

12.02 hrs.

## CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORT- ANCE

### DEVELOPMENTS IN PAKISTAN

**Shri P. K. Deo (Kalahandi).** Under Rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Prime Minister to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

"The recent developments in Pakistan, their effect on India and the incidents and raids by Pakistanis across the Indian border"

**The Deputy Minister of External Affairs (Shrimati Lakshmi Menon):** A large number of short notice and ordinary questions have been tabled by hon. Members in regard to recent developments in Pakistan. There have also been notices under Rule 197 asking for a statement to be made in regard to these changes. Most of the facts have been fully reported in the public press and are known to Members. Nevertheless, in view of the desire of Members of the House, this statement is being made, recapitulating some of these facts

These recent developments in Pakistan are of great significance and have naturally attracted widespread attention. To us in India they are of particular concern because Pakistan is a neighbour country and unhappily the relations between Pakistan and India have left much to be desired. Also some statements made in Pakistan recently have not been friendly towards India and in some indeed the language has been menacing.

On October 7, 1958, President Mirza abrogated the Constitution of 1956, dissolved all political parties and proclaimed Martial Law throughout the country. General Ayub Khan was appointed Chief Martial Law Administrator.

In his Proclamation, President Mirza stated that "a vast majority of people no longer have any confidence in the present system of government and are getting more and more disillusioned and disappointed and are becoming dangerously resentful of the manner in which they are exploited." He laid emphasis on what he called taking the country "to sanity by a peaceful revolution". President Mirza also stated his intention to devise a more suitable Constitution, and to submit it at the appropriate time to a referendum of the people

This action of President Mirza thus put an end to any kind of free or representative government in Pakistan. It is true that parliamentary institutions in Pakistan had been deprived of much content because of the failure to hold elections ever since Independence came eleven years ago. Nevertheless, there was the form of such institutions. The Proclamation of Martial Law ended this. For the first time, dictatorial rule was established in a member-country of the Commonwealth. The very basis of the Commonwealth has been democratic institutions and the parliamentary form of Government. Both these were suddenly ended by the *coup d'état* of President Iskander Mirza.

Martial Law courts were established and the Civil courts were debarred from questioning the action of the Martial Law authorities. In fact, not only was the Constitution of Pakistan abrogated, but all its laws, judiciary and political, and economic structure could only function within the limitations imposed by the Martial Law authorities. The old sanctions ceased to exist. The new sanction was the will of the President or the Martial Law Administrator.

On the 27th of October, President Iskander Mirza announced a Cabinet to assist him in governing the country and appointed General Ayub Khan as Prime Minister. General Ayub Khan was sworn in as such in the course of the day. That very evening,

[Shrimati Lakshmi Menon]

however, President Mirza was induced, under pressure, to resign, and General Ayub Khan assumed supreme power and became President as well as the Chief Martial Law Administrator. The reason given by General Ayub Khan for this was that it was necessary to remove an appearance of dual control, and further that President Mirza had been too closely associated with politicians who had misbehaved so much in the past. President Ayub Khan announced that he was setting up a Presidential form of Government, with Ministers nominated by him as his Advisers. A Presidential form of government presupposes the election of the President by the people.

October 27th thus saw a number of strange developments, culminating in the dramatic removal of President Mirza. A Prime Minister and his cabinet are sworn in the forenoon, and that Prime Minister removes without ceremony the President who appointed him that day, and assumes complete power without any check. General Iskander Mirza was sent in the early hours of the morning to Quetta. A few days later, he was allowed to leave Pakistan for England. Pakistan ceased to be, even in name or form, a free country in the democratic sense, and any criticism by an individual or the Press of this regime was, an offence under Martial Law.

Whatever reasons or justification there might be for these repeated and far-reaching changes, the fact emerges that a dictatorial regime with military control, which is normally not approved of by those who believe in free institutions and democracy, was established in Pakistan. From the larger point of view of the world, and more particularly of Asian countries, this was a step which caused much concern. In India, that concern was necessarily all the greater. It has always been the viewpoint of the Government and people of India that it is for the people of Pakistan to choose their own form of Government, and it has never been our desire to intervene or interfere in any way in the internal affairs

of Pakistan. The people of India and Pakistan have a common heritage and innumerable associations. We have always desired the welfare of the people of Pakistan and their economic progress, even as we labour for the advancement of the people of India. We could not, however, help regretting a development in Pakistan which, from all normal standards, was a set-back both politically and economically.

