

**Mr. Speaker:** I will put them one after the other. Is any other substitute motion being pressed?

**Some Hon. Member:** No.

**Mr. Speaker:** I will put No. 8 first. No. 9 will come later

The question is:

That for the original motion, the following be substituted, namely:—

“This House, having considered the present international situation and the policy of the Government of India in relation thereto, is of the opinion that the policy pursued so far which aimed at vacating Chinese aggression has been halting and lacks in purposiveness and therefore all possible steps be taken to vacate Chinese aggression on Indian territories.” (8).

*The motion was negatived.*

**Mr. Speaker:** I will now put amendment No. 9 to the vote of the House. It is a long one. I need not read it.

*Amendment No. 9 was put and negatived.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Now I will put amendment No. 1. The question is: That for the original motion, the following be substituted, namely:—

“This House, having considered the present international situation and the policy of the Government of India in relation thereto, approves of the said policy.” (1).

*The motion was adopted.*

**Mr. Speaker:** All other amendments are barred.

12.54 hrs.

MOTION RE: SITUATION IN ASSAM

**Mr. Speaker:** The House will now take up the next item on the Order Paper. Shri G. B. Pant.

**The Minister of Home Affairs (Shri G. B. Pant):** The hon. Prime Minister will move the motion.

**Shri Jaipal Singh (Ranchi West—Reserved—Sch. Tribes):** May I make a humble submission? I hope you will agree with me. Perhaps the whole House will agree with me that as the hon. Prime Minister has already had a really hard time—not hard in putting his points across, I do not mean that, but a very arduous time—may I humbly suggest that we go into recess for an hour so that he may also get some rest..... (*Interruption*).

**Shri Vajpayee (Balrampur):** Half an hour.

**Shri Jaipal Singh:** I need at least an hour for myself. I cannot rush and eat. I am pressing the wish of the House and I am only hoping that it will come from the Chair.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru** indicated dissent.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Prime Minister is always fresh.

**The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru):** Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have been considering in a somewhat diffused way international affairs. We come now to the domestic scene and to some things that have happened and are happening in this country which have been grievous to all of us and which have caused an enormous amount of sorrow and misery. Not only the actual sorrow they have caused but in the context of things the consequences of what has happened in Assam and Bengal are so far-reaching that everyone of us, I hope, will appreciate them in considering this question. We have had trouble in India—I mean, serious trouble—even since independence on many occasions, but the kind of thing that has happened in Assam is rather of a new type and a new type in the big way. It does rather shake the foundations of our country and our unity. Therefore in

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considering this matter we have to be, I hope, even more careful than usual, that we do not allow ourselves to run away with momentary excitement to which sometimes I am liable, Sir. We know that this matter has led to great excitement and passions. When there is excitement and passion the mind ceases to function clearly and only anger comes out of it. But the matter is so important, so vital to the future of our country that we just cannot afford to be angry. We can afford to be angry and lose our tempers occasionally but not when very serious things are under consideration and when the consequences of our words or actions may be very far-reaching indeed. I do not think that in this context we have faced anything like this since independence, that is, in the context of the consequences being bad for our country and weakening the bonds that hold it together.

I want to be frank with this House. At first, I did not want to move this. I wanted to speak on this motion, certainly but I did not want to move it. I thought that my colleague, the hon. Home Minister, was far more fitted for this purpose, as he is undoubtedly. Nevertheless on thinking again I saw some virtue in my moving it even though I might not do so as my colleague would have done. I thought that in a matter of such supreme importance the Prime Minister should take charge of it, of course with the help of his close colleagues, and that I should place it before the House.

Now, here we are facing this problem with two States, namely, Assam and Bengal, rather intimately involved and naturally feeling very strongly about it in different ways. Others too feel the sorrow of it. Or, perhaps people coming from other States do not feel it in that intense way. Sorrow they feel but not in that way which the people from Assam and Bengal might feel because they are involved themselves. Perhaps, therefore, it is we others from the other States who can help a little in

considering this question more objectively and more calmly than those who feel it even more strongly than we do. I would appeal, not to them, but to every one including our colleagues from Bengal and Assam to think of it in this larger context and not merely in the somewhat narrower context of some odd event which has moved them very much.

13 hrs.

During the last six weeks or so, I have naturally studied this question, seen innumerable reports. I spent three days in Assam too and met many people, Bengali speaking, Assamese speaking people and others and received scores and scores of memoranda and heard their excited talk. I remember, it was at the close of my stay there, that after this experience of charges, counter-charges, excited talk, angry talk, I said, my first problem has become how to retain my own sanity. I said, my mind has been so shaken that I must hold on to myself and I must not allow myself to be swept away this way or that way in an angry mood. I can well understand other people perhaps feeling that way also.

Another experience that I had there and later was to be very chary of believing anything that the people told me. Then and there, when I met the deputation or read their memoranda, at first, I was inclined to accept. Soon found somebody else come and say exactly the opposite of what the previous memorandum has said. Then, I become a little more careful and I started examining and cross-examining trying to trace anything that was said, how far it was true.

There can be absolutely no doubt that what has happened in Assam is a grievous tragedy. Events have happened which are totally inexcusable, unpardonable. Let us admit that. But, I would beg of this House to remember that all the accounts that have appeared are not necessarily true. To my certain knowledge, many of them are false, or untrue or

without foundation. I say so because all kinds of papers are circulated and all kinds of things have appeared in the newspapers. Normally one cannot get a grip of the things. I read in the newspaper many dead names mentioned. I meet the fellow who is mentioned as dead in a hale and hearty condition. It is a fact which you can immediately contradict that a man who is reported dead is very much alive. You can see it. So, this type of thing, one has to guard oneself against.

I have received papers from deputations referring to the most ghastly things really, merely reading it makes one's hair stand on end, about some kind of treatment of women, of children. There have been bad cases, a few about women. But, what was referred to about children, it shocked me exceedingly. I have not been able to find a trace, an iota of evidence for it anywhere. Nobody ever mentioned it to me although I saw hundreds. Nobody ever mentioned it to the Ajit Prasad Jain Committee although they met large numbers of people. Suddenly it comes in some kind of a document. I am merely mentioning it, not to minimise in the slightest what has happened. I think it is a ghastly story. But, let us not be lead away by everything that a newspaper has reported or might report or any printed document or typed document might say. I am not criticising anybody for the moment because I do not know what I would say if I was excited. We all express ourselves in forcible language. We all tend to become credulous. When we are excited we believe everything. I have seen and I have had to deal with all kinds of refugees in the last 10 or 12 years; refugees from Pakistan, refugees from Tibet, now refugees from Assam, unhappily. The one lesson that I have learnt is that a refugee's statement is seldom correct. That is to say, it is not untrue. It is not deliberately untrue. I do not say he is lying. Not at all. He may, of course. I am not referring to untruth. But, the fact is that he is in a

mental state of unhappiness, he has gone through such terrible things, experiences, that it is impossible for him to be objective. What he tends to do is to relate as facts things which he has vaguely heard. That is a very common thing. He has heard. The person from whom he has heard something, heard it from a third party. And so, it increases. By the time it reaches me, it comes through 2, 3 4 sources and it has an appearance of being true when it is grossly exaggerated or it has not got any basis at all. In these times, I do not know if I or any hon. Member had to face this difficult crisis in our lives like these refugees have had to face, what kind of account we would give of that. It is a very difficult thing. Our minds are working. We see a thing. We do not see the whole picture. We form an idea. The result is, the account we may give quite honestly would not be completely true: may have some atom of truth. Therefore, I would beg of the House to remember this. I have seen in some cases that the account given in the newspapers is without the least foundation sometimes. There is no truth in it, or in many statements that have been circulated by good people. I am not criticising them. They have accepted them because they have heard this from refugees or from others. This is the approach that I should like to make.

It is impossible in this debate here for this House to go into individual cases and all that. That would serve no purpose. It has been done; it has to be done; it may be done more. We have rather to see this question in its broadest aspect and the very broadest and biggest aspect, of course, is in relation to our country, India. That is the first thing to remember. Nothing should be permitted to be done, nothing should be allowed to happen which injures India. The most painful part of this Assam episode is, what has happened is a stab on India. That is the painful part of it apart from individual misery and unhappiness. We may blame the Assamese, we may blame the Bengali-speaking people for something or other. That

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is a matter for judgment where somebody went wrong. Obviously, the Assamese went wrong that these things happened. There is no doubt about it. You can see the result, houses being burnt and all that. You may trace the causes of it. You may go back, years back, friction between the Assamese and Bengali-speaking people. It is a long story, the whole story. Remember that fate and geography and the fact that they were both in India threw them together, as often happens, because they are so like each other. If they had been more different from each other, it might have been different. But if they were so like each other, when they fall out sometimes, when brothers fall out, it is a bad falling out. I remember some lines that I read when I was a boy:

"To fall out with those we love  
Doth work like madness in the  
brain."

And so, when this kind of thing happens, somehow people become mad and function madly. That is no excuse, but that is an attempt to understand this business.

Here is Bengal, one of our greatest States in India, great in achievement, great in the big men it has produced, great in the leadership it has given to the national movement, the freedom movement, great in many ways, great in its literature, language etc. Here is Assam, a State long neglected under the British rule, almost a kind of forgotten State, tacked on to Bengal for many years, and I am afraid rather looked down upon as backward to some extent, and that Assam itself tied up in the hilly areas with all kinds of people; it is a mixed State with very difficult problems, frontier problems and these problems of its internal structure, problems, during the British days, of being forgotten and not progressing as much as it ought to have done as other parts of India did. And then comes partition which hits Bengal and hits Assam, both. And Assam is joined to India

by a tenuous link—you see the map—which is a narrow link, with all kinds of urges to go forward and all kinds of difficulties to face, and all kinds of feeling that some people are coming in the way of their progress—employment, this, that and the other. So, feelings rise, and sometimes come out.

I can tell you quite frankly that I like the Assamese. I think they are a fine people. I like the Assamese young men,—I say so because I am going to say strong things about them presently—I think they are fine young men, but these young men of Assam have behaved atrociously for which there can be no excuse, no quarter. They are fine material. This madness seizes people, anger seizes them, but they are fine material, and that is the tragedy of it, that this fine material which can serve Assam and will serve Assam a great deal and serve India, should go astray this way.

This is the background. We are not going to consider all these petitions and things. Maybe some papers are circulated here giving lurid accounts of incidents that happened there, but before us we have one document, that is the report of the Ajit Prasad Jain Committee. If I may say so with respect, it is a good document, it is an able and objective survey, and it is no credit to it but some credit to me that what I had thought of and written about when I came back from Assam was largely on those lines, so that I find no difficulty at all in appreciating what that report says almost completely, barring minor things here and there perhaps, because it fits in with my thinking when I went there and my thinking as it has grown during all this period because I have been living in it, these Assam matters—almost daily papers, telegrams, discussions, all this has been happening.

There is another document which may not be formally before us, but which, no doubt, Members must have seen and may have read. That is a

paper that came out yesterday or the day before on behalf of the Assam Government, a policy statement. It is advantageous to us, it is good that this document came out about this time, so that we may know exactly where the Assam Government stands. It may be a little absurd for me to make a personal remark in this connection, but I was somewhat taken aback when somebody, a friend of mine, told me: "We think that you must have been responsible for drafting that document". I was taken aback because I am not responsible except maybe for verbal changes here and there. The whole substance of that document was produced by the Chief Minister and the Finance Minister of Assam, word for word, every substantial thing that it says. It was shown to us certainly, and we suggested verbal changes here and there. It is their document, and it must be judged completely as such. There is no question of any compulsion or pressures by us on them.

\* As I expect hon. Members have read that document, we should like them to think about it. It is a brave and fine document. It is a document which might well be criticised by many people in Assam. It envisages action which is strong action. They have not become frightened that they should not do this because they might lose votes or lose the election that is to come. They have said that they will do what they consider to be their duty to do, whatever the consequences might be.

**Shri Naushir Bharucha** (East Khandesh): May we know if the Prime Minister will place it on the Table of the House? We do not know anything about it.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru**: Certainly.

**Shri C. D. Fande** (Naini Tal): We have read that in the press.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru**: If you wish, Sir, we can place it. We shall place it tomorrow.

**Shri Naushir Bharucha**: Today if possible.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru**: Here it is. [See Appendix III, annexure No. 68].

**Shri Naushir Bharucha**: It may be cyclostyled and circulated.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru**: Now, what are the issues before us?

When I went there, I mean six weeks ago, and recovered a little from the shock of what I saw and what I heard, I immediately thought of what should be done immediately, and it seemed to me that the first thing to be aimed at was rehabilitation, to get back people to their homes—there were other important aspects too. There were at that time, I forget the exact figures, about 40,000 people in camps in Assam and about 4,000 who had gone outside Assam into West Bengal, refugees, and I thought we must concentrate on that immediately.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri** (Berhampore): The Prime Minister said 4,000?

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru**: At that time, it was six weeks ago, or five weeks, I forget. So, I said: you must within the next two or three weeks get back these people who are in Assam and immediately rebuild the houses burnt down. Of course, there are three types of houses which suffered. One was the house that was completely burnt down. When I say "house", normally it means a hut, small huts. The second was houses or huts that were not burnt down, but looted—the hut was there still. The third was: houses were left quite whole, but people, through panic, had gone away. Quite a large number—I do not remember for the moment—8,000 or 9,000 huts were burnt down. And there, I saw the harvest ripening, and I said these people must come back to take advantage of their harvest. So, I wanted to hurry that process. And everything else seemed to

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me secondary; once they came back, let us do everything. Of course, in bringing them back itself, certain things had to be done. The very first thing was that the Administration should function with a measure of strength and efficiency.

And there can be little doubt, as Ajit Prasad Jain report says that in some districts of Assam, that Administration had collapsed during these days. It was not functioning at all properly. It was a misfortune also that at the top of the Administration, just at that time, the Chief Minister was lying very ill; the Finance Minister was in Kashmir, and the Chief Secretary was also in Kashmir. It was unfortunate. That, of course, is no excuse....

**Shrimati Renu Chakravarty** (Basirhat): Why did he go?

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru**: Why did they go? Frankly, because this was not expected by them to happen. We can all be wise after the event. It may be, and I say it will be true to say, that their intelligence apparatus was very very bad, and it hardly existed; it may be also possibly that the intelligence staff, as perhaps other junior people there, maybe sometimes senior people, had themselves developed a certain bias this way or that way and did not function.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravarty**: What about the circular of the I.G. which says that we were to expect very serious things in the very first week of June? That was the circular issued by the I.G. of police.

