early inquiry into the murders that took place in Asansol Jail. I shall now put my questions :

The under-trial prisoners in Asansol Jail were shot dead. The Government made an announcement to that effect. But is it not true that the under-trial prisoners there were actually beaten to death ?

Our CPI-M party called for Asansol bundh in protest against the brutal murder of undertrial prisoners in Asansol Jail. Every man in Asansol responded to our call. They have unequivocally condemned the police atrocities in West Bengal Jails during the current President's rule there. This fact is known to everybody.

It is said that naxalite prisoners in Asansol Jail were chained from waist to feet. I therefore want to know from the hon. Minister how in that condition the prisoners could gather arms ?

For the last six months a number of prisoners have been murdered in various Jails of our country. It is within our knowledge that the Government enquired into those murders. Since the inquiry is now complete, what is the result thereof ?

The hon. Minister has said that the retired Judge of a High Court would be appointed to inquire into the murder of prisoners in Asansol Jail. In this connection I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is ready to allow an impartial non-official inquiry into that incident in Asansol Jail along with the proposed enquiry or not ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : The hon. Member has made a long speech and has also raised certain points which I would like to reply. He has in the end demanded that an impartial inquiry should be instituted.

I have already announced in the course of my statement that Government proposes to appoint an impartial person, possibly a retired Judge of the High Court, to inquire into this episode. I do not know what more

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impartiality the hon. Member can demand. The Government really takes a very serious view of this episode that happened in the Jail and we want that everything should be very fairly gone into and thoroughly examined, so that whoever is at fault could be punished if something is proved against him.

As regards the mis-treatment or, as he put it, the murder of undertrial prisoners in the Jail, I do not agree. Even this incident was started by the prisoners themselves. Even prisoners who were confined in two cells cut off an iron bar with a hacksaw. In another cell they cut off an angle iron and with that they attacked the warders. It was as a result of their attempt to escape from the jail that the other warders came and this scuffle ensued with the result that I mentioned.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Gwalior) : With the result that they were beaten to death.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : As regards the Midnapore incident, about which the hon. Member mentioned, there also a ten feet long tunnel was dug and the prisoners were trying to escape by that method. When they were apprehended, some incidents took place.

So, it is not that the jail authorities on their own resort to violence or violent methods but only as a reaction to these persons who use violent methods to escape from the jail or attack the jail warders off and on.

SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI (Berhampore) : I am very sorry that the hon. Minister has tried to put off all criticism by just announcing the decision of Government saying that they "take a grave view of this episode and propose to order an enquiry through a Retired judge of a High Court." On the face of it, it looks very nice but it has to be remembered that this is the sixth of the ghastly murders of undertrial prisoners in the jail. They may be Naxalites or anything. They were not found guilty. Even guilty and convicted prisoners have their right under the law.

These nine prisoners have been killed, you must remember, by lathi charges. No bullet injury marks are there. First in December such a thing happened in Midnapore Jail. Then in February in Berhampore Central Jail also prisoners were killed many of whom were detained under the PVA Act and were undertrial prisoners; they were beaten to death by *lathis*.

In May, again, in Dum Dum jail, there was an escapee. That is on record. But such is the brutal administration that although 45 prisoners escaped, many of them were killed after they were caught by *lathi* charges. 16 persons escaped and no trace has been found of them.

In July, in Alipore Special Jail, a similar incident took place. There, the killing was mostly by shooting. Again, now, in Alipore Special Jail, this thing has happened. You must remember that this has raised such a revulsion in public feeling that there was a call for *Hartal* in Asansol given by the members of your party, not so much by other leftist parties. All sections of the public joined. But it was the local Congress party which took the lead. That shows the seriousness of the situation. This has come at the top of 5 other similar ghastly incidents.

I would like to remind the Government that in the British days, in Hijli detention camp where we were lodged, a shooting took place and by bullet two prominent prisoners were killed and that led to such a revulsive feeling in West Bengal that Poet Rabindranath Tagore came out in the maidan below Octorloney Monument before a mass meeting and read out one of his most brilliant poems condemning the killing in bitter anguish. And that started really the end of British domination so far as West Bengal was concerned. Let the Government also take some lesson from past history.

Why is this being repeated from time to time under the present rule when we have a democratic Government which is supposed to be returned here this time with a massive mandate? Is this massive mandate for killing unarmed people inside Jail in this fashion? This judicial inquiry on this one single episode will not do. I would

like the Government to announce comprehensive inquiry into all the six incidents that have happened.

