

for Roman
script (St.)

STATEMENT

Sir, as the Honourable Members may recall, a statement was made by me in this House on 21st November, 1974 on a calling attention notice relating to the reported clash between the tribals and the police in Assam. Since then the Bodos have continued their agitation for adoption of Roman script. Picketing and demonstrations by Bodo volunteers have taken place in various localities in Assam. Some wooden bridges were burnt dislocating communications. On 24th November, 1974 a group of Bodos reportedly attacked a police party causing injuries to two Sub-Inspectors of Police. There was police firing in two places resulting in the death of one person.

In order to maintain law and order, the authorities had to arrest a number of persons. We understand that the State Government have agreed to release all the arrested persons against whom there are no charges of substantive offences. A good number of persons have since been released. The State Government have informed us that no instance of rape or kidnapping of women has come to their notice.

The Bodos were learning their language in the Assamese script till last year. It is only this year that they have taken to agitational method which has resulted in hardships to so many people. Tribes like Mikirs, Dimasas, Rabhas, Mechs, Lalungs use Assamese script. Assamese script provides a link among the different tribal languages in the State and the tribal languages on the one hand and the Assamese language on the other and thus helps in integrating the various communities living in the State. A common script will help

strengthen the many bonds of common interests which have existed for centuries between the communities and will contribute to building up of a united prosperous State in this sensitive border area. If there are any difficulties or apprehensions these could be discussed and settled in a peaceful manner. Violence will lead us nowhere. This aspect seems to have been appreciated and I am glad to inform the House that the Bodo Sahitya Sabha have suspended their agitation albeit temporarily, have had discussions with the Education Minister, Assam on 28th November, 1974 and propose further discussions in the third week of January, 1975. Three representatives of the Plains Tribals Council of Assam also met me in this connection on 18th December, 1974.

Now that the dialogue between the State Government and the Bodo representatives is in progress, we should all endeavour to create proper atmosphere for its success.

14.48½ hrs.

INDIAN TARIFF (AMENDMENT) BILL*

MR. SPEAKER: Item No. 34. Prof. D. P. Chattopadhyaya.

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (PROF. D. P. CHATTOPADHYAYA): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill further to amend the Indian Tariff Act, 1934.

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Indian Tariff Act, 1934."

The motion was adopted.

PROF. D. P. CHATTOPADHYAYA: Sir, I introduce† the Bill.

*Published in Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part II, section 2, dated 20-12-74.

†Introduced with the recommendation of the President.