**Shri A. P. Jain** (Saharanpur): That is 1st July; it was not before that. The circular was issued on 1st July.

**Shri Braj Raj Singh** (Firozabad): The Chief Secretary and the Finance Minister could have come back from Kashmir.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru**: He did, the moment he knew it. We now see

these things with foresight; we know; we see that all this happened in May and this happened in June. But at that time, there did not appear to be anything very serious. Anyhow, it was, if you like, the fault of the Government, not judging the situation more thoroughly, or the fault of the Administration or their intelligence apparatus.

The Finance Minister and the Chief Secretary went to Kashmir before these serious developments, which took place on the 4th July. I was following daily the message; I did nothing. I came back from Kashmir myself on the 7th July. And that was the first I heard. I think I heard something in Kashmir on the radio, and then I came back. At that time, the Chief Minister was lying exceedingly ill. The Chief Minister, in fact, from the 6th July onwards, did not know anything that happened. He was too ill to be told or to know what was happening. I went to see him on the 17th or 18th July. He knew nothing of what had happened in Assam, from the 6th July onwards till I met him. And I did not talk either; he was too ill. That, of course, is no excuse. I am merely trying to mention certain obvious facts.

The fact is that the Administration did not function, in some places did not function at all....

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee** (Calcutta—Central): May I interrupt the Prime Minister? The I.G.'s warning was on 1st June. At page 11 of the Report of the Parliamentary Delegation, we find:

“During the month of June, the storm was gathering momentum and as early as the 1st June, a circular was issued by the Inspector General of Police suggesting that major trouble should be anticipated from the current agitation on the language issue and giving instructions as to how the Police should deal with it.”

And the following are Shri A. P. Jain's observations:

"It is, however, our painful duty to remark that proper precautions to meet the impending trouble were not taken."

**Shri A. P. Jain:** I shall produce the circular. I have got the circular with me. If it is printed as June, it is a misprint.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** This may be seen too. But my main argument is not affected.

The fact is that in spite of some circulars and others—after all, one of the principal persons whose business it was to report from day to day was the Inspector General of Police himself and his staff, and not he himself, but all his staff.—it came unexpectedly. That the situation was not good is one thing, but to expect some major developments which suddenly came, because of the fire on the 4th July is another; some houses were burnt; the police came and fired, and an Assamese student was shot down in his hostel compound. I would not give any opinion about that. The matter is under enquiry. But that thing, in a very excitable atmosphere,—and people had worked up that thing—let loose a tremendous deal of passion. But I am not going into detail.

What I was venturing to point out is that we agree that the Administration did not function efficiently for a variety of reasons. As a matter of fact, the Assam Administration, if I may say so, has always been weak, weak in the number of people that serve it, and weak to some extent, sometimes also in the quality of people that serve it. That is a fact. But it was particularly weak, and functioned weakly in this matter.

Now, therefore, when I saw this, this position, I felt that obviously the Administration had to be strengthened. One question which was before me all the time,—the moment I went

there, it had been referred to, and I heard it,—was whether there should be President's rule, whether I should recommend to the President to take over charge of Assam or not. And I gave a good deal of thought to it. On my return, I consulted and discussed this matter with my colleagues. I was almost, before I went to Assam, inclined to think that when such bad things had happened, it might be desirable to have President's rule. But then I considered: "What exactly are we aiming at there? What do we wish to do? What is our objective? And how best can we attain that objective?"

If there was President's rule, it would mean the top somewhat changed. The basic administrative structure remains, except where we change it here and there; we shall have to function through that Administration with possible changes. I felt that so far as the top was concerned, top meaning the Government, the Chief Minister and his colleagues, although for a variety of reasons, either illness or being away, they had not functioned with efficiency, but were then functioning with considerable efficiency. When the Finance Minister came back from Kashmir, he certainly functioned with strength and efficiency. The Chief Minister was ill, unfortunately. And so far as the Chief Minister is concerned, I have long had the highest regard for him as an administrator and otherwise. In the Assam State, he has had a very special position, not only in the minds and hearts of the Assamese, but in Cachar among the Bengali-speaking people and in the hill areas too. So, he has been a tremendous cementing factor in this complex and problem State. In fact, I could not think of any other feasible Government which could take the place of the present Government, without this Chief Minister.

As for President's rule, I felt that it might have some advantages in a minor way. It would shake things up, which would be a good thing; it would take some steps which perhaps the

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local Government could not take. But it would be very difficult for the President-rule Government to take the basic steps. The basic steps were to change the whole atmosphere of that State, to prevent this drift, whether the drift was of refugees going to West Bengal or other things. Otherwise, conditions would remain, if you like, in a kind of armed truce controlled by President's rule.

Now, I have not mentioned one thing. The moment we heard of these occurrences in Assam, that is to say, the serious part of them, that moment steps were taken to send the Army. The Army went. There was no delay about that. The biggest thing the Centre can do in circumstances of this kind is to send the Army. The Army went in considerable numbers. The Army could go fairly rapidly, because it was stationed in Assam itself for other reasons—not this reason—for frontier reasons and the like. So the Army was there. The Army spread out. What else could President's rule do? As I said, the directing agency at the top would somewhat change and may be, to some extent, it might function with possibly greater speed.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** May I enquire whether the Army was moved by the Central Government or the State Government or the local magistracy asked for Army help under the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act? We have not been told what was the actual position.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** I can let him know later. But a local Magistrate can only ask for the Army locally situated. He cannot ask for big movements of the Army from elsewhere. That is only ultimately, and if the local Government asks for it. But it is the Central Government which has to order major Army movements. I cannot at the moment say on what date the Army was moved. I can find out or perhaps the Home Minister will let him know that.

**An Hon. Member:** The Home Minister is there.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** What was the date?

**Shri G. B. Pant:** The Army was deployed in Gauhati on the 4th itself.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** No, Sir. The other day, he said it was on the 5th.

**Shri G. B. Pant:** On the 4th evening, and in Shillong on the 6th and in other places thereafter. It went to every place almost. Five battalions were deployed.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** On whose initiative was it done? It is a very material point, because one of my charges would be that the Central Government simply sat here and watched the situation. I should very much like to know if I am justified in that conclusion.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** Would that charge be based on the delay in sending the Army?

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** Yes. I have some facts in my possession, official records, which I will show.

**Shri G. B. Pant:** It is not proper to disclose the correspondence that the Central Government may have had with the Chief Minister or the Governor there, but I may just say that a suggestion had been made before the 4th.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** Personally, so far as I know, when I came back—I said I was in Kashmir on those four or five days—when I came back, I enquired about it and I was informed that the Army was sent immediately. The Army stationed there went. I do not know the exact time and date. It went and it had been there for two or three days already.



This was the position that faced us. It was perfectly clear when I was there that no disturbance on any major scale could take place—could take place, I say—even if people wanted to do so, because of the Army, chiefly, and also because the administration, such as it was, was functioning with much greater efficiency. As Shri Jain's report says, some District Magistrates failed completely, some functioned very well. But anyhow, it was moving. But the Army was there and it was quite inconceivable that any large-scale disturbance could take place after that, and so long as the Army was there. There were other signs of improvement too. Of course, the Army could not remain there for ever. It went there and may remain there for some months or whatever it is.

So I thought that the advantages of President's rule would not be very considerable. We had the Army. We had the Governor, a very competent Governor, who, in fact, has both experience of Army work and other work. We had, I thought, the only Government that could function effectively; I could think of no other. And all these people were kept in close touch with us. There was no difficulty about our advising them and their accepting our advice or telling us of their difficulties. I felt if we had put President's rule there, immediately there would be a break in this and all the responsibility would be given to three or four persons who might be put there, and the people of Assam would, rightly or wrongly, feel terribly sullen and angry over this development and would not give their co-operation at all in bringing about a change in the mentality there. There is no doubt about it. If I may say so, every Party in Assam would have disliked this—and they said so to me.

So what I was after was to change the whole atmosphere of Assam, to get the co-operation of the people there. I went and addressed them. Everywhere I said, 'You have done

great wrong. You must atone for it. You must perform *prayaschith* for it. You must go and build the houses that you have burnt down'. I could not spot the people, but this was generally speaking.

**Shri Ranga (Tenali):** Did they not feel any repentance?

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** I suppose so.

**Shri Ranga:** Why do you expect them to be sullen then?

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** I suppose some did and some did not. I cannot say how many. I think they were certainly sorry for these, many of these misdeeds. But behind that lay all kinds of other suppressions, oppressions, past memories and histories. It is not very easy to analyse all that.

So I was anxious and I felt that you could not deal with this situation except with the co-operation of the people, not everybody, the mischief-makers, but broadly with the co-operation of the people. So I appealed to them in that context. I am quite certain that in the Presidential-rule context, that co-operation would not have been forthcoming. That is at least the impression I got. We had, in effect, most of the advantages that come from Central intervention, that is, the Army was there, our advice was there and all that, and if we went a step further, we would lose the major thing that was necessary. That was, changing the atmosphere there. That was how I felt at that time. And I told them to come together, from their committees for this purpose, build houses themselves, protect them, give assurance of protection and so on and so forth. I wanted to put this burden squarely on the Assamese people. They should feel their responsibility and not merely leave it to enforced measures, which were the Army and the rest. Anyhow, that was my idea of dealing with this situation.

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Unfortunately, my expectations were belied. Although during all this period—six weeks or eight weeks—no major incident has happened, or can happen,—because some minor incident may always happen—nevertheless, the number of people who have migrated from Assam has been very considerable. It is 40,000 or 42,000—I do not quite know at the present moment,—which is a very bad thing for Assam, a very bad thing for Bengal—large numbers of people—and very bad, of course, for the poor people themselves. We are now faced with this tremendous situation, how we can reverse this current because if we do not reverse it, the situation will deteriorate with extreme rapidity, become worse and worse and it may become completely unmanageable. How to do that is a matter in which both Assam and Bengal have a part to play. One of them cannot do it, however much they may try. The other party also has to come.

It has been a matter which I have not fully grasped why during the last 6 weeks or so this migration should continue in a big way. The answer, I agree, is that these people did not feel a sense of security; they were afraid of what might happen. True; it must be there; there can be no other answer; and so they went. How is one to give them that sense of security? Of course, I would have said, as I said there, I said I am prepared personally to stand guarantee for your security. And, I meant that. And, I say now they have that security. I am not talking about what I said; I am putting it in the crudest way—their security in the sense the Army is protecting them.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartty:** What about the persons in sibsagar on the 25th of August where there was burning of houses and where a child was

burnt to death? Even a Government Press note has been issued.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** May be; I cannot immediately answer. I do not remember.

I am looking at the particular picture which becomes progressively deteriorated because of this happening. There was no immediate cause except fear, a lack of sense of security, fear, panicky conditions; and I do not deny the reasons for that. In fact, if you want to go against it you have to fight that thing and not to give way to it. But it is unfair for me to accuse anybody who has to face these consequences as to what they should or should not have done. Anyhow as I saw it, and as I still see it today, if this problem has to be settled as it must be settled, action has to be taken in many ways.

Obviously, of course, nobody can disagree that the evil-doers, the mischief-makers should be punished and punished strongly. There is no doubt about it. May I say, with all kinds of queer notions about it, even reputable newspapers wrote in a curious way. In one of them, the other day, I read that there were long lists in the possession of Government, of the mischief-makers with our government, the Central Government, and it almost seemed that I had it or my colleague the Law Minister had it and we were suppressing them.

Now, this is absolutely without foundation, no iota of truth in it. I have not seen a list; I have not heard of a list either in Assam or here. Nobody here has seen a list or heard of it.

**Some Hon. Members:** List of what?

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** A list of malefactors. One suggested that lists are in the possession of Government here, and that everybody knows that and that for some reason or other we are suppressing it and taking no

action. I say, somebody may have it; hon. Members here may have it. I have not seen a list or heard of it. My colleague the Home Minister has neither seen nor heard of it. The Law Minister has neither seen nor heard of it.

Of course, when I was there some names were mentioned to me—not very many names, because I was not carrying out an enquiry into individuals—a few names came to me, and those names I have not remembered too. One of them is a student leader and an other a public man. So, some names might have been mentioned, may be, to the Law Minister.

I am merely saying how wrong statements are made and create a mentality in the people. We are charged as a Government—as Shri Chaudhuri just now hinted—for not taking action in this matter.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** I said timely action.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** All right; not taking timely action, presumably because we sent the Armed Forces later than we might have done. I do not think so. I was, unfortunately, not here at all; I was in Kashmir. But, according to my information, they were on the 4th in one place and on the 5th or 6th at another place. It is very difficult to remember. This serious trouble took place on the 4th of July. However, this is a matter to be considered. We sent more forces later.

What exactly the Centre was supposed to do is not clear to me, because if anybody is of the opinion that we should have introduced President's rule immediately, that is a different matter. Having considered that question, I thought that was a wrong step and a harmful step because if that had been done, the time for bringing about any suitable atmosphere in Assam to settle this matter properly would have been not only long delayed but made very difficult. If these

matter, we cannot function as Grand Moghuls there. We have to convert the people, bring them round—and punish, of course, those who have done wrong. Generally, everybody does wrong. Because all this happened in Assam we are not going to condemn all the population of Assam; because a number of students behaved badly we are not going to condemn all the students of Assam. We punish those who are really guilty and try to win over the others. After all, if not today, tomorrow, the day after, even if President's rule is there, 6 months after, you must have elections. Those people choose their leaders; and if they are not won over, brought into a proper frame of mind, you get back to the same state or worse. They are more angry still: 'Oh we have been sat upon previously; we are now sat upon now'. They forget the evil they have done; and the new things fills their minds. So, that was the basic approach. I am not aware, during this period of the Central Government having failed to do anything they should have done. May be, of course....

**शाला अक्षित राम (पटियाला) :** मैं और कुछ नहीं कहूंगा, लेकिन हमें यह बताया जाये कि पहली जुलाई से पहले वहां पर सेंट्रल सी० आई० डी० काम करती थी या नहीं। और अगर करती थी, तो वह क्या करती रही ?