I have also to ask several questions. They had a departmental inquiry when the Berhampore Jail incident took place. I come from Berhampore which is my home town. I immediately wrote to the Government. Subsequently, when the democratic coalition Government was formed, I met twice or thrice the Chief Minister and he promised that a judicial inquiry will take place. But the officials were so powerful that they could stall the judiciary inquiry and they had a departmental inquiry. Eventually, the Government said that a departmental inquiry will be held, presided over by the Home Secretary or some other Secretary. Nobody knows who is the Secretary of which Department in Government now. These days, every 3 months, every 3 weeks, a Secretary is changed from this portfolio to that portfolio, from this department to that department of the Government.

Firstly, I would like to know what has happened to this Secretary's Report. Secondly, why not no action has been taken against the Inspector-General of Police under whose regime these things are happening repeatedly (*Interruption*). They may be Communists; they may be Naxalies; they may be even ordinary criminals. I do not know who is what in Government there. Nobody knows. All sort of infiltration, political, anti-social, I say with all sense of responsibility, has taken place in West Bengal administration. Nobody knows what is happening there.

Is it not a fact that sometime before the West Bengal Ministry resigned, Mr. Gian Singh Sohan Pal who was the Prison Minister visited the Jail? Suddenly, he received some complaint from the Jail and he immediately, without letting his officers know anything, went to the Jail and visited the place. He found such serious complaints that he also made a report to the Government saying that these things should be immediately remedied. Food was not given to them. They get one *thali* and one *katora*. Even that they did not get. Blankets are not given. The prisoners are not provided even with minimum necessities. They are to get coarse blankets. But those blankets

are not given. No clothings are given. That being the condition inside the jails, it is no surprise that the prisoners sometimes are in a mutinous mood. So, Sir, I would like the Government to understand the gravity not only of this one episode in Asansol. Perhaps because the local Congress was moved to take some action, some protest action, they have awakened to the seriousness of the situation.

The entire prison administration and the entire Home Department administration in West Bengal is seriously in default and all the six incidents and the Jail, Home and Police—all these things should be inquired into and for that, now that you have placed one Cabinet Minister in charge of West Bengal problems, there should be no difficulty in your deciding on these things.

So, all these three or four questions I want to be answered and I want to categorically know whether a comprehensive inquiry on the lines that I have suggested into all the incidents will be ordered or not.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : It is not true to say that the Government is trying to put off...

SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI : I didn't say that you were trying to put off. I say you are only trying to put off criticism by ordering an inquiry into this particular incident. I want a comprehensive inquiry. It is a ghastly thing. It is a demoniac regime—it seems.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : I wholly agree with the sentiments of the hon. Member that this is a very serious matter and that is exactly why we have decided to have a comprehensive and independent inquiry into the whole incident..... (*Interruptions*). The inclusion of other incidents of this nature in this inquiry, the Government is not considering for the moment, the reason being that this is the most recent incident and the evidence would be readily available and we would be able to get some results out of this. If we have a moving inquiry covering all the incidents, I think it will take too long a time and may not be as fruitful and ;

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useful as the hon. Member wants it to be. It is because we have taken a very serious view of this situation that we have ordered an inquiry into this.

As regards the Berhampore inquiry, the Commissioner, Presidency Division was appointed to inquire into that incident and he has submitted his report and the Government is considering that report and will take due action after that.

As regards action against the IGP and other officers, that can be done only after the inquiry.

SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI : Why don't you change that man? Everywhere it is done.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : The hon. Member has suggested that the whole prison administration should also be gone into. I agree with that suggestion and the Government will consider appointing a high-power Committee to go into all the aspects of prison administration in West Bengal and how the management and administration of prisons should be improved so that general reforms take place and if any officer, whether it is the IGP or anyone-else is found guilty in this or in any other case, the Government will not hesitate to take suitable action.

SHRI P. K. DEO (Kalahandi) : I wish that the Minister in charge of West Bengal Affairs had been present here to-day.

Sir, I don't hold any brief for the Naxalites but it is simply nauseating that day in and day out we get reports of under-trial prisoners inside the jails are being killed, as if a Stalin era has dawned in this country or the days of gas chamber of Hitler have come down here. It is most surprising. The whole thing has got to be gone into, very thoroughly. How the prisoners got hold of lethal weapons? How this clash took place? All these things will have to be gone into by the judicial enquiry. I want that the scope of the judicial enquiry should also be enlarged so that all the previous incidents could also be looked into. Secondly I would like to

know why they should be kept under trial for such a long time? Why they should not be tried under the Indian Penal Code and be convicted? Why they are kept under trial for such a long period of time and all the atrocities are being committed on them—and that too, in a sub-divisional jail? Also I would like to know as to what the attitude of the Government is towards the Naxalites.

