

[Dr. B. Gopala Reddi]

tion 43B of the Sea Customs Act, 1878 and Section 38 of the Central Excises and Salt Act, 1944. [Placed in Library, See No. LT-2691/61].

**LOK SAHAYAK SENA (AMENDMENT) RULES**

**The Deputy Minister of Defence (Sardar Majithia):** Sir, I beg to re-lay on the Table a copy of the Lok Sahayak Sena (Amendment) Rules, 1960 published in Notification No. S.R.O. 406 dated the 3rd December, 1960, under sub-section (3) of Section 11 of the Lok Sahayak Sena Act, 1956. [Placed in Library, See No. LT-2539/60].

12-19 hrs.

**CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE.**

**ENROLMENT OF BENGALIS RESIDING ON ASSAM IN VOTERS' LIST**

**Shri Muhammed Elias (Howrah):** Sir, under Rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Law to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

The difficulties faced by Bengalis residing in Assam in regard to their enrolment in the Voters List.

**The Minister of Law (Shri A. K. Sen):** Sir, the Government of India have no information regarding any difficulties which are being faced by Bengalis residing in Assam in regard to their enrolment in the Voters List. It has, however, been alleged that Bengalis en masse residing in Assam are required to produce citizenship certificate or satisfactory proof of their having settled in Assam before the 18th July, 1948 to get themselves registered as electors. Indian citizenship is, however, a primary qualifica-

tion for registration as electors. Bengalis in Assam who were born in India are automatically citizens of India. There are, however, in Assam a large number of displaced persons from East Pakistan. They can acquire Indian citizenship if they migrated from Pakistan before 19th July 1948 and have been ordinarily resident in India since then, or if they have registered themselves as citizens under section 5(1)(a) of the Citizenship Act. In order that the displaced persons may be registered as electors they have to fulfil either of the above conditions.

Steps, however, have already been taken to get the displaced persons registered as Indian citizens. The Assam Government have issued instructions to all district registration authorities, including sub-divisional officers working as registration officers in sub-divisions to see that easier facilities are given to those displaced persons who apply for and who are found eligible for registration as Indian citizens. These officers have been asked to give prompt attention to such applications and to see that all applications from eligible persons are disposed of speedily. The Election Commission has also directed the Chief Electoral Officer of the State to tour the districts and see that there are no complaints of omission of eligible electors on any appreciable scale. Under the procedure prescribed by the Election Commission in this behalf only a portion of the electoral rolls of the State of Assam is being revised this year. Every care is being taken to enrol all the eligible voters in the electoral rolls.

**Shri Muhammed Elias:** May I ask one thing? During 1951 or 1956 when the Bengalis enrolled themselves as voters they were never told to produce any citizenship certificate; they only produced the refugee registration certificate or affidavit. But now they have been told—the Registration Officer has issued one circular on 23-1-1961 (the number of the circular