**Shri Ranga:** They have also gone to sleep.

**श्री जवाहरलाल नेहरू :** मैंने आप से कहा कि सेंट्रल सी० आई० डी० और आसाम सी० आई० डी० मिली थीं। कम से कम हमें कोई ब्याल नहीं था कि इतनी खराब हालत वहां होने वाली है।

**शाला अक्षित राम :** आप को ब्याल नहीं था, लेकिन सी० आई० डी० सिस्टम को भी क्या खयाल नहीं करना चाहिये ?

श्री जवाहरलाल नेहरू : मैं ने कहा कि वहाँ का सारा इंटेलिजेंट सिस्टम खराब था। मैं ने शुरू में ही कहा।

श्री साधु चरित राम : वहाँ का सी० आई० डी० सिस्टम खराब था, लेकिन सेंट्रल सी० आई० डी० तो अच्छी थी। It was appointed by the Central Government.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Evidently, my colleague the Home Minister is the boss of the CID. He will tell you about it. The fact is, our intelligence system failed.

The second thing that is held up, I believe, is why these evil-doers have not been punished quickly and effectively. All I can say is, I believe, that some more than 4,000 people have been arrested by the Assam Government. (Interruption). People have this in mind; they imagine that the evil-doers are certain individuals who are in their minds. And, may be they are right; may be they are wrong; I cannot say. I am not aware of a single man. I am aware of some people who deliver powerful aggressive speeches on the language question. That is true. I have no knowledge of a single individual in favour of it except the one who was the leader of the students against whom I can definitely say that he took part in some of these nefarious activities. But immediately to take action and chop off the head of some miscreant. . . (Interruptions.)

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: May I know whether the Prime Minister has seen the recommendation in Jain report on page 19—

“Apprehension of ring leaders, who are still at large. Special

courts should be set up for the speedy trial of important offenders.”

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I quite agree. I am merely stating that I am not aware of all the persons; I am saying this because it is imagined and stated that we are in possession of this knowledge and we are suppressing it. I do not know a single case, except as I said, a student leader.

Shri C. K. Bhattacharya (West Dinajpur): He is perhaps referring to one Mr. Dulal Barua. Is he a student? He is a forty year old person and father of four children. He is put up as the leader of students by the Assam Government. He is not a student at all.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Surely the hon. Member should realise that most of our student leaders are like that. . . (Interruptions.)

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: The student leader in question appears to be in Government service. Then, inspite of not having a degree in his possession, he has a post-graduate scholarship which was ordered by the Director of Public Instruction? May I know how all this kind of thing happened?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: The hon. Member is more or less correct. It is a very odd case. He was a clerk in the agricultural department—this gentleman with five children and a wife. He organised a strike in his department. Apparently, the strike was more or less a successful strike. Thereafter he took leave, I think. I do not remember the exact chronological order of these events. But anyhow he went to another department, the education department and he managed to get a scholarship—

a post-graduate scholarship. . . (In interruptions). Then he got leave from the agricultural department where he was serving and having got leave there and having become a student, immediately he applied all his considerable talent in organisation to organise the students for what is called the councils of action. I must pay him credit for he organised it remarkably well.

**Shri C. K. Bhattacharya:** I am afraid that this person was no graduate at all. How could he get a post graduate scholarship?

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** That may be true. We do not say that he was a graduate. There is obviously some hanky-panky about it—how he got this, how some people seemed to favour him there and all that. There is no doubt about it. It is a bad show. But anyhow this man—maybe, with the help of some others but he was the principal person—was building up what can only be described as a kind of student caucus. We sometimes complain of political parties exploiting the students. No-doubt, they do here and there. But my own impression is that the student caucus in Assam was no creature of any political party. It dominated the scene and made the political parties and their leaders behave according to its wishes and ordered them about—simply ordered them about. For instance, it will say: you must come and preside at this meeting or your house would be stoned and so on. The poor fellow would go and preside for fear of his being stoned.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** Does the Prime Minister also know that the public man to whom he referred—I do not want to name him—brought this person after he was made a post-graduate scholar and introduced him to the student gathering in the university campus saying: I am bringing to you the leader of Assam students and the future Chief

Minister of Assam?... (Interruptions.)

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** I do not know all that.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** Does it not indicate that in the administration and politics of Assam there are certain corrupt politicians and an alliance between them the fascist type storm-troopers and commando-gangs? All these things are very plain.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** Yes, Sir, It does indicate certain things. The gentleman you referred to who was at that time Education Minister, left the Government soon after or was made to leave it. No doubt he was a somewhat disgruntled person and possibly he encouraged the wrong things there. I have no doubt broadly about this. Exactly what he did—I do not know; I cannot say. But there is a general impression that he had no love for the Chaliha Ministry and wanted, therefore, to encourage those who were opposed to the Chaliha Ministry.

I request this House to consider what our aim should be I do submit that this kind of mere vague talk or angry talk—we are angry and we should be angry, I do not deny it—does not help us to consider this question with any clarity. We want presumably peace and order there. We want all these refugees to go back. Mind you, all this in a smaller scale has happened on the other side. A number of Assamese have gone from Bengal back to Assam. It may be on a smaller scale. We want to stop all this. We want to create a sense of security there. We have to build something which has much deeper foundations and we have to create a feeling of kinship among the Bengali-speaking people as well as others speaking people as well as others there. There is no other way. Some of the proposals that are made must inevitably lead to disastrous consequences. They may satisfy us but

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they lead to disastrous consequences. If you cannot create a sense of goodwill, between the various sections of the community in Assam—it may take some time for them to come together—what are you going to do? You cannot take away chunks of population and remove them; you cannot leave them to fight each other out. In the context of India, there is absolutely no other way except to aim at that. Therefore, we should take no steps which come in the way of their coming together. It is not an easy matter and it does not suddenly happen.

The first thing is to remove the present difficulties and then gradually help in that process. I am convinced that Assam is a State with enormous potentialities for growth; it will grow. Today in Assam or in Bengal there may apparently be strong dislike and all that but as soon as we start working in a positive line, it will gradually grow less. In Assam it is bound to grow less. Assam has considerable material for progress. Its people are competent, if they may be given a chance. They may not have too much of a chance in the past. It is not an easy task, and it can only be done if you avoid doing things now which aggravate the situation. That was the approach we had and, as I said, I could not think myself of any better way of dealing with it except through the Assam Government as it is today. I could not think of a better local government and I did not think that a Central Government going into the picture would improve matters or it would be able to deal with it except just in the manner of a bludgeon—that is, till a strong force comes who hold the situation, but you never start the process of healing at all.

14 hrs.

Now, that was our conclusion as it was. Then it became necessary that the Government of Assam should be helped in various ways, supplies etc.,

but that its prestige should be held high. We wanted them to do difficult things, very difficult things, and if we weaken it all the time, if we try to undermine it, then it becomes even more difficult for them to do those difficult things. Therefore it is, I believe, our function, if my reason is correct, that we should not do anything which weakens the Assam Government. You know what the policy of the Assam Government is. It is in their own document, the policy document that they have issued. As I said, it is a strong policy, it is a brave policy and no one, I take it, here can sever with that policy.

The question that has been raised often enough is about enquiries. Now, obviously, when these troubles take place one's mind goes to an enquiry, for many purposes, to find out the evil-doers—that is one type of enquiry—to consider basic things, causes etc., seek remedies and all that. Now, again, when I was there in Assam over a month ago I thought of this. My mind is always conditioned to approve of enquiries whenever something happens. Let there be an enquiry, though I might mention that the way enquiries are held in India alarm me. I am not criticising the persons who hold the enquiry, but the procedures are really alarming. If something happens somewhere, for six months the thing lasts and when everybody has forgotten everything and vast sums of money are spent on it somekind of a judicial document appears. I should like full enquiries and relatively quick enquiries, quick decisions. Anyhow, my mind goes automatically towards some kind of an enquiry where any upheaval takes place.

But sitting behind Assam then and looking around what is happening—these strong passions that had been raised—it seemed to me quite clear that this type of an enquiry which will go on for many months would immediately halt the various proces-

ses that I was aiming at—the processes of healing etc.—stop them completely and, in fact, reverse them. After three days in Assam I simply seized hold of my head and said: "Can I hold on to my sanity or not?" It was because of these contradictory charges, counter charges, anger and all that—men and women and everybody coming. I was just amazed at the way I for a person became a butt of all these delegations and others and their strong language. I said, if a commission of enquiry comes here and this kind of thing goes on from day to day—evidence and all that—what effect will it have? I have no doubt at all that the effect would be to stop immediately any kind of process of healing and, as it always happens in such small court cases, each party would try to put its case at the strongest and would accuse the other in the strongest way, and, may be, ultimately, whatever may be decided, for the moment, for those months of enquiry, the atmosphere of Assam would be thick with hatred, violence, charge, counter-charge etc. No body would go back from Bengal to Assam, many more may come away from Assam to Bengal. All this would happen.

Therefore, thinking of all that it seemed to me—I was inclined to have an enquiry, certainly—that that type of enquiry while the process of reconciliation or resettlement or rehabilitation was going on would be harmful. In fact, I came to the identical conclusion that Shri Ajit Prasad Jain's Report says, in spite of my predilection for an enquiry. One or two things I wanted. One was that the guilty should be punished. Certainly, that is not part of an enquiry. So far as my mind went, this kind of enquiry lasting months and months is not the way to get hold of the guilty. There are shorter enquiries. I am glad that such short enquiries have been undertaken in some areas, and the joint report has recommended that approach elsewhere too. That is a quick way of getting the malefactor. Ap-

point a good man. If you do not like a departmental head, appoint a more senior man, a High Court Judge if you like. But this kind of quick enquiries in the local areas can get the malefactor. You would not get him by holding big enquiries. That I think is the right approach.

Now, it is said "comprehensive enquiry", "causes" and all that. I, subject to what I have said—its coming in the way—would have accepted that long ago. For me it was far more important, the future of the relationship of the Assamese and the Bengali-speaking people, than anything else. That was the basic thing. That was basic because if that went wrong,—it has not, it is bad enough of course for two of our principal States to be affected—I hope people will realise that the neighbouring States would be affected. There is no doubt at all about it—Bihar would be affected, Orissa would be affected and so on—because this kind of infliction of hatred and violence, unfortunately, spreads easily. So I was anxious somehow to get a grip of the situation, and later we can have any number of enquiries.

When I discussed this matter with the Chief Minister, Mr. Chaliha, broadly speaking, he was anxious to get things going and smoothly done but he was afraid that this enquiry would upset the applecart. He was not against an enquiry at all. This was, broadly, the approach which we took in this matter.

Now, I find that there are a number of amendments which involve chiefly enquiries. As I said, we are not against an enquiry at all. I may tell you that the Chief Minister, Mr. Chaliha also told me that he has no objection. He said: "We have nothing to hide. In fact, we are anxious that whatever evil thing has been done should see the light of day, whatever evil person have functioned they should be punished. We are anxious to do that and we are going

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to do it." That is what he expressed in his policy statement. But he pointed out to me only one thing. He said: "We do not want this kind of thing to come in and upset the work that we want to begin. The question of rehabilitation goes a long way, goes a better way". Then let us have an enquiry. But what kind of enquiry again? I am speaking for myself now and not for Shri Chaliha. As I said, an enquiry into these detailed circumstances everywhere, to pick out the malefactor, is not a suitable thing to do now. You cannot mix up the two things. It will prolong the agony. But what could be done quickly, relatively quickly, is an enquiry by competent men into the affairs in these half a dozen big major places, and let them punish those who are guilty. An enquiry that would have to go into deeper matters, into causes, etc., and then suggest a remedy is a very difficult task. That should be by really competent men; that should come at the appropriate time, the proper time and not to be barged in to upset everything which has been done and not even to help very much in getting hold of the malefactor, because it may take a much longer time. You cannot mix up a broad enquiry, causes and all that, and make suggestions for the future into these pursuits of the malefactor. They are two different things, which have to be dealt with differently.

So, I would suggest for the consideration of the House—if I may use the word, the pursuit of the malefactor—that this should be undertaken quickly as suggested by Shri Ajit Prasad Jain in his report, by appointing a competent person to enquire into the affairs by going to the chief areas of disturbance and then those persons should be dealt with. If any other enquiry is desired—the causes etc.—certainly have it, but at the appropriate time, the right moment, and not when it comes and

upsets all the healing processes that we wish to start.

I am not giving the numbers, the figures, in regard to the houses. I am told that 40 per cent of the houses that have been destroyed have been built or re-erected by the local people with the Assam Government's help, and often, I am glad to say, by the local people with the students and others helping. We placed our army at the disposal of the Assam Government to build quickly. There was some delay unfortunately because corrugated iron-sheets could not be obtained easily. But they have been obtained and they are there now in adequate numbers. The army people are there. It is not particularly a work suitable to the army. There are mostly little huts spread out here and there. They function in a concentrated way. So, it is not greatly suited to them, but still, it is possible that some particular area may be given to them for constructing these houses. But even otherwise the construction is going on pretty fast and there is plenty of room for nearly all the refugees to go back to the houses that were not burnt, the houses that were partly destroyed but which have been repaired.

There are two matters which I would like to mention. One is about the press and the other about the students. It is almost an axiom with us that the press is something above reproach, that the freedom of the press should not be touched. I myself largely believe in it, and I am prepared to put up with the press which is very far from the ideal, which may even fall below the average. Indeed we do put up with it. After all, there are many periodicals in India which do not bring great credit to India or to anybody. There are also good newspapers, good periodicals. I think we should accept that position. But I think it is a bit too much to say that the press can do anything that it likes, involving



grave injury to the common good, to the public. Obviously no country allows that. If the press today starts inciting people for a communal riot, we come down and stop it. Obviously we should. No idea of the freedom of the press should come in our way from stopping a press preaching communal riot. So, in such circumstances, instances, if the press does this, and does something which is worse than even the normal communal riot it produces intense hatred and bitterness between the Assamese speaking Bengalis and the Assamese speaking Assamese and the Bengali speaking Assamese and the people of Bengal. It is no small matter. It is a very serious matter, affecting the whole future of those areas in Bengal. There is no question at all of facts being suppressed. I am not in favour of suppression of facts. But I am against the trend being given which excites people and thereby creates an atmosphere which is most dangerous. I have no doubt at all that if any newspaper does that, action should be taken and there should be a law for action to be taken.

It is an impossible situation: that when these grave issues of national security, national solidarity, unity, are at stake, the newspapers should excite the people to frenzy. I do not blame the people who read those newspapers. What are those people to do when they get excited and when they read the daily stuff which excites them? It is not their fault. If I read that, when there are no other means of doing it, I would be excited.

I must say that when I saw some Assamese papers and some papers from Bengal, I found them very painful reading because of the way the headlines were put. I am for no suppression of news, but surely every rumour you hear is not news. You give huge publicity to a rumour, and maybe afterwards, two or three or four days after, you say in two lines that it was a wrong thing! That has become the practice. I do know that completely false reports were given

to the papers. I know it from personal knowledge because I enquired; they were false absolutely. There was much truth too, but above all, the whole way of editing the news—captions, headlines or whatever it was—was meant to excite, when every effort should have been to heal. I am not at all for hiding; certainly get the evil-doer to book. That is one thing.