Sometimes we hear that they are in a dialogue between Government and Naxalites and at the same time we hear such reports of these people being killed mercilessly inside the jail. Sir, a signature campaign is being carried on inside the Congress party for the mercy petition of a condemned Naxalites prisoner. Sir, all these things prove that there is utter confusion in the mind of the Government regarding tackling the Naxalite problem. I would therefore like to know :

- (a) whether there will be a time-limit for the trial of these under-trial prisoners ;
- (b) whether the scope of the judicial enquiry will be enlarged to cover all the previous incidents and cases ; and
- (c) whether the Government will come out with a clear statement of their attitude so far as the Naxalites are concerned.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : It is true that the number of under-trial prisoners in West Bengal is really very large. That is one reason why jails are over crowded as a result of which there is tension and such incidents take place.

I can say that Government are taking steps to accelerate the pace of investigations. But, there are lot of difficulties involved in the witnesses are not easily available and the normal police force is engaged in law and order duties. But we are, I may say, seized of the problem and we propose to have a special investigation squads so that they could concentrate on the investigation of such cases, so that this problem of having under-trials for a long period of time could be obviated. I am sure, if these

measures take effect, we would be in a position to reduce the number of these under-trials. They would be tried and given-punishment which they deserve by the court. Regarding the past incidents, it is not possible to bring all of them within the ambit of this particular enquiry. I think since all of them are of a similar nature, we can certainly learn a lot from the results of this particular enquiry which the Government proposes to hold in this case.

SHRI P. K. DEO : It is very vague answer.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur) : Sir, I wholly condemn the incidents. This I speak on my behalf and on behalf of the group which I represent here. This is something unusual. We cannot imagine this. I really cannot imagine that 9 under-trial prisoners were beaten to death by *lathi*-charge. We have been in jails; we have faced *lathi*-charges. What a merciless beating they would have got for 9 of them to die like this? It is stated here that a tussle ensued between the 11 Naxalite prisoners and the warders; some prisoners jumped down from the roof. The jail staff made a *lathi* charge resulting in all the 11 prisoners being seriously injured, 9 of the injured prisoners died. The jail authorities let loose the hardened criminals on an assurance that they will be given remission for one or two months and those criminals assaulted the political prisoners. In these jails that is the practice that is always done by the Superintendents of jail of the district and also central jail. All those criminals were given *lathi*. They were allowed to beat them and beat them to death. We find from the statement that Government take a grave view of the episode and propose to order an enquiry by a retired judge of the High Court. Why not have a serving judge of High Court? Why not have a Supreme Court judge? Why not appoint a parliamentary committee consisting members from all parties?

What is happening in Bengal today is that if you want to shoot anyone just call him a Naxalite and shoot him. All those young boys at the age of 15, 15 or 16 are shot dead. They are caught in the name of being Naxalites, and then they are told to

go, and the moment they turn back, they are shot dead. Immediately, the report is given that the armed attacks on the police by these people and when they were running away, they were shot dead. This is the sad story of what is happening in Bengal today. As very ably explained by my hon friend Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri, in all these incidents, there was only one evidence, except in the case of one or two, that all were beaten to death by *lathis* and other weapons. Stories have been concocted. They are using oil so that there may not be any sound heard. We know how the jail authorities give the stories, it is a sad commentary on our parliamentary democracy and on the functioning of this Government that nine people have died and yet not a single officer of the jail has been suspended or removed from that place. In this justice? Will there be any justice available from the hands of a retired High Court judge? Now, they are appointing a commission. Commission for what? What about the murderers? What about those who have murdered these men? They should be chalaaned and tried under section 302 on the charge of murdering these innocent boys.

Again, what about compensation? What about the mother and fathers who were dependent on their sons or their only sons who have been beaten to death? Here, nine under-trials have died; out of *lathi* charge and out of shooting, the total number who have died is more than 40 in these jails. I would like the hon. Minister to assure the House that an inquiry will be conducted into all the incidents and due compensation would be paid, and all the officers whether it be the IG of Prisons or the Jail Superintendent, would all be removed from that place and suspended because otherwise no proper inquiry can be conducted. This blanket power given to the police and the jail authorities to shoot anyone in the name of his being a Naxalite should be taken away.

