

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Defence Minister is not aware of it. Whatever might have happened will be taken notice of by the Court of Inquiry, and we will have that report.

12.22 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE
ALLEGED SETTING ON FIRE OF HOUSES OF SCHEDULED CASTE PEOPLE IN A VILLAGE IN U.P.

Shri B. K. Gaikwad (Nasik): Under Rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Home Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

The alleged setting on fire of 80 houses of Scheduled Caste people of Daula Raghbir Dayal village in Bareilly District, Uttar Pradesh, by Thakurs.

The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs (Shrimati Alva): "The alleged setting on fire of 80 houses of Scheduled Caste people of Daula Raghbir Dayal village in Bareilly District Uttar Pradesh by Thakurs."

In the recent Gram Panchayat elections in the Daula Raghbir Dayal village in Bareilly district, the Thakurs were defeated as, it is reported, they were not supported by the Jatavas, who are members of the Scheduled Castes. Two of these Thakurs, Jhandu Singh and Chander Singh turned enemies of one Chokhey Jatava, and are alleged to have set fire to his house on the 25th February, 1961. The flames of this fire spread fast due to strong wind and caused damage to about 68 houses. The loss as a result of this fire is estimated at Rs. 30,000. No human life was lost, but three or four animals were burnt or injured.

2. Shri Chokhey Jatava lodged a report which was registered under section 436 I.P.C. The report was investigated by the police, and

Jhandu Singh and Chander Singh have been prosecuted. The case against them is pending in Court.

Shri B. K. Gaikwad: May I know whether some compensation has been paid to these poor innocent people by imposing a punitive tax on those who set fire to the houses? If that is not possible, I want to know what aid Government is giving to these people to rebuild their houses and establish themselves as before.

The Minister of Home Affairs (Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri): We have no information on that point. This is entirely the responsibility of the State Government, and I am quite sure that they will do the needful.

Shri Vajpayee (Balrampur): May I know whether it has been fully ascertained that the houses were burnt down by Thakurs?

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri: I do not know. The names appear like those of Thakurs. The two names are Jhandu Singh and Chander Singh. In any case, two of them have been prosecuted, and when the case is over, we will be able to know the true facts.

Shri Vajpayee: May I point out that in the Call Attention Notice, the entire Thakur community has been involved? If there are individuals who have done this, they must be condemned and they should be punished. But the entire community of Thakurs should not be brought in in this manner.

Mr. Speaker: Shri Vajpayee has raised a pertinent question. I am anxious to allow all information to be placed before the House wherever there is any oppression apprehended, wherever there is oppression of the Harijan community or Scheduled Castes by others. There may be such incidents here and there, but other incidents which may relate to something

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else than this kind of oppression due to untouchability, like small factions arising out of various other matters ought not to be given the appearance of this happening in a general manner, least it should appear that this is generally prevalent amongst all sections of the community. There is some force in what Shri Vajpayee has said.

So far as the information that we have received is concerned, this is due to some trouble in the panchayat elections. There are a number of cases where there is an attempt to impose their will, or to subordinate and coerce members who are not economically or socially well up. Such things occur. That is why I am freey allowing these questions. Sometimes it is said that these are matters of law and order within the jurisdiction of the local Government. But I would advise hon. Members who table questions or Call Attention notices to verify their facts. Instead of saying 'Thakurs', if he had said 'some Thakurs', it would have been much better rather than referring to Thakurs in general, as if the whole community is against that community.

Shri B. K. Gaikwad: On a point of explanation.

Shri Sonavane (Sholapur-Reserved-Sch. Castes): May I know what relief has been given by the State Government to the persons who are affected by this fire?

Mr. Speaker: The same question was asked by Shri B. K. Gaikwad and the answer was given by the hon. Minister.

Shri Sonavane: There was in information given on this point.

Mr. Speaker: He answered it.

Shri B. K. Gaikwad: In the panchayat elections it was not only the Scheduled Caste people who did not vote in favour of those who set fire to the houses. There may be many others. But only the houses of these poor innocent people were burnt.

Every now and then this happens. It is only because they come from the downtrodden Scheduled Castes. That was why I asked this question.

Mr. Speaker: I will not allow a general statement of that kind. We are all interested in seeing that on the ground no single individual is opposed, however low economically or socially he may be. If it happen, I bring it to the notice of the House, but care should also be taken by Members who table such questions not to create an impression that this is rampant all over the country. Every small incident ought not to be magnified.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): What happened in the panchayat elections in U.P.? A month ago we gave notice of a Call Attention Motion which was refused. A person was elected as *Pradhan* under the panchayat raj. He was murdered along with five others. So it is not only a question of oppression of Scheduled Castes. The law and order situation in U.P. has deteriorated. The Centre should take note of it.

12.25 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT
TELEPHONES BOARD LIMITED AND
AUDITED ACCOUNTS AND COMMENTS

The Minister of Transport and Communications (Dr. P. Subbarayan): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of Annual Report of the Government Telephones Board Limited for the year 1959-60 along with the audited Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor-General thereon under sub-section (1) of section 639 of the Companies Act, 1956. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-2932/61].