Then, coming to students, I have just said that students in Assam are really like the students everywhere: sometimes misbehaving and sometimes behaving. I have no objection to that. But because of some special reasons,—maybe, they imagine that they occupy a special position and that they are much superior to everybody there, every authority, everybody. Some students—young boys, rather bright boys, I thought, and I liked them—came to me and made a very simple request: “We should be put in charge of law and order; remove your apparatus. See how we shall function. There will be law and order here.” This was not said as a joke. They meant it. This is the mentality; an extraordinary mentality. Of course, I, not being an Assam leader, would give them a bit of my mind with great force, which I did in public meetings and elsewhere; and they listened to me because, I feel friendly to them, even though, I curse them sometimes. But really it is extraordinary. It is not good.

I do not understand it. In his minute of dissent, Dr. Gour talks about democracy and students. I shall be very respectful to Dr. Gour, but what he says there—I say so with all respect—is just bunkum; nothing else than bunkum. I hope it is parliamentary. But still, here, to talk in this context about democracy and students, really has no meaning. We want students to develop, to become big, to grow and serve their country and serve themselves and serve others and be ambitious, if you like. But to call this business of building up caucuses, to hold up that everything is

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democracy in action—the students— etc., has no meaning from either the students' point of view or the democratic point of view. I do not think Dr. Gour can stand either. But that is a big and serious problem, because after all, those students are bright people who ought to make good in the future, who will make good, I am sure, given the chance. I think they have energy in them and many other qualities in them. But this kind of thing, the way they have drifted is bad for them; it is bad for Assam and bad for everybody. They should be controlled.

Therefore, there are four or five things for-us to deal with. The very first is rehabilitation. They are all tied up really. Improve the administration, tone it up, tighten it, punish the guilty, punish the evil-doers as well as the administrators who did not come up and last of all, tackle the basic problems there, which is a much more difficult thing. But remember that we should not take any steps now which come in the way of our tackling the basic problems. If we take wrong steps, becoming hysterical and angry now, then we make the situation such that we will not be able to retrieve it at all. It is one of the biggest and greatest challenges that we have had, not Assam, not Bengal only, but the whole of India, and this Parliament, and I hope that we shall face this trial and challenge adequately.

Sir, I beg to move:

"That the situation in Assam and the Report of the Parliamentary Delegation thereon presented to the House on 30th August, 1960, be taken into consideration."

**Mr. Speaker:** Motion moved:

"That the situation in Assam and the Report of the Parliamentary Delegation thereon presented

to the House on 30th August, 1960, be taken into consideration."

I have received notice of several substitute motions. I will call the hon. Members one by one and if they press, I will treat their substitution motion as moved.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** I do not want to move my substitute motion No. 1. I have given my name in substitute motion No. 7 of Acharya Kripalani.

**Shri Naushir Bharucha:** I am not moving substitute motion No. 2. I am moving the next one, No. 3.

**Shri Bimal Ghose (Barrackpore):** I move my substitute motion No. 4.

**Shri Atulya Ghosh (Asansol):** I move my substitute motion No. 5.

**Mr. Speaker:** In the amended form, with the omission of the word 'Central'.

**Shri Atulya Ghosh:** Yes.

**Shrimati Renuka Ray (Malda):** In view of substitute motion No. 5 which has been moved, I am not moving substitute motion No. 6.

**Acharya Kripalani (Sitamarhi):** I move substitute motion No. 7.

**Mr. Speaker:** These are the only substitute motions moved.

**Shri Vajpayee (Balrampur):** I have given notice of a substitute motion. Perhaps it has not been circulated because it was submitted after 3 P.M. Still, may I request you to admit it?

**Mr. Speaker:** There are a number of substitute motions on which he can speak. Why should I admit a motion which has not been circulated? Hon. Members must have had notice of all these substitute motions. The hon. Prime Minister has had no opportunity to look into it. So, it is too late.

Hon. Members will have 15 minutes or 20 minutes at the most.

**Shri Naushir Bharucha:** I beg to move:

That for the original motion, the following be substituted, namely:—

“That House, having considered the situation in Assam and the Report of the Parliamentary Delegation thereon, presented to the House on the 30th August, 1960 recommends that the Union Government do consider the desirability of assisting the Assam Government by a generous subsidy in the task of prompt rehabilitation of the riot victims in Assam.” (3)

**Shri B. C. Ghose:** I beg to move:

That for the original motion, the following be substituted, namely:—

“This House, having considered the situation in Assam and the Report of the Parliamentary Delegation thereon, presented to the House on the 30th August, 1960,—

(a) regrets that the Union Government failed to fulfil its responsibility when it allowed an administrative breakdown to remain unattended to in Assam; and

(b) recommends that a comprehensive inquiry into the happenings in Assam by a high powered commission be organised with a view to allay misunderstandings and expose abuses that need to be corrected, and representatives of the Union Government should be posted in Assam to assist in the process of rehabilitation.” (4)

**Shri Atulya Ghosh:** I beg to move:

That for the original motion, the following be substituted, namely:—

“This House, having considered the situation in Assam and the Report of the Parliamentary Delegation thereon, presented to the House on the 30th August, 1960, recommends that the Government should at an appropriate time set up a judicial enquiry to enquire into the circumstances resulting into the disturbances in the State of Assam in the month of July and to suggest Dr. steps necessary to prevent the recurrence of such disturbances in the future.” (5).

**Acharya Kripalani:** I beg to move:

That for the original motion, the following be substituted, namely:—

“This House, having considered the situation in Assam and the Report of the Parliamentary Delegation thereon, presented to the House on the 30th August, 1960, is of the opinion that in view of the recent tragic happenings which have taken place in Assam and have created a sense of fear and insecurity in the minds of the minorities in Assam, a comprehensive enquiry by one or more Supreme Court Judges be instituted to enquire into the disturbances and the circumstances leading up to them and suggest remedies for ensuring adequate protection and full enjoyment of their rights guaranteed under the Constitution to all citizens and preventing recurrence of such incidents in future.” (7).

**Mr. Speaker:** The motion and amendments are now before the House.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the last eight years and more, I have often spoken in this House, but I do not remember ever having felt as weighed down as I am by the subject under discussion today. We could never imagine that after thirteen years of independence and after ex-

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periencing the nightmare of the communal madness of 1946-47, the concept of Indian nationality, a proud label which enables everyone of us to stay in any part of our great country, would be battered and broken by incidents that we thought could never happen in our country again.

In Assam, a beautiful corner of our country, gruesome things have taken place that have brought shame not only on Assam, but on all of us. In the name of the Assamese language, whose development we all care for, but actually for deeper reasons of political cupidity, which have been even indicated by the Jain report, these ghastly things have happened. I say this not only because of the agony and torture of many thousands of people who have been pushed out of Assam or are living with a chilling sense of fear and insecurity, people who speak the language which I also imbibed with my mother's milk, but I say this because of the danger these unhappy events indicate. The Prime Minister has also spoken of the threatened dissolution of our Indianhood.

I was recalling what perhaps you will appreciate, a rhyme in the *Vishnu Puran* where our country is designated:

उत्तर यत् समुद्रस्य  
हिमादेः शैव दक्षिणम्  
वर्षम् तद् भारतम् नाम  
भारती यत्र सन्ततिः ।

We are the children of India, the country which extends from the Himalayas to the sea and wherever we are, under the Constitution and under the terms of the culture we have inherited, we are entitled to live in possession of all our rights.

I remember also what I read about a long time ago when I was quite young. It was the late Sir C. Vijayaraghavachariar who quoted what Mazzini had said and had adapted it to the Indian context. He told us,

"Never rise but in the name of India and of all India".

This idea is emphasised in our National Anthem and I am sorry that such ghastly and gruesome events have happened as endanger the very development of this concept, which we inherited thousands of years ago.

If legalism is wanted,—I do not personally—I feel article 355 could be invoked. I notice that in the United States Constitution also, there are provisions that when there is a disturbance which interferes with the operation of the national government itself, then the processes of the federal administration can be brought into operation. In this regard there was a leading case, *In re Debs* (1895) where it was said that the entire strength of the nation may be used to enforce in any part of the land the full and free exercise of all national powers and the security of all rights entrusted by the Constitution to its care. I feel that if, legalistically speaking, the Centre wanted to proceed, they could have proceeded at one time, and I am sure that there has been a very serious default on the part of the Centre in this regard.

14.31 hrs.

[SHRI HEDA in the Chair]

I say this because we have to recall what has happened in Assam, and how.

It is stated in the Jain Report that the storm began to gather in June, and we heard of the Inspector-General of Police's warning which, the Jain Report says, was ignored. Even earlier there were events, over the refinery about which Shri Feroze Gandhi has given a statement, and

then happened unparalleled devastation. I do not want to rub it in, but the fact remains that we have to remember the context in which we are having the discussion today.

As a result of this devastation, forty to fifty thousand people have been rendered homeless and at least eight to nine thousand houses have been destroyed. The official figures say that forty persons were killed, but the number killed is many more according to other figures. And the number of those who were injured and, what is even worse, of those who were humiliated is legion. Worst crimes against women have at least been reported in some cases, which the police have admitted, and horrid incidents like people being burnt or children being thrown into fire have been reported, and affidavits have been sworn in that regard.

I do not say these things in order to have an animus against the people of that area. But what I say is that for two or three weeks from July 4th, there was a complete collapse of law and order. And there was a pattern in regard to the bringing about of this collapse of law and order. The report itself says how there was a general pattern. The report says that the members of the delegation saw that pattern being put into execution in different areas. And there were some other delegations like the delegation of women which went to Assam after the 15th August, and they noticed how all over the place there was a uniform pattern and how devastation took place, sometimes over a continuous area of more than two miles, when every thing was done by people coming in trucks and buses, sometimes in trucks and buses which were supplied by the Government itself, by some kind of dubious agency inside the Government. And this kind of pattern has been noticed by the Jain delegation.

Unlike in Kerala, where nothing like this had taken place, the Central Government on this occasion sat supine. The State Government abdicated

its function and the Central Government, for whatever reason, was completely indifferent. The Congress Party, I know, has inner-party differences and there was an attempt to overthrow the Chaliha Ministry, because Mr. Chaliha is known to be a humane and non-chauvinistic sort of person. But to cover up the defaults of the Ministry and to hide from public view the Congress's inner wrangles is a very ugly phenomenon, and we have noticed daily the Central Government being completely mum.

The Prime Minister, in response to many appeals, went to Assam. He did a very right thing. I shall not refer to the visit of Shree Sanjiva Reddi from whom nothing was expected. The Prime Minister went, and I am sorry to have to say that we missed the tone of indignation which he ought to have felt. He also tried to cover up the lapses of his own guilty men. And when he was speaking, today I was feeling all the time that he was trying to pose the problem as if it was a quarrel between A and B and we have now got to come together and solve that difficulty. It is not so simple as all that. There are guilty men in the camp of the Prime Minister who are operating in Assam, and they are being sheltered and their guilt has been cloaked over by the indifference of the Central Government, by its mouthing certain sanctimonious phrases rather too late in the day.

The Prime Minister came to Parliament on the 1st of August when some of us wanted to have a serious discussion at least to begin with, and he told us that 19,000 people had gone back and that things were getting normal. And yet, six weeks after the holocaust we were told that 39,383 people were in West Bengal, in camps, on the 27th August. And incidents took place after 15th August in places like Dhubri and Gauhati. The daily trek from Assam continues and Sealdah station is congested with suffering humanity. Surely, it is not

[Shri H. N. Mukerjee]

anybody's point that people like to live in Sealdah station for a change. They are coming away and living in unspeakable conditions. I remember in 1956 having written an angry letter to the Minister of Rehabilitation about the conditions in Sealdah station which, I think, he will never forget. And the conditions in Sealdah are so terrible, so ghastly, that nobody comes there of his own accord. But people are doing so because of the prolonged sense of insecurity which not all the sermonising in Parliament by the Prime Minister, however lofty a person he might be, or by anybody else, would help to bring about a change in the situation.

As Members of Parliament we want to know why this apathy took place, why this acquiescence in evil, which is just as vile as evil doing. All that I can say is that party reasons are responsible for it, and no other reasons.

We place no general bill of condemnation against Assam. I belong to a party which is anti-chauvinist, because we cannot afford provincial or communal or caste bickerings, because we have to work among the people in every category. As a Bengali I have no animus but only friendship for the Assamese people. The Bengalis have tried to make their contribution to Assamese literature. Shanker Deo of Assam is a hero of all India. Men like Anand Ram Barua and Mahamahopadhyaya Padmanatha Sharma are names to conjure with in Bengal; they are Assamese people. The Assamese are no better and no worse than the rest of us. But they were maddened deliberately and mass hysteria was engineered so much that even on the 26th August there were stabbing and assault on Bengalis in Gauhati.

This is a matter which is very serious. All kinds of things have been said, into which I cannot go because of shortness of time, in regard to the

economic reasons for the dissatisfaction that the Bengalis have been feeling there. But I cannot understand how this can be seriously pressed, because the Bengalis have been living there for generations, most of them. They are Assamese really. They are Bengali-speaking Assamese. They have every right to all their functions of citizenship, but we find they have not been safeguarded in their case.

We have noticed also how the Hills people have reacted. We have noticed how, behind this agitation, there was an attempt, and a chauvinist attempt, to impose the Assamese language as the official language of the State before anybody was ready for it, in spite of the fact that the Assamese form—in spite of the rather inflated figures of the 1951 census—about 55 per cent of the population. The Prime Minister has said, and I want to repeat, that this is a question not of Bengal and Assam alone, but it is a question which affects minorities everywhere. If once a militant minority in one State gets the upper hand by sheer methods of violence and intimidation, then good-bye to all hopes of emotional integration in our country.

The delegation's report is a document which I found to a certain extent helpful. But I do not like its obvious desire to smooth things over and to see that the Congress Government and the Congress Party are not let down. In one of the Notes of Dissent it has been pointed out how the Assam Congress lacked both courage and policy to stand up to the onslaughts of powerful chauvinistic elements. What I want to ask the Prime Minister and the Government of India is, are the big-wigs in the Congress, and other parties also, who might have taken part in this business to go scot free? As I asked the Prime Minister some time ago, when I asked a question referring to the delegation's report, the ring leaders are still at large. Why are they at

large? It suggests that things are very bad as far as the State Government is concerned.