Orders have been passed now that there will be no inquiry against the police when they murder anyone. I hope the people of Bengal will not tolerate this, and the people of India will never tolerate this. They will never tolerate what is going on in Bengal and especially in these jails.

In the light of this background, I would like to ask now two or three question. May I

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know whether the inquiry will be conducted not by a retired judge of the High Court who may be clamouring for getting a job after giving a clean chit to the police and to the jail authorities, but by a serving judge of the High Court whose integrity is not in question?

Secondly, will there be a comprehensive inquiry as demanded into the working of the jails in these horrible conditions? After all these are under-trial prisoners. They may be political opponents. One may not like the Naxalites, but they should be treated as political prisoners. But what is happening is that they are not treated as political prisoners, because they are beaten like this. You remember how Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was beaten by the jail warders in Calcutta in the Alipore jail where he was mercilessly beaten and he started bleeding, and the entire country was shocked. But today 40 people have died, and there is not even a stir in the country and the Government come forward and merrily say that a commission will be appointed. So, I would like to know whether a comprehensive inquiry will be held into the working of these jails and the conditions of the prisoners in jail, and whether they would be classified as political prisoners. One may hang them after a proper trial. I do not mind. But they should be treated as political opponents because they are not thieves; if they are antisocial elements they will be exposed before the country. If today they do not agree with the politics of this Government, they are at liberty to do so. I do not support their ideology, but this Government has no business to kill children of the soil in this manner by beating them with lathis. It is a shame on them. If the Home Minister does not have an inquiry into these things, it is high time that more activities of this nature take place in the country.

Compensation should be paid to the bereaved families of the persons who have been murdered. After all, when there is a railways accident and people are killed, their families are given compensation. After all, these people did not commit suicide. They have been murdered. The mothers might have been expecting from their sons. They have snatched away the sons from

their mothers, and, therefore, it is but proper that the mothers should be paid compensation. I would like the hon. Minister to reply to all these points.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : I completely share the sense of horror and anguish that the hon. Member has just described. There is no question of trying to underplay the utmost seriousness of this incident.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : Go to Lodhi Road and see the mother whose boy has murdered.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : It is precisely because of the seriousness of this incident that we have decided to hold an inquiry. The hon. Member wanted that the inquiry should be conducted by a serving Judge of a High Court or the Supreme Court. There are difficulties in getting such a Judge to serve on such inquiries. That is the reason why we have preferred to have a retired High Court Judge.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : Appoint a parliamentary committee of all parties. That is better than a retired Judge.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : There is no question of this enquiry taking a long time and the retired Judge trying to perpetuate himself. It would be our endeavour to finish this inquiry in the shortest possible time. When their report is available, we will take action against the officers involved in this incident.

As regards compensation to these persons it does not arise in a case of this nature. I do not want to anticipate whether the conclusion will be 'guilty' or 'not guilty'.

As regards giving them political prisoner status, there are definite rules in regard to this. The courts are involved and we have a certain set of rules and procedure to go through before the status of a prisoner is declared and he is declared a political prisoner.

Again I would say to hon. members that we have taken a very serious view of this incident and it is with a view to stop

such incidents in future that we are holding a comprehensive inquiry into the jail administration.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : What about suspension of those officers ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : It is too early to say what Government will do.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE : It is not too early for killing people ?

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : We will consider all these matters.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE (Calcutta-North. East) : You will forgive me because I shall begin by saying what I am tired of saying, that the Prime Minister, who is the Home Minister, is not here ; Shri Siddhartha Shankar Ray, supposed to be in charge of West Bengal affairs, is not here, and my friend, Shri Mirdha, holding the baby, has chosen to use the word 'episode' in regard to what has happened.

This impossible situation is continuing in West Bengal, and if it was not for the disarray in the left, which is reflected also in this House, no government functioning with a Parliament supervising its work would last for 24 hours after the kind of incident has taken place. This kind of incident shows that the ruling classes can no longer govern in the old fashion, which means that whole country is ready for a complete changeover. You have to remember this the background of the situation.

The Minister has given us a statement, and it can be summed up in this fashion : Two heavily locked, bolted and guarded cells are broken open at dead of night, 11 persons, most heavily guarded, escape ; they carry iron rods inside a heavily guarded jail, they beat two sleepy warders ; they run away towards the wall ; they climb the roof of the kitchen ; they throw brickbats, which were conveniently heaped on the roof of the kitchen God knows how that then the wide-awake prison staff comes into the picture : they fire twice, on two occasions ; the firing is followed by a lathi-charge so atrocious that 9 out of 11 died in the most horrible imaginable fashion.