A matter of even greater concern to India was the possible attitude of the new authority in Pakistan towards India. Unfortunately, the relations of India and Pakistan, ever since partition, have not been friendly, and the attitude of successive governments in Pakistan has been to encourage feelings against India. Even threats of war have been uttered. This attitude has been further encouraged by military help received from other countries. Nevertheless, attempts continued to be made to reach a solution of the problems which estranged these two countries. It will be remembered that less than a month before the first *coup d'état* in Pakistan, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan visited Delhi and held discussions with the Prime Minister of India. As a result of these discussions, agreements were arrived at in regard to some border problems. These agreements related to minor matters. But even a small step in the right direction was helpful.

On the assumption of power by President Iskander Mirza and, later, by General Ayub Khan, the question arose whether this slight improvement in Indo-Pakistan relations would continue and be improved upon, or a reverse process would set in, leading perhaps to greater tension. After the first change, some vaguely conciliatory statements were made on behalf of Pakistan. We welcomed them. When General Ayub Khan declared himself as President, one of his earliest utterances was of a completely different nature and referred to the adoption of extreme measures, and even war, with India,

in order to have a satisfactory solution of the Kashmir question. Subsequently, President Ayub Khan spoke in a somewhat different vein and emphasised the necessity for amicable and peaceful settlements of disputes between India and Pakistan.

In these circumstances and in the nature of things where a country is under a military regime, there can be no certainty of what future developments might be. We can hope for the best, but we have to be prepared for any possible emergency that might arise. There is no adequate reason for our Government or our people to take a tragic view of the situation. At the same time, there is equally no reason for a complacent attitude.

We have in the past repeatedly expressed our concern at foreign military aid being given to Pakistan. This becomes of added significance in the new context that has arisen in Pakistan, and it may encourage still further aggressive tendencies there.

There has been a recrudescence of border incidents and of cases of ill-treatment and harassment of Indian nationals at the border check posts. I am placing on the Table of the House a statement of border incidents that have taken place between the 11th September, 1958, the date on which the Joint Communique was issued after the meeting of the two Prime Ministers, and the 15th November, 1958. [See Appendix I, annexure No. 63.] An analysis of these incidents will indicate that, during the last five weeks or so, since the abrogation of the Constitution on the 7th October in Pakistan, there have been thirteen incidents on the India-East Pakistan border, and three incidents on the India-West Pakistan border. During the four weeks previous to the 7th October, there were seven such incidents on the India-East Pakistan border and one on the India-West Pakistan border. Minor incidents such as those of cattle lifting or petty thefts have not been included in this list. A serious aspect is the number of cases of kidnapping. Sometimes the

persons kidnapped are returned a few days later. Whenever such an incident occurs, immediate action is taken by the State Government concerned, as also by the Central Government, and the appropriate authorities on the Pakistan side are approached. The matter is pursued and, in fact, we are now dealing with several such incidents according to the procedures laid down for the purpose. Apart from individual protests, we have addressed a separate communication through the Pakistan High Commissioner in New Delhi, expressing the Government of India's serious concern at the frequency of recent border incidents and the many cases of harassment and ill-treatment of Indian nationals at the border check-posts. A recent case has been particularly deplorable. A member of the staff of the Assistant High Commission in Rajshahi and his wife were brutally treated at the Customs check-posts at Darsana railway station. We do not know if this kind of misbehaviour and the increasing number of border incidents are a reflection of some new policy of the Pakistan Government or are due to a weakening of the authority of that Government at the borders. In any event, the least we can expect is that adequate punishment should be given to those who are guilty. We have just received information that the Government of East Pakistan have informed our Deputy High Commissioner in Dacca that they have ordered disciplinary action to be taken against the East Pakistan Jamadar concerned in the incident at Darsana railway station.

I do not wish to say much more on this occasion. We shall watch the situation carefully and, whenever necessity arises, place any new information before the House. We shall continue to follow our policy of a friendly approach to our neighbours and at the same time of firmness in defending our rights. I would like to repeat that we wish well to the people of Pakistan and our desire is to develop good neighbourly relations with them.