And that is why we put forward this demand for a judicial enquiry on the basis of an amendment which has been signed by representatives of all sections of the opposition. At one time the Prime Minister himself did not rule out the idea of a judicial enquiry. But now he says that the pitch would be queered, that the atmosphere would be vitiated. Now he seems to think that the position would be aggravated if there is a judicial enquiry. But I do not understand it at all. I do not understand it, because, how can the position improve if the sufferers, those who felt the pinch, those who were uprooted from their own homeland, those who, in some cases were suffering a second instance of uprooting—because they had come from East Bengal to Assam and now they are pushed out again—are not assured of security?

Now, if their minds are not put at rest, if a sense of security is not given to them, if the hooligans and the ring leaders, about whom the Jain Report says they are still at large, if the ring leaders are not got together, arrested and punished properly then how is the sense of security to return? My friend, Shri Atulya Ghosh has given notice of an amendment in which he wants that a judicial enquiry should be held—I am happy about it that he is rallying round to this view—but he wants the judicial enquiry at the appropriate time. Now I do not like this formulation, because I feel that much time has already been wasted. As a matter of fact, if the Central Government had acted in July, if the Central Government, even though it might not have wanted to have President's rule as in Kerala, if the Central Government intervened—they had an armoury of things which they could employ in this case—then the enquiry would have been finished in July, and the month of August when the Par-

liament meets would have been a time when we would have felt quite happy about the way in which the situation was tackled, but it was not done. And simply because it was not done, we find the situation has gone from bad to worse. And therefore I say that if we make compromise with evil—and the Prime Minister said that we do not want to make a compromise with evil—then it is necessary that here and now we start a process of judicial investigation. I did not understand the Prime Minister when he said that “all kinds of complications arise if there is a judicial enquiry and I would rather have a departmental enquiry here and there”. The Jain Report also suggested that there should be a departmental enquiry in Nowgong and some other areas, especially in the area near Goreswar. But they do not want a judicial enquiry of a sort which will really and truly command the confidence of the people, which alone can restore a sense of security to everybody. Therefore, I find that if this judicial enquiry is not conceded, then the position is sure to go from bad to worse, and that is why we press with all the strength at our command, this request for a judicial enquiry. I do hope that the Home Minister and the Prime Minister and others in Government will apply their mind very carefully to this position, because there is a united demand in the whole of West Bengal. We know that the West Bengal Assembly is going to meet tomorrow and the Chief Minister of West Bengal is putting forward there an agreed resolution, where the main plank is the demand for this judicial enquiry. In a State like West Bengal, where we have so many parties—Congress, Communist, PSP and the others—we have come together, because we find that after all this is something which is absolutely in conformity with the principles which should govern the conduct of the Indian Union. I suppose that this demand for a judicial enquiry will be conceded by Government without delay, because time is of the essence of the matter.

[Shri H. N. Mukerjee]

I note in the Report also—and the Prime Minister made certain observations thereon—certain statements in regard to the desirability of muzzling the press. The Prime Minister, of course, conceded that the press should be allowed to function and facts should always be publicised. Now, the press, the Prime Minister has conceded, has a duty to perform, and it is necessary for the press to give publicity to information which it receives from *bona fide* sources, sources represented by correspondents in different places. What has happened in Assam is so gruesome, that two of the press correspondents of Calcutta newspapers were killed; and one of them was known to be a public man with great sympathy for the Assamese people, who could speak the Assamese language just as an Assamese. The press has shouldered a very difficult burden there. I do not say that the press of West Bengal is altogether good and in every case it had been faultless: No. On many occasions I have also noticed exaggerated reports, and sometimes I do not like the idea of banner headlines being given to certain news items. Surely, I quite agree with what the Prime Minister said in regard to the publication of certain items of news in a certain way, but, by and large, generally speaking, the press has done its job extremely well with a great sense of responsibility. If the press has not drawn the attention of the country to what was happening in Assam then, I am sure, communiques of the sort which sometimes have emanated from Government sources would have made a black-out of the entire Assam situation. It was the duty of the press to do so. It was the duty of the press to point out how there were guilty men taking shelter behind men in authority. I cannot divulge names but I know of persons, neither Bengali nor Assamese, who know the Assamese scene, who know some of those persons, who are responsible for the gruesome happenings there, and who believe that this kind of

person should be put up against the wall and shot. But it is not possible to proceed in that way, and I do not ask Government to proceed in that way. But I do ask the Government to have a judicial enquiry because, without a judicial investigation, it is not possible to give to the masses of our people that sense of security without which they may not go back. The Government has always been minimising the position and, therefore, in spite of occasional exaggerations in the reports of the Calcutta newspapers, basically they have done a great job, and that is why any suggestion of muzzling of the newspapers must be discountenanced.

The Prime Minister has also referred to the question of the students' participation in this unhappy tragedy, and the Jain Report has some observations in regard to the students as well. The students, it is proposed under the Jain Report, as well as from the trends of the Prime Minister's observations, should be taught a lesson because, after all, they were the villains of the peace—this is the idea which is being propagated. I want to ask whether the students were suddenly in a position to come forward and take the leadership of Assam. Were not there people behind the students? The Prime Minister was hard put to it today to explain away the case of one student leader, who is in the service of the Government, who has no degree but who has got a post-graduate scholarship. Heaven knows through what kind of mechanism, through the assistance of the Director of Public Instruction under the orders, perhaps, of a Minister with some kind of portfolio; he is supposed to be the greatest student leader; a student leader in the employment of the Government, a student leader who is obviously a favourite of the powers that he is supposed to be the greatest leader. Now, these students have been used as pawns by the Congress party and the Congress Government. The other parties may very well have been to



blame to a certain extent but, as far as we are concerned, we are prepared to have a perfect probe, a comprehensive judicial enquiry. As far as we are concerned, some members might be aware, our party has taken special steps even against those who are fairly high up, who are Members of the Legislative Assembly, whenever charges of chauvinism and conduct which was even worse have been alleged against them. So, we do not want this kind of thing to happen.

It is no good banning students' participation in political matters and that sort of thing, because you cannot have it in that way in the present day world. After all, at the age of 21 they are voters for your elections. Many of the students, at least in the post-graduate stage, are 21 or over. So, it is no good merely expecting students to keep away from political work in every part of the country. They can take part in political work, not for all the time but in times of emergency.....

**Mr. Chairman:** The hon. Member should conclude.

**Shri H. N. Mukerjee:** I will finish in five minutes.

In times of emergency, perhaps, they could come forward. But, generally speaking, they take a lively interest in political matters. We do not want our students all the time shouting away all over the place and making a lot of *golmal*. We do not want that kind of thing at all. But, on the contrary, the desire of the students to know the present-day world by organising themselves in their own way is something which should not be negated only because in Assam some very guilty men, because they were in power, have exploited the students and the young people of that State in order to perpetrate these atrocities. You let go all the main culprits and you punish the tools, this is the kind of activity which is being persisted in by the

Government in Assam, and the State Government's incompetence in having abdicated its responsibility has not been brought to book by the Central Government by the utilisation of those weapons which the Constitution put in its armoury.

Therefore, in regard to the other demands which are now being put forward for the solution of the tangle in Assam, I would say that, apart from the judicial enquiry, which is the most important thing, the language issue should be settled. There should be no hasty decision and there should be no imposition. And, as I said earlier, we have great sympathy for the development of the Assamese language, we quite understand the desire of the people in Assam to have Assamese as their official language, but the position being difficult, the population ratio being rather complicated, and because of the SRC report laying down certain criteria for the adoption of one language as the official language of a particular State, because of these factors, we cannot have Assamese immediately as the official language, and therefore, there has to be consultation and there should be no imposition. I am glad there is talk of a round table conference where the language issue can be thrashed out.

In regard to rehabilitation I wish to emphasise that Central liability has got to be accepted and execution of rehabilitation schemes has got to be guaranteed. This has got to be done. This sort of guarantee has got to be given. The law and order position there has deteriorated to such an extent that we have not seen one single case of the application of the Preventive Detention Act. We have known and we have seen reports of people being arrested and then being let off on bail even though they were charged with having committed some of the most gruesome atrocities. This kind of thing has happened. The guarantees as to the execution of the responsibilities of the Central Government have not been

[Shri H. N. Mukerjee]

observed. In regard to rehabilitation in particular, Central liability has go. to be accepted. West Bengal should not be asked to foot the bill for having to keep, for God knows how long, nearly 40,000 refugees from Assam. Some thing ought to be done by the Centre and by the Assam Government also. But what is most important is that there should be a guarantee to the heart of the people of Assam. There I agree with the hon. Prime Minister that all kinds of efforts should be made by all sorts of people in different parties and by those who belong to no party so that we can have a restoration of cordiality and friendship in Assam because this is not a matter which affects only Assam and Bengal. If the disease infects other parts of India then we shall have to say good-bye to all ideas of our Indian nationality.

There has been a talk of the hon. Prime Minister going again to Assam. I do wish he goes. But let him feel something a little more acutely than he has done so far. Let him feel something of the hurt which our people have felt. Let him not be derailed from his path by a certain prejudice which we have suspected on his part—a prejudice regarding Calcutta and Bengalis. I know that the Bengalis may have an attitude of mind which perhaps may not be palatable to other people, but we all have different attitudes of mind. We have all to live together. We have to make do. We have to live together. We are all Indians. That basic unity of our Indianness is something which transcends our differences when we belong to our States. Therefore when the whole of West Bengal is unanimous on this issue, when in Assam also there are men of goodwill who will surely understand that guilty men have to be punished, that only as a result of a judicial enquiry the whole position can be clarified, when that is so, good men of goodwill in Bengal and Assam can certainly combine. I

therefore repeat my very fervent appeal that efforts are made at every level to bring about once again a reconciliation of all our peoples whether they belong to Bengal or to Assam because now we are getting hints—very gruesome hints—of what might happen once the provincial chauvinism is roused to the fever pitch which we have seen having been done in Assam. We have got all to pull together. We have got all to remember the glory that India represents. We have got all to remember that however, our pride in our own linguistic unity might be that pride can only be sustained and propagated before the whole world when we remember our Indian entity and when we remember our affiliations with this great country of ours. Then and then alone shall we be able to solve the kind of difficult problem which has cropped up.

I do not think it is a problem which defies solution. It is a problem which has to be tackled with statesmanlike fervour. This is a problem which has to be tackled with sympathy. This is a problem which cannot be successfully tackled if there is in the Central Government a feeling that Calcutta is a difficult customer as far as political matters are concerned, that Bengalis are a difficult people, that Bengalis are creating all kinds of political troubles for the party in power. Therefore sympathy which is due to all of us, whether we live in Bengal or in Kerala, or in Punjab or in Tamilnad, the sympathy that is due to all of us must be forthcoming. Without that sympathy being forthcoming, I am afraid solutions will not be enough. But if there is an immediate advance towards the setting up of a judicial enquiry, if there is co-operative and collective effort in order to make rehabilitation really and truly effective, if the language question is solved with reference to all opinions in Assam and elsewhere, then surely we shall find a way out of the present extremely disastrous tangle.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** Sir, the ominous portents held up by the late tragic upheaval in Assam are clear for all to see. It is really a challenge to the national integrity and unity of India and if we feel or if we are disposed to feel that this is a matter which concerns only the several major language groups inside the State of Assam or they merely concern the people of Assam and Bengal, we would make the most grievous sort of mistake. It would be a mistake that would eventually mean failing India. It is my principal charge against the Government that sits over there, namely, that by their inaction, by their indecisiveness, by their hopeless confusion of mind they have really failed India.

It is not so much the Government of Assam which has to be put in the dock today—far less the people of Assam for whom we have love and respect. But we must call to the docks the entire Cabinet here and particularly two high personages who hold the destiny of our country in their hands today. I mean, with all sense of responsibility, the hon. Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and his colleague, the hon. Home Minister, Shri Govind Ballabh Pant. Why I say so...

**Shri Jaipal Singh:** Why not Shri Jawaharlal Nehru?

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** I have said Jawaharlal Nehru:

**Shri Jaipal Singh:** Why do you not say Shri Jawaharlal Nehru?

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** Shri Jawaharlal Nehru and Shri Govind Ballabh Pant. It means the same thing to me.

Why am I bringing in the Central Government? We have grown into a habit of thinking that whenever the Central Government acts in the affairs of a State it can only impose the President's rule, or else do nothing. Although I was not privileged to be

one of the makers of the Constitution, one of the makers of this document is sitting over there, one of the founding fathers of our Constitution, and I would in all humility refer to him certain sections of the Constitution that impose inescapable responsibility on the Government to see that this Constitution is respected throughout India and its terms have been framed in such a wide manner that they can step in without imposing President's rule if they feel that the Constitution is being violated.

On the opening day of this session when some of us sought to move an adjournment motion on the Assam situation, I referred to article 355 which was earlier referred to in connection with the Kerala situation. Do I have to remind Shri Govind Ballabh Pant—does it not this article place on the Union Government the obligation to ensure that the Government of every State is carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution? Does not article 256 of the Constitution extend the executive power of the Union to give such directions to the State as may appear to the Government of India to be necessary for carrying out the compliance with the laws made by the Parliament and laws which apply in that State or in any State or throughout India? May I ask in all humility: Is not the Constitution also the law of the land? Are not articles 14 to 19 which guarantee freedom of movement, freedom of habitation, freedom to pursue any avocation we like in any part of the country—I do not speak only for Bengal; it is not a question of Bengalis and Assamese alone; I speak as an Indian citizen—law of the land? These are the rights that have been guaranteed to us by your Constitution? Are they not the law of the land? Is it not your duty to see that these rights are protected? Can you say in all seriousness that the steps you took were at all proportionate to the seriousness of the situation that developed there?

15 hrs.

**Shri Tyagi:** The situation is not continuing.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** I am coming to what is the situation that is continuing. The Prime Minister referred to the decision—I do not know who took the decision—to move the army. Presumably, the Central Government at a certain stage decided that the army has to be moved. When? On the 4th night and 5th of July. Was the Central Government in possession of no information at their disposal before that a very serious situation had been developing the State? I have seen here in the Jain Report there is some criticism of the intelligence staff of Assam and the local administration in Assam. Lala Achint Ram, our respected friend hit the nail on the head when he asked, what was the Central Government doing. Year after year, we pass our budgets and sanction money for the Central Intelligence Bureau over the destinies of which our estimable friend sitting over there presides. What was the Central Intelligence Bureau doing all the time? Did they have no information from other sources?