This is the report which he gives and this is an "episode".

Inside jails, the Minister should know I hope, I do not know, but so many of us here have some experience of jail life inside jails or prison-vans, where prisoners supposedly trying to escape have been killed by the Government in West Bengal over and over again, the balance of sheer physical strength is on the side of the authority and never on the side of the prisoners. And yet, in West Bengal, in six different cases the prisoners have been killed, deliberately killed, and not once an order has been given to shoot not in order to kill but only in order to injure, to maim perhaps the person you are aiming at. And this time they were killed not merely by shooting but by beating them, clubbing them, to death. This is a most atrocious imaginable proceeding happening inside the jail which is supposed to be run by a civilised administration. In no country could Government come before Parliament and justify and call it an "episode." This is the sort of thing which has happened.

If you think that is only me talking with all my prejudices and predilections, the other day, the Calcutta paper, *Hindustan Standard*, which is a right-wing paper, dated 6th of August, made an editorial comment, "Violence in jail." I am quoting only one or two sentences from it :

"The belief is widespread that there is more to it than the aggressive militancy of the Naxalites in jail ; whether Alipore or Asansol, the *modus operandi* of the prisoners on the rampage seems to be the same. It is rather strange. But no less so is the similarity in the methods adopted to thwart them by the prison staff. The final result also conforms to a set pattern now familiar. Many prisoners are maimed and killed but the jail staff generally would escape with light casualties."

This is what it says in the editorial comment of its paper on the 6th of August, 1971.

This kind of things goes on. Only yesterday, I got a registered letter from the

[Shri H. N. Mukherjee]

father of an undertrial prisoner who was killed in Alipore jail, who was for eight months an undertrial prisoner. His father writes to me, with a copy of his letter sent to Shri Siddhartha Shankar Ray, where he says that one of his other sons who works in the National Library, next door to Alipore jail, and was trying to collect some material from people who might have been eye-witnesses to the incident, is now threatened by people who work in the jail and in the police department concerned with it. Therefore, this kind of thing is going on merrily in West Bengal. But we come here and talk about democracy, progress, and God knows what. This goes on.

I want to know, quite apart from all this talk of judicial enquiry which might take—Heaven knows how long—what tangible steps, if any, has Government taken so far on the basis of the experience of six jail-break incidents and the human sacrifice extracted from them. I want to know, quite apart from the judicial or quasi-judicial, official or semi-official enquiry, what tangible steps have been taken so far from the eight months' experience in regard to jail-breaks. Have you got any report from the Inspector-General of Prisons and/or other jail authorities regarding such apparently impossible happenings? Have not the Government authority there or in Calcutta asked them to explain how it is that these things could happen in the way in which the Minister is constrained to present to the house? It does not make sense; two and two does not make four as far as the Minister's statement is concerned. Have you got any reports from your own people in Calcutta that these are the reasons for this kind of impossible things happening inside the jails? If you have not got any reports, and if you have not taken any steps for the security of political prisoners inside the jails, then, do we take it in Parliament, democratically elected Parliament with a massive mandate to do God knows what, that the objective of the Government, in so far as West Bengal is concerned which is considered to be a recalcitrant province, is to secure the physical elimination of young and fanatical political militants, however misguided and wrong they might be? Is it the objective

of Government actually to try the physical elimination of them, and at the same time carry on the farce of a dialogue with the political opponents? I am sorry I am putting it in this way, but I was not ready for the kind of statement which the hon. Minister has presented. He is a very sensible person otherwise. How could he present this sort of statement? How could he paint such a picture of things happening in this jail? If this is how jail life today in West Bengal is continued, you have no business to be there. There is more than ample material for a no-confidence in the Government of the day. While perhaps there are very good reasons for the Prime Minister to be away, reasons for jubilation in which some of us may also share, for this kind of thing there is no answer. They must take the country into confidence. This goes on over and over again. Six incidents of the same sort, fantastically, absolutely impossible incidents, happening all the time, atrocious elimination of young people. They have their parents, their brothers and sisters. And we talk about genocide somewhere. This is genocide, selective genocide, being practised by the Government of West Bengal, and you have to be answerable to the country in regard to this sort of thing. Therefore, give us an answer. What steps you have already taken on the basis of the reports that you have received, pending the reports of the judicial or quasi-judicial enquiry which you are going to have. If you have not taken any steps, get out of Government, you have no business to stay there.

SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA : I am not at all justifying what happened or glossing over this very serious incident or episode or anything else that the hon. Member chooses to call it. Let us not reduce it to a question of semantics. By whatever phrase I call it, we have taken a very grave and serious view of the situation. This statement merely contains the report that we received from the State Government as to what happened on that night. I have tried to convey it to the House through my statement.

As regards what concrete steps the Government has already taken to prevent such things happening, Government has taken a lot of steps as a result of enquiries or as a result of other reports that we have

got in this matter. We are trying to segregate some of these prisoners, we are trying to screen them, we are trying to screen the type of people who interview them, we are trying to expedite the investigation of the cases, we are trying to expedite the trial of the cases, so that the basic problem could be tackled and we may not have any case of such things happening.

I can only reiterate in the end, as I have done before, that the Government takes a very serious view of the situation. The judicial enquiry or enquiry by a High Court Judge is not going to take a long time. We want to expedite it as far as possible, and we will try to see that it is finished very soon.

12.49 hrs.

RE: QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Maurya has written to me that he wants to raise a question of privilege regarding an article which appeared in the *Nav Bharat Times*. He may take a few minutes.

श्री बी. पी. मौर्य (हापुड़) : अध्यक्ष जी, 4 अगस्त, 1971 के प्रश्न 1572 को लेकर जो यहां पर प्रश्न और उत्तर हुए थे, "नव भारत टाइम्स" हिन्दी दैनिक ने कुछ यहां की कार्यवाही से संबंधित और विशेष तौर से मेरे खिलाफ व्यक्तिगत दूषित, बहुत ही घिनौना और एक पत्रकार के स्तर से बहुत नीचे उत्तर कर उन्होंने अपने इस पत्र के द्वारा, प्रचार किया है। मैं 6 अगस्त, 1971 के अखबार से आप की अनुमति से कोट करना चाहता हूं, और आप से प्रार्थना करता हूं कि यह विशेषाधिकार का प्रश्न बनाया जाय।

"कुछ लोग हैं जो अपने को मौर्य कहते हैं, कुछ इतिहासकार हैं जो मौर्य का अर्थ जानते हैं, हमें नहीं मालूम ये कौन हैं, संसद सदस्य हो जाना काफ़ी हो जाना चाहिये था। गोस्वामी तुलसी दास ब होते तो श्री बी. पी. मौर्य बुद्ध धर्म की दीक्षा लेने से पहले ही किसी मौलवी

का पाजामा सिलते होते और वह भी निःशुल्क, अध्यक्ष महोदय।

"जम्हूरियत में एक बड़े मज्जे की बात है। आदमी का अपना कद चाहे साढ़े चार फुट से भी छोटा हो (मैं तो पाँच फुट तीन इंच हूँ) लेकिन ऊँचे से आदमी के मुँह लगने लगता है। मुरा खानदान का हर बेटा चन्द्रगुप्त मौर्य नहीं हुआ करता। चन्द्रगुप्त मौर्य भी आचार्यों का आदर करते थे।"

अध्यक्ष महोदय, इस सदन की यहां वह एक परम्परा रही है कि यहाँ जो भी चर्चा हो उस पर एक अच्छे ढंग से तो बाहर टीका की जा सकती है लेकिन यहाँ की सदन के अन्दर की चर्चा को लेकर बाहर उस पर इस तरह की टीका नहीं की जा सकती जोकि इस सदन के किसी सम्मानित सदस्य को समाज की निगाह में गिराये या दूषित प्रचार उस के खिलाफ हो। मैं आप से प्रार्थना है कि इस को विशेषाधिकार समिति के पास भेजा जाय।

MR SPEAKER: I have also read these comments very thoroughly. For the benefit of those who do not understand Hindi, this is the english translation:

"It would have sufficed to be an M. P. Had Goswami Tulsidas not been there, Shri B P Maurya would have been found sewing the pyjama of some maulvi free of charge. Before embracing Buddhism..."

According to the practice and convention that we have always followed, I will send it to the Paper concerned.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी (ग्वालियर) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, क्या यह सम्पादकीय लेख है या सम्पादक के नाम कोई पत्र है? यह क्या चीज़ है?

अध्यक्ष महोदय : यह "नवभारत टाइम्स" के दैनिक हिन्दी समाचारपत्र में छपा है।