On the 2nd of August, one hon. Member from Assam Shri P. C. Barooha and another hon. Member from the U.P. Shri Raghunath Singh had put a question to the Minister of Transport and Communications about non-Assamese employees of Mohanbari airport of the Civil Aviation Department. In the answer it was that on the 24th June, although there was no attack on the aerodrome itself, the members of the staff who were assaulted were the victims of the general language agitation. This information was already in the possession of the Central Government, or at that in the possession of one of the departments of the Central Government. Then, on the 5th of August, there was a question in my name, put to the Minister of Transport and Communications again, ask-

ing whether it is a fact that the running of Railway Mail Service between Lumding and Tinsukia had been stopped since the 23rd June as a result of the attack on non-Assamese R.M.S. sorters between Mariani and Tinsukia in connection with language disturbances in that State, and if so, for how many days the Railway Mail Services were dislocated on this line on account of these disturbances. The reply was, the running of Railway Mail Service was dislocated on certain days during the months of June and July, and some R.M.S. sections did not work over this route on 24th and 25th June. The trains did not move and communications were interrupted. Yet, the Central Government here sits tight saying that the situation was not anything that calls for any drastic action or we do not know anything.

We were told by the Prime Minister on the 1st of August that on the 23rd or 27th of June—I do not exactly remember the date—when the Governor of Assam came to Delhi, he asked him about the situation and the Governor reported to him that there was tension, but the situation was no so serious to call for any anxiety or any drastic action immediately. May be, the Governor being a military man was suffering under an inferiority complex and he did not want to appear to the people as a chhota Ayub Khan. He felt he had to function within the frame work of State administration.

We know from the Jain Report what was the state of the State administration and police intelligence service there. There was the Central Government over here charged with all the responsibility to uphold the Constitution and the fundamental rights of the people guaranteed under the Constitution. But what were they doing? I know the Prime Minister was not here. But, the iron man of India, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant was here, who could crush the Central

Government employees' strike in less than a week's time. Was he not here?

Look at the confusion in the Government Benches. Up till now, although more than six weeks have passed, but for the statement just now made by the Prime Minister, we have had as yet not a single authoritative statement on behalf of the Government. Information comes to us by scraps. Even this Jain Report which I consider as nothing but a sort of a special pleading for certain kind of conclusions to which they had arrived even perhaps before they went to Assam, has pointed out to certain things which call for immediate enquiry. Certain things came up here in the course of the exchanges that we had at the time of the Prime Minister's speech. There was one Dula Barua. He is said to be a student leader. You already know what type of student leader he has been. This man appears to have been in league with a public man who was a member of the Cabinet in Assam for some time. Here, again, in this report, we find that except in the two districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur, in all other districts, in all the four districts, the magistracy, the police and others were in league almost or were infected by this virus of linguistic chauvinism. In one place, it is mentioned that a procession was taken out from a police station itself. Do not all these facts point out that a secret nucleus or gang was working with tentacles spread even inside the Administration?

Reference has been made in this report to the general pattern of the disturbances that took place. I do not want to go into the details because I have no time. But, anybody who has simple commonsense can see that these things could not have happened unless there was a deep-laid conspiracy and I say it deliberately with a full sense of responsibility that even the Members of the Assam Cabinet were afraid of these people. Let me call to witness Shri Sanjiva Reddy, for whom at least our friends opposite will

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have some respect—may not be we on this side.

Some Hon. Members: Why?

Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri: He is reported as saying on the 14th when he was in Assam and went to Silkhar, that on his arrival at Shillong, he actually found that the leaders and Cabinet Members were somewhat nervous and at a loss to understand how to control the riots and outbreak of mob violence. By the 14th, Mr. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed had come back.

Some Hon. Members: Not on the 14th.

Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri: Even then, he could not inspire that confidence. Even the second man in the Cabinet could not inspire that confidence. The Congress President found by talking to Cabinet Members that they were afraid, they were nervous. Why were they afraid and nervous? Of whom were they afraid? Who were the reactionary forces who terrorised them? I deliberately say that a fascist gang was operating there—reactionary forces whose activities require to be investigated and exposed. It is not the Assamese people, the Assamese masses, who are to be blamed. I am privileged to know something of the Assamese people. I have travelled over Assam a lot. They are a human people, they are a friendly people. They have grown up in the Vaishnavite tradition from the days of the Mahapurushas, Shankara Dev and even from earlier onwards. One of the finest versions of the Gita has come out from there. So, I cannot bring myself to believe that these people could be moved to frenzy simply because there was some linguistic, communal rivalry between the major language groups there. Who suffered as a result? Not the people of Cachar, which is a Bengali speaking district. Those who suffered were the Bengalees of the six Brahmaputra valley districts who almost unani-

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mously everywhere passed resolutions supporting the move for Assamese as their State language.

Is it a question of economic rivalry? I do not have the time, but I have some figures with me. I am giving you the latest figures to be found in the Civil List. In the Assam Civil Service No. 1, in the posts of the Extra Assistant Commissioners etc.,—the total number is 145—Bengalees are 18, hill people 17, Assamese-speaking people 110. Verily, Sir, Bengalees are standing in the way!

The total number of ACS people of Class II is 149 of which Bengalees are 15, hill people 14 and Assamese 120. Verily, Sir, Bengalees are blocking the way!

Then I come to business and industry. I have figures with me, and I would like to be corrected by my Assam friends over there if I make a single wrong or incorrect statement.

**Shri C. K. Bhattacharya:** You have one by your side.

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** He may also correct me.

What are the principal industries in Assam? Apart from tea, there is petroleum, coal, rice and oil mills. The petroleum industry in Assam belongs to a British company. There are four coal-mining companies, three of which are owned by a well-known business community whom I do not want to name here because passions might be roused.

**Some Hon. Members:** Why?

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** One is British. So far as rice and oil mills are concerned, including Cachar there are 300, of which 35 belong to Assamese, 32 to Bengalees and 233 again to the same business community. Bengalees are blocking the way, they are the stumbling block to Assam's progress!

Then, there are the agencies of controlled goods in Assam. Two of these dealers who have the monopoly of these controlled goods, so to say, or the concession of selling these goods, are Bengalees, four are Assamese and 114 again belong to that business community.

**Shri Sinhasan Singh (Gorakhpur):** What is that community?

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** And the Bengalees are blocking the way of the economic development of Assam!

Then, about the tea gardens. There are as many as 25 agency houses. Of these, only three are in the hands of or controlled by Bengalees, one is Assamese and the rest 21 are either in the hands of the Britishers or men from that community. Our hon. friend Shri Rameshwar Tantia would be able to enlighten us with something about tea industry in Assam. This disposes of the question of Bengalees being the stumbling block in the way of Assam's development.

I grant that there has been a great deal of rivalry between the Bengalee educated middle classes and the Assamese educated middle classes who are coming up. I also know that for the past three decades—not only since independence as the Jain Report says, but even from before that—there had been developing a certain amount of rivalry between the Bengalee-speaking Assamese and the Assamese-speaking Assamese over their relative strength in population, their representation in the services and all that, and I find that a misunderstanding has come to take possession of the Members of the House as I find from lobby talks. They say: "Oh, Assam's Chief Secretary is a Bengalee, the IGP is a Bengalee, there are so many DIGPs who are Bengalees." But does not the Bengali-speaking Chief Secretary belong to a district of Assam? Have not his people lived there for generations, have not his forefathers

lived there for generations? Is it not a **there for generations?** Is it not a fact that a previous Government of Assam wanted to get rid of him, and did actually get rid of him? He was sent out of that State, and a non-Bengalee Chief Secretary from another State was brought in. Was it not a fact that after sometime again the same Chief Minister begged of the Bengalee gentleman to come back. When the non-Assamese and non-Bengalee Chief Secretary came the Bengalees of the Brahmaputra valley could heave a sigh of relief that a non-Bengalee had come and he would act impartially without any inferiority complex. Shri Pandit was sent there, but can anybody enlighten me why this gentleman could not stay in Assam for six months?

I grant again, I concede, that there has been rivalry between the Bengalees and the Assamese. And do I not know as a Bengalee what the failings of my own people are? I know them fully well but even then, in spite of the fact that the Bengalees have certain failings, would you go out to kill them, to burn their houses, to resort to those violent, unspeakable crimes that have taken place? And here the Central Government say they were not aware of how they could stop these things. The two seniormost Cabinet Members are not sure, even after six weeks, at whose initiative the Army was moved there, whether the Assam Government asked for it, or whether it was done at the Governor's initiative. Anyway, it was some relief, some consolation that the Army was moved at some stage.

My principle charge against the Government is that they abdicated their function, the Government of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the Government of Pandit Gobind Ballabh Pant, the Government of the gentlemen who are sitting there, abdicated their function. If anybody is to be put on the dock, is to be arranged publicly, it is they, not the Government of Assam.

I hold Shri Chaliha in great esteem. He has been a friend and colleague of us here. Do I not know that he is esteemed not only by the Bengalees there, but even by the hostile Nagas? I agree with the Prime Minister that he is the one cementing force. But who were the people, I ask, behind these happenings? Does not the Prime Minister know? Of course, my hon. friend Shri Jaipal Singh would object, but I know that the Prime Minister is posted with all the facts, and I wish to tell him that there is a reactionary nucleus, a gangster nucleus in Assam, may be controlled by men of his own party.

**Shri Jaipal Singh:** What is my objection?

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** He would object to the Prime Minister saying that he knows more than all the Opposition Benches put together.

I know that the Prime Minister is posted with all the facts, but I appeal to him to take courage in both hands to suppress the forces of disruption. If at this moment, he cannot protect the unity of India, if he cannot protect the integrity of India, I do not know who will.

I pray to God; I am not a believer, but even then, I pray to God. (*Laughter*). Do not laugh; this is not a matter of laughter. I ask you to see the writings on the wall, inscribed in letters of blood and tear, blood of brother shed by brother, and tear of Mother India; and if we fail to rise to the occasion, then we will, all,—all of us,—commit treason and fail Mother India.

**Acharya Kripalani:** Sir, we live in times when everybody is suspect, whatever his credentials. At such times, it becomes difficult to speak the truth, without offending some party or the other, without offending some interest or the other. In the case of communal riots, it becomes even more difficult to speak out the truth, because

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it is said that if the truth is told, peaceful relations will be disturbed and rehabilitation will become impossible. The only safe course, therefore, in such circumstances, is to throw all the blame upon the people of India, on the goondas or maybe, even the victims, including the children and the women. This is the safest course that one can take.

As the Prime Minister said, the happenings in Assam are tragic indeed. They are a disgrace not to Assam alone, but to the whole of India. Let this fact be not lost sight of because of the hysterical outbursts of a section of people in Bengal and a section of the press. These events have been more damaging to our national life than the riots that took place at the time of the Partition. In those days, we could legitimately blame a foreign Government and say that they with their policy of divide-and-rule, had brought about these riots. But, today, there is no third party even on whom we can throw the blame.

It is not my purpose today to retail the inhuman and cruel deeds that were perpetrated. Riots are always senseless and cruel, but in the present instance they were more so. It is now common knowledge that children were killed, and that women were dishonoured. There are certain acts so cowardly and cruel and degrading that numbers in my opinion do not count. If even one child was killed, and even one woman was dishonoured, it should be a matter of great shame and humiliation for all of us. It is also a matter of national shame and humiliation that some foreigners should have tried to save our people from the wrath and cruelty of their own countrymen.

It is said that this riot was a result of language controversy. This is not altogether true. People do get excited about language. But, in India, the masses everywhere speak the local dialects, and left to themselves, they will not fight with their neighbours on this language issue. At least 80 per cent. of those living in the villages

have no education. Moreover, they are too engrossed in their every-day economic problems to have an appetite for riot on the language issue. I, therefore, do not for a moment believe that the mass of the Assamese people had much to do with this riot. I have not known that there are any considerable number of goondas in Assam. There may be political goondas, but they are not the ordinary goondas. I have been often in the midst of the people of Assam. And I have found them to be simple, to be peace-loving, and to be easy-going. Then how did all this happen?

The language controversy in Assam, as I make bold to say, everywhere else in India, is the creation of the educated people; but the language controversy is always a smoke-screen. If it were not so, the Bengali-speaking Assamese who live in the Brahmaputra valley would not have been the victims of the riots! They had never agitated against the Assamese language or in favour of the Bengali language. It is known that they had sometimes passed resolutions accepting the Assamese language.

It is neither the masses nor the goondas who would ask women to change their dress. I can understand a goonda dishonouring a woman, but not asking her to change her dress, and to wear what is called the *makhla*, nor would he destroy Bengali schools and clubs where there was no property to be looted. If the masses were responsible in Assam, Bengali students, male and female, would not have been obliged to leave their schools and other educational institutions. Nor did the goondas go to the refinery or to the railways and find out Bengalis and harass them there. All these things have been done, let there be no doubt about it, by us, the educated people.

**Shri Jaipal Singh:** Miseducated people.

**Acharya Kripalani:** This is what it is. Let there be nobody who would say that the masses perpetrated these things.



Let us now see who were the victims of these riots. The Bengalis living in the valley are not Bengalis; they are Assamese people. If the citizenship of India goes by States, then, they are the children of the soil as much as the Assamese-speaking portion of the population or the hill people. As a matter of fact, there are no real Bengalis in Assam except a few in the plantations, in the railways and other all-India services. The overwhelming bulk of the so-called Bengalis are Assamese, speaking the Bengali language in their homes and using it for the education of their children. No two major languages in India, I say without any fear of contradiction from any quarter, are more alike each other than the Bengali and Assamese languages. They have the same script. And I make bold to say that every Assamese understands Bengali and every Bengali understands Assamese; at least, every urban person does so, and every educated person does so. I really cannot understand what the controversy is about; but I have a suspicion, and it is this, that there is a group of people who have political ambitions, and there is another group of educated persons who want to have preponderance in Government services and in the administration; it is these educated persons who create all the riots that have all along happened on the issue of language; it is not the common people.

Why do they do this? They do it not because, as my hon. friend has just now told you, the economic life of the country is in the hands of other people. The educated know that they cannot enter into the field of industry and commerce. Why? Because if a fool enters into industry and commerce, he will go into liquidation; but if the fool enters government service, then it is not he who would suffer, but it is we who would suffer. Therefore, every fool can aspire to government service. There are more gains in commerce and industry, but the educated do not care for them. They care only for the loaves and fishes of office.

Supposing language was the real issue, it could be decided very easily. It was a question to be decided by the Assembly, by the votes in the Assembly. It could have been done at any time because the Assamese-speaking Assamese are in an overwhelming majority in the Assembly. So far as this language question is concerned, there are no parties at all, as there were no parties so far as rioting was concerned. All parties became united and worked together. The majority of the Assembly members are Assamese-speaking. The Chief Minister had announced that he would bring forward a Bill which would decide this issue and he had said that Assamese would be the State language of Assam. He had only provided in that Bill a little breathing space for the Bengalis in Cachar and for the tribal people. So where was the question of language?

Even supposing that some people did not want the Bill that he proposed to bring forward, that they were dissatisfied with it, they could have brought amendments, and I am sure those amendments would have been passed, because they have an overwhelming majority. There is no question of party affiliation here. But supposing even that is not done, supposing even that does not satisfy them, then, I hold that the Constitution of India provides that everybody can freely speak out his mind and propagate his views. They could have propagated their views. But I am surprised to see that even when rioting was going on, when the atmosphere was disturbed, these educated people went on convening meetings after meetings emphasising this question of language. Language is not an issue which could not have been decided, but there must be a deep-rooted conspiracy, and I am sure some of the Congressmen also know it. It was this, that there was a clique which wanted to get rid of Chaliha, which wanted to get rid of the Ministry, and that clique was joined by other cliques and by other parties including, I am ashamed to say, my party. I do not speak as belonging to any party. I have never

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spoken anything excepting what I have felt and what I have considered to be for the advantage of my people. I have no Province, and I can tell you, Sir, that I have no religion in so far as I am an Indian. My religion is for private consumption and my private conduct. As an Indian, I have no religion in the public life of the country, in so far as the social, political and economic life of the country is concerned.

**The Minister of Mines and Oil (Shri K. D. Malaviya):** That way I am proud of you.

**Acharya Kripalani:** That I am correct will appear from what happened when an adjournment motion was sought to be moved in this House and the Prime Minister said that it was not time just then to have any debate on the question, and then some Bengali gentlemen spoke and some Assamese gentlemen spoke: The Assamese Member said that there are deeper causes, language is not the only cause, but there are deeper causes for what happened. What are these deeper causes? One such was referred to by our Prime Minister. It is the historical cause—that, to their shame, the Bengalis, having been conquered earlier than other people of India, learnt the English language more quickly and they were appointed in the neighbouring province as administrators and they behaved there in a supercilious manner.

**An Hon. Member:** *Chota Sahibs*.

**Acharya Kripalani:** They considered themselves as *Chota Sahibs* under the white *Burra Sahibs*. But I ask my Assamese friends very humbly: have you ever asked the hill people? What do they say? They say, 'Curse on both your houses, Bengalis and Assamese. You have tyrannised over us.'

If we are going into the historical past, the Andhras will tell us that the Tamils have sat upon them; the Gujataris will tell you that at one time Surat was looted . . .

**An Hon. Member:** By Maharattas.

**Acharya Kripalani:** The Kannadigas will tell you that the Maharattas had always sat upon them. If we are going into these deeper causes, if we are going into historical causes, we will be nowhere. There would be no unity of India without which we would not have achieved our independence. We have today no enmity with the English, know that that no one Province could have tyrannised over another as much as the English people did over us all, and yet we have no ill-feeling for the Englishman. We have friendship with him and we manifest this friendship whenever an occasion arises. This was not a riot engineered by the masses. Let me make it clear again. It is a question of the educated persons, who can do nothing but go in government service or be Members of Parliament or the Assemblies or join political life. We cannot do anything constructive. We cannot do anything that is worthwhile for India. This is the condition of the educated and this is because of the education we have received. This education was given in order to provide a cheap native agency for the administration by the Britishers because they could not bring the British people here in any numbers. As the tree, so the fruit. The fruit was there not only before independence; the fruit continues on after independence, because our educational system still remains the same.

We must clearly understand who are responsible, and not talk of the common people whose only concern is to get two square meals a day, who are not thinking of fighting with their neighbours, who always co-operate with their neighbours and who are not concerned with the language issue because they are uneducated. It is we who create trouble and throw the blame upon others, clever fellows that we are.

The trouble, Sir, is—this is also another phenomenon in India which is very peculiar—that every Province not only wants to have everything for itself within the Province, but it also

wants a share in other Provinces, and it wants a share in the Centre. Tell the Bengalis from all parts of India, 'You all go to Bengal'. They will never consent to it.

**Shri C. D. Pande:** Then Shrimati Kripalani will go away.

**Acharya Kripalani:** I am sorry you are mistaken. (*Interruptions*). Shrimati Kripalani is as much a Bengali as, I say with all humility, our Prime Minister is a Kashmiri and I a Sindhi. She has been brought up and educated in the Punjab and Delhi and Simla and has worked in U.P. Such is our cursed way of thinking. A man may go to America and in 5 years gain citizenship; but if I go to another province and live for 30 years, I will be called a Sindhi and our Prime Minister will be called, unfortunately, a Kashmiri. This is how we manage these affairs!

As I was telling you the trouble is that people in different provinces want their own province to themselves and in other provinces also they want to have a share. Take the Tamilians. The Tamilians want to have nothing to do with the North. If I had the power I would say, 'Yes; you have nothing to do with the North. Let all Tamilians go bag and baggage to Tamil Nad, to Madras'. They will never accept such a proposition. The Punjabis want—the Sikhs want or whoever wants it—the Punjabi Suba. Tell them that all the Sikhs that are spread out throughout the length and breadth of India should go into the Punjabi Suba, then the demand for the Punjabi Suba will not be there.

This government of ours, the Central Government of ours, does not think logically; it thinks through fear. Government is not carried on through fear. Give this choice to the Jhonnies who want their separate provinces on a linguistic basis, that they shall have their pound of flesh and no more; and you will see what happens. Nobody would want a province to himself because nobody wants only that. We

want to have our own and have something from our neighbours and having got it, will not leave it; and every province has a big claim upon the Centre. Why cannot the Centre just tighten the screw? I do not understand this!

Then, in this matter how did the Provincial and Central Governments behave? The State Government's Cabinet was nowhere. It was said that Mr. Chaliha was ill. Then there was the second man in command, Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmad, he was away while these troubles were going on. It was not that there was no trouble, because the trouble began as early as May. Incidents were happening. Even the report of Mr. Jain has to admit that these incidents were going on at that time. The Chief Minister was ill, the second-in-command goes away to Kashmir and takes away the Chief Secretary also with him! (*Interruptions*). What was the Chief Secretary doing in Kashmir and for what was he there? I do not know whether there was a conference of the Finance Ministers.

**Some Hon. Members:** A conference on Community Development.

**Acharya Kripalani:** Community Development! There was not a conference of the Finance Ministers. He is my friend; and they are all my friends, unfortunately. This is how things are done.

I am sorry to say—I have great respect for my friend of many years, Shri G. B. Pant who is considered a strong man in spite of his age—that the Home Minister's functionaries were not functioning in that State. Even when there were disturbances in the All-India institutions, there was no knowledge here. If there was knowledge, no action was taken. Therefore, the Central Government is also responsible for the trouble; and I hope that these things will not happen in future.

[Acharya Kripalani]

Then the question arises—and this is a very interesting question—whether there should be an enquiry. I am not thinking of an enquiry into who killed whom, who burnt the houses; but I am thinking of an enquiry where we get at the root of the trouble. Unless we get at the root of this evil, I say this evil will be recurring from time to time. This is the third time it has happened in Assam. It has happened in other States in a lesser degree; on this very question. We must find out who are at the root of this trouble; and unless we find that, I am afraid we will not be able to check the recurrence of such incidents in the future, which disgrace us before the whole world.

I must admit that there are some disadvantages in an enquiry. But, when we have to solve collective problems, it is not a choice between good and evil. I submit it is a choice between two evils; and I make bold to say, a high-power enquiry is necessary which need not go into details, which should only be asked to find out who created this trouble. That young boy, Dulal Barua's organising capacity was praised by the Prime Minister. I know the evil can organise better than the good. The good people rely on their goodness and on God. They never organise themselves. This is the trouble with good people. And the evil person, if he is not intelligent, if he cannot organise, he will go down. He cannot function.

**Mr. Chairman:** The hon. Member should now conclude.

**Acharya Kripalani:** A few minutes, Sir.

I feel that holding an enquiry of that sort will be the lesser of the two evils. Those who do not want an enquiry argue that it will further anger the Assamese-speaking community. Do the Assam people want that the truth should be covered up? I thought that the truth should come out and it should be in the interests of the Assamese people themselves

that they are taken out from the clutches of the political cliques that are functioning. They themselves should be anxious to know the truth as anybody else in India. Truth injures nobody but the evil-doer.

It is now widely believed that the riots were engineered by a political party. If that is so—and it is also said that my party was involved in it—I do not care whether the Congress wants to see that its people are cleared or not. But, if I belong to a party, I certainly want to know what my party people did. I would like to know whether I can associate with them or not. I cannot associate with people who are provincial, who are communal. I can only associate with Indians. I left the Congress for lesser reasons; and I would have no hesitation in leaving the Praja-Socialist Party if I find that there are some people—important people holding offices—who are communal, who want to destroy the unity of India, who are at the root of a riot that dishonours our women and kills our children before their parents. How can an enquiry be denied? There was the death of one boy. It is said that he was killed by a bullet of the police. And at once, the Assamese—I say, the educated Assamese—made it impossible for the Government not to have an enquiry immediately. Government would not institute an enquiry so soon while the atmosphere was disturbed but the political elements—that is, the educated people—and the students compelled the authorities to have it at once. I have never found that on one death, the provincial Government has instituted an enquiry so quickly and so soon. You must remember that there is no Government in Assam but the Government of an educated mob and behind it the political cliques which want to achieve their own selfish purposes. I am now able to understand what I read in history that for kingdoms and empires the claimants killed their brothers and their fathers. Now I understand why it was so. If for these petty jobs, we

are able to destroy our people, dishonour our women and kill children I understand that it is possible for a person who is going to get a kingdom or an empire to kill his brothers or imprison his father. It is only today that I understand history, when I see the mean minds of our people who cannot rise above their cliques, above their ambitions for a Ministry and things like that and they betray our country. How are we going to face it?

How are we going to face Bengal? I say that but for this old man Dr. B. C. Roy, Bengal might have seen a worse riot than Assam. We have got to be thankful to this old man that he has kept the peace in his State. If we are going to deny him this enquiry, you are not strengthening but weakening his hands and I am afraid he will not be able to keep in check the forces that are working in Bengal.

**Shri Atulya Ghosh (Asansol):** I am thankful to the hon. Speaker for making available this report. The Prime Minister has said that the report has been drawn objectively. At least about the findings of the report, there is no difference of opinion among the Members. They are more or less unanimous. We find from the report that on the 1st of June, the IG asked for advice from the Government, apprehending trouble in the State of Assam. On the 28th of June the second man in the Cabinet, Mr. Fakruddin Ahmed, along with the Chief Secretary left for Srinagar.

15.54 hrs.

[**SHRIMATI RENU CHAKRAVARTY** in the Chair].

When he left for Srinagar, he knew the Chief Minister was not keeping well. What was the result of IG's note? Why did they ignore this note of the IG?

Anything that is said now is controversial. So, it is better to read from this report:

"Following the incidents of 4th July, 1960 at Gauhati, there was

a week of uncontrolled mob violence throughout the Brahmaputra Valley, which resulted according to official estimates in the death of 39 persons, injuries to 487, burning, damaging and looting of 10891 houses. There were also reports of molestation of women and a few cases of rape."

This is neither by a Bengali Press nor by a Bengali. If it is exaggerated it has been done by all the parties of this Parliament, Members belonging to all the parties. The incidents which began from the 1st of July continued unabated upto the 12th of July—a period of 12 days. I can well understand the difficulty of the Government of Assam, Mr. Chairman.

**An Hon. Member: Madam.**

**Shri Atulya Ghosh:** I am sorry, Madam Chairman.

**Mr. Chairman:** There is a ruling that you can address the Chair in whichever way you like—he or she or it.

**Shri Atulya Ghosh:** Sometimes the Prime Minister of India is absent from India or sometimes, the Home Minister from Delhi. But the Government of India functions. The Chief Minister was ailing; the Chief Secretary was absent and the Finance Minister was absent. The other Ministers were there, the whole administrative set-up was there. It is very difficult to understand how a civilised Government, a Congress Government which believes in some ideology allows these things to happen for continuous twelve days? We cannot reply to the people. There is no question of exaggeration.

This report is given by Shri Jain and his colleagues. What is the reply to it? From our early days we have treated the Prime Minister as our leader and it was our privilege to work under him. But regarding Assam incidents he could not satisfy us.

[Shri Atulya Ghosh]

There is no reply to this charge. How could it happen for 12 continuous days? In the heat of the moment, I can understand people doing some obnoxious work but how did it happen for over a week? It is very perplexing. Whether there was a Congress Government or a PSP Government, they are a human Government; they are human beings functioning as civilised men.

Now, what about this language question? The Brahmaputra valley people, those who have suffered had never raised any question about language. This is nothing but creating confusion in the minds of the people and creating misunderstanding in people's minds.

We have heard that Bengalis are trouble-shooters; we have heard that superiority complex is dominating the Bengalis and it is the root of these troubles. Did these Bengali-speaking people go out to these areas from Bengal? Are they themselves responsible for remaining in Assam?

In 1905 Bengal was partitioned. A state was created and named East Bengal and Assam, the headquarter being Dacca and the summer capital being Shillong. In 1911, the Partition was annulled. What was the result? Three districts of Bengal with more than 90 per cent of the Bengali-speaking people,—people of the same soil and some areas in the Brahmaputra valley, some of the hill areas were taken together and the State of Assam was formed. Now, why were these three districts of Bengali-speaking people taken? To make the Assam State viable. We are not talking about any sacrifice. We are mentioning this to remind you about the historical facts. For economic necessity, the Government of India at that time gave this area to Assam and the leaders of Bengal did not object to it. I am not asking any sympathy for this. I am only saying that we should bring it to your notice that these

Bengali-speaking people who are in Assam are as good Assamese as Baruas and Chalihas and Buragohains. We have heard to our shock and shame in the Central Hall and in the lobby some of our colleagues saying that a superiority complex is dominating the Bengalis. I deny the charge. There is no question of a superiority Complex. It is a fact that they are there for ages. They love the soil of Assam as Baruas and Chalihas and others do. So you cannot say that they are intruders, they have gone there and they are trying to make their language to be accepted by Assam. That question does not arise. And the sufferers were the people of Brahmaputra Valley. They have said in hundreds of meetings that their language is Assamese.

16 hrs.

Madam, the treatment meted out to Shrimati Indira Gandhi was shameful, I do admit it and I express my sincerest sorrow. But the people throughout India know that there are people in every State who want to create chaos and anarchy, those who would like to create a sense of anarchy and mobocracy and to reap rich harvests out of it. No right-thinking Bengali is responsible for this. Anyhow, I am sorry for it. But I was astounded, I was shocked when friends and colleagues of several years told me that they have no sympathy for the Bengali-speaking victims of Assam. Why? Because some of the interested persons in Bengal staged a demonstration against Shrimati Indira Gandhi. Is this the reason to lose sympathy for the daughters of thousands of citizens of Assam, because one noble lady was insulted? Madam, I was shocked.

We have heard that we are trouble-shooters. What can we do? We are helpless. The whole of India applauded us when we did trouble-shooting against the British Imperialism. We have been accustomed to trouble-

shooting. It will take some time for us to change, and this consideration you cannot avoid. When our boys were shooting people and killing them and laughingly embracing any kind of punishment including gallows, the whole of India applauded. So we became accustomed to it. If it is wrong, well, we are trying to rectify it. You should be compassionate, you should be sympathetic and there should not be any jarring note, any sarcastic remark. Without Bengal India won't survive, and without India Bengal won't survive. So you have to take us as we are and try to make us good.

Sir, the Prime Minister blacklisted the name of Bengal in his speech on the 15th August. What wrong did we commit? Our Governor cancelled the Independence Day festivities. What could the lady do? 30,000 people leaving their hearth and home living in the Indian Union came to Bengal—not from Pakistan, not from East Bengal. We have become accustomed to refugees but not from Indian Union. Lakhs and lakhs of refugees have come. Our independence means seeing every day people without hearth and homes, our freedom means complete disruption of whole of our economic life, our independence means soaring unemployment, our independence means nine million people suffering in East Bengal. This is our independence. We are suffering. We have accepted it as fatalists. We are trying our level best to survive, our level best to fight it out. We require sympathy.

**Shri Tyagi (Dehra Dun):** When refugees were coming from both east and west in 1957, they never refused to celebrate 15th August. They were equally badly treated.

**Shri Atulya Ghosh:** I am very sorry. Tyagi is one of my best friends. Even in 1956 due to floods we abandoned our independence festivities, perhaps he does not know, what can I do. At the time of the Goa inci-

dent we abandoned our independence festivities, he does not know, what can I do. This is not the first time that we did it. We did it several times. I am sorry that an esteemed friend and colleague like Shri Tyagi—he has experience, I am new-comer in Parliament, I was formerly an absentee and I do not know how to speak—is trying to embarrass me by putting questions. We meet several times. He could have put all these questions to me in the lobby. What is the use of trying to embarrass me? I am not accustomed to speaking in this august House. They must treat me with a bit of sympathy. They must allow me to speak. If they embarrass me I will not be able to speak. Shri Tyagi is also trying to embarrass me. His only business is to embarrass everybody.

**Madam,** we have heard about newspapers. It is very bad to publish exaggerated news, to print false news. But our Prime Minister is the leader of the nation. Panditji is known to everybody. Shri Durgadas as the Chairman of the All-India Newspaper Editors Conference went to Assam. I would request the P.M. to enquire of him. The poor newspaper people had no other alternative. There was a complete censor and the Government machinery was not supplying any news. So they had to gather news through dubious means because they had to supply news. When this thing happened in the Punjab the Government supplied news and provided police escort. They made all convenient arrangements for the newspaper reporters to get news.

**Shri Feroze Gandhi (Rae Bareli):** Why not send Pratap Singh Kairon to Assam?

**Shri Atulya Ghosh:** Shri Feroze Gandhi is very influential member in Parliament. He may try to do it and send him to Assam. I am very thankful for his suggestion. If he brings a motion I will endorse it also.

Then, Madam, some telegrams were sent. The telegrams were not receiv-

[Shri Atulya Ghosh]

ed by the addressee. After five days without any intimation the telegrams were sent to the house of the senders. Whose fault is it? Who will enquire about all these things? I can well understand the feeling of the Prime Minister. He is the arbiter of destiny of 400 million people. I can well understand his embarrassment, his distress. But who will do it? Who will take charge of all these things? Madam, all this happened in June. It began happening in June and today is the 1st of September. Two and a half months have passed. We are still hoping that something will happen which will check the flow of refugees to West Bengal which is now 45,000.

The Prime Minister came back from Assam sometime in July—I think it was on 19th July—I hope Shri Tyagi will correct me if I am wrong—

**Shri Tyagi:** Yes.

**Shri Atulya Ghosh:** At that time it was 11,000. He said about law and order. We believed him. We still believe him. We have full confidence on him. He is the only leader who can deliver goods. But sometimes we disagree. He has taught us to express disagreement wherever necessary. He disagreed with Gandhiji also. I have got the boldness as his follower to disagree with him. Madam, there is no sense of security. There is no law and order in that area. He has to bring that sense of security in the minds of the people who have come. I would urge them, their leaders, their administrators, let them administer either as human beings or as administrators. Let them call the editors of these newspapers. Let them talk across the table. Let Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru convince them. I think there will not be a single editor—it may be that some two or three editors of papers belonging to some party will not be convinced—who will not be convinced if Panditji talks to them. Let him talk with them. We must try to bring an atmosphere of peace and

tranquillity and co-ordination without censoring the newspapers, without showing a sense of helplessness. The Prime Minister is the leader. He is the steward. If he shows a sense of helplessness, where will India go? One of the senior leaders was telling me that in his whole lifetime he had never come across with such a situation, and wondered who would be responsible for this situation. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru? But are we all for disintegration? Is that the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and is it for disintegration that we fought? Who is responsible for it? India and the whole world will hold him responsible if this injury, if this disintegration, continues. He must come to human level. He cannot lose his soul. He is trying to have material prosperity of India. There are the river valley projects; there are the steel projects. There are the locomotives, this, that and the other. It is all right. We do want material progress, but let him become human and let him talk with the people. Let him try to understand the mind of the people, and let him try to convince them about the integrity of India for which we are all responsible and for which we have drawn our Constitution and to which we are committed.

**Mr. Chairman:** The hon. Member's time is up.

**Shri Atulya Ghosh:** Assam's is a case which will make Shri Jawaharlal Nehru take that much courage which might bring in the integration of India and which will stop disintegration.

The report is an objective report, and there is sufficient material in it which indicates that an enquiry is required just to help the Government of Assam, just to help the rehabilitation of the suffering people of Assam. I think what I have said about the happenings of Assam cannot raise any controversy. There cannot be any controversy about rehabilitation. This is a report which I recommend to the P.M. to consider and on the basis of



this report, I request him to arrange for a judicial enquiry.

**Shri A. P. Jain:** May I make a correction? It is about the date of the circular. This morning, when the question was raised, I said that the circular was dated 1st July. In fact, it is dated 1st June.

**Shri Atulya Ghosh:** Is the report right or you are right?

**Mr. Chairman:** The report is right. I would request hon. Members to keep within the time-limit. Shri P. C. Borooah.

**Shri P. C. Borooah (Sibsagar):** Mr. Chairman, it is with a sorrowful heart that I am going to take part in this debate, on account of the recent happenings in Assam, which have been described as brutal atrocities, my head hangs down in shame. Actually, I have no language to express my agony and my feelings. We condemn these atrocities. We condemn those happenings with all the force at our command, and we express our sorrow and sympathy to the afflicted ones.

Among the victims—I need not repeat here what has already been said and need not take the time of the House but there are some Assamese also, and it is heartening to find in the report, at page 5, para 15, the following:

“We record with pleasure that during these unfortunate disturbances there were cases of Assamese giving protection to Bengalee sufferers, and in some places the Assamese have helped Bengalees in re-building burnt huts and have also rendered other assistance.”

This is very heartening.

Everybody is asking the same question: “What has happened to Assam?” The Assamese are nice people. They

are generally peace-loving. Traditionally they are gentle and accommodating and they are more wedded to cultural activities than to the hard question of economics or politics. According to Mahatma Gandhi, in one of his articles, “Assam is lovely. Its damsels can weave fairy tales in their handlooms”. So, how can these people go amuck so suddenly? What is the reason behind it? Some say that it is a move against the Ministry, as has just been stated by some hon. Members. Some ask whether it is a move against the Congress regime, or whether it is actually a *Bongal Kheda*, which means driving out the Bengalees from Assam. My answer to these question is an emphatic no. I do not say it is a movement against the Congress regime. The Congress is very strong in Assam. Even a combination of all the non-Congress and anti-Congress parties there will not be able to oust the Congress regime from Assam, and the general elections show it. I can assure you that the Congress will come out with flying colours not only in the next general election but also after the next, provided, of course, the language question is handled justly and to the aspirations of the people there.

If it is said that it is a move against the Ministry, all that I can say, is again no. There are disgruntled Congressmen in the Assam Congress as are in the other State Congresses also. But their number is not very large, or at least not as large as some of the other States have. Those few people would not be able to touch the fringe of the Ministry.

But, when the movement was first started, there was a slogan and a demand for the abolition of the Ministry, and in my place, Sibsagar, which is also the home-town of our Chief Minister, a slogan was uttered that they want to take the blood of Shri Chaliha. They would not be satisfied without having the blood of Shri Chaliha and that the Congress Ministry should go. But, as the movement gathered momentum, that slo-

[Shri P. C. Borooah]

gan died down and not repeated afterwards.

So far as the *Bongal Kheda* movement is concerned, as I said on some other occasions, out of the 17 lakh Bengali-speaking people in Assam and some eight to nine lakh Bengalees living in Assam valley, only 40,000 have been affected. Others are staying in their own hearths and homes carrying on their avocations and professions as usual. So, it cannot be said as a *Bongal Kheda* movement. Had it been such a movement, these people could not have stayed there.

Then, what is the real cause? With your permission, I shall read para 5, page 2, of the report. It says:

"There is no disagreement among any section of the people of Assam that the immediate cause of disturbances was the language issue and there is also near unanimity among the Assamese and the Bengalees of Assam that there existed deep-rooted and longstanding dislike and suspicion between them, which prepared the ground for creating a situation, in which the language controversy acted as a detonator for causing explosion."

"They do not, however, agree on the reasons for this dislike and suspicion. The Assamese feel that the Bengalees consider their culture and language to be superior to that of the Assamese, and look down upon the Assamese language and culture. They do not mix freely with the Assamese. They also feel that the Bengalees have monopolised jobs in the Central Government offices in Assam and deprived the Assamese youth of their due share in Central services. They further complain that the Bengalees do not consider Assam as their homeland, but look up to West Bengal for inspiration."

Also, in page 3, para 7, the report says:

"For our purpose, it is enough to conclude that although language issue was the immediate cause of disturbances the real causes were more deep-rooted."

I have in my possession a long list of these historic reasons but the time at my disposal will not allow me to go through it. Moreover, I fear that by doing so at length, I might be repeating the same mistake which the protagonists of this movement in Assam did there, and my statement here might create a bad atmosphere in Assam. Our speeches in Assam which were delivered in the various meetings addressed by us were confined only to condemnation and atonement. But here, standing as I do, as an accused in a dock, I have to defend myself by the same arguments the protagonists of the movement put forward in Assam. I do not want to repeat those things here. After hearing the Prime Minister's opening speech that we should try not to create bitterness but see that this debate can actually help in bringing peace and amity between the two communities. I do not want to dilate or repeat those things lest it might hurt my Bengali friends here.

I am sorry when my friend, Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri spoke. I could not hear his whole speech. I was absent for a while at that time. He was mentioning something about the number of appointments. I have hurriedly gathered a few lists. The percentage of Bengali-speaking people in Assam is 17 or 18 per cent. In the APS cadre, there are 50 Assamese, 23 Bengalis and 18 others. So, according to the population percentage, Bengalis' share is much higher. In the Superintendents of Police, there are 10 Assamese, 3 Bengalis and 9 others. It is 30 per cent. In DSP, there are 37 Assamese, 13 Bengalis—here again the percentage is more. In

**Sub-Inspectors**, there are 431 Assamese and 190 Bengalis. In Assistant **Sub-Inspectors**, there are 198 Assamese and 108 Bengalis. In constables, there are 773 Assamese and 251 Bengalis. In **IPS**, there are 16 Assamese and 13 Bengalis. Thus, we see that particularly in the police department, the percentage of Bengalis is higher than the Assamese, so far as the total number of population is concerned.

**Shri N. B. Maiti (Ghatal)**: Are these Bengalis not Assamese also? They may be Bengali-speaking, but are they not inhabitants of Assam?

**Shri P. C. Borooah**: They may be inhabitants of Assam but that does not mean that they are Assamese. "Bengali-speaking Assamese" is a word just now being coined. This kind of terms as, "Assamese-speaking Assamese" and "Bengali-speaking Assamese" were never used before. It has just been coined to suit this purpose. In Cachar, Bengali-speaking people are there. Actually, their trouble is with us. It is a domestic trouble. I would have very much liked had it been in reality and spirit Assamese-speaking Assamese and Bengali-speaking Assamese affair. I do not understand then why West Bengal had to come into Assam's domestic problem.

**Shri C. K. Bhattacharya**: West Bengal comes in because it is being burdened with over 50,000 refugees. That is how West Bengal comes.

**Shri P. C. Borooah**: If West Bengal comes in because of the refugees, who brought the refugees? These refugees did not come during the disturbances. They came after the disturbances. Actually, there was no necessity of West Bengal's coming into Assam's affairs.

**Mr. Chairman**: The hon. Member should address the Chair.

**Shri P. C. Borooah**: There are 17 lakhs of landless Assamese people. When their cases remained in cold storage, 5 lakhs of refugees from East

Pakistan have been rehabilitated by Assam. But there was no acknowledgement from the side of the Bengali-speaking people of Assam. They have never acknowledged it and not a good word to the Assam Government. These things also hurt the Assamese.

Now, regional languages are getting importance. The universities are switching over to the regional languages. So, the Assamese people thought this to be the right time for doing something about their language. That is how this language movement came in which wanted to give the language a status. When this was going on, the Bengali-speaking people of Shillong and Cachar objected. There were processions where the Assamese language was ridiculed as donkey's language and Assamese signboards were defaced. They stoned the APCC President, who was accompanying the AICC President to Silchar. Our Governor's visit was black-flagged. Last but not the least, they found it the opportune time to hold conferences—Bengali and non-Assamese language-speaking people's conference, which was presided over by my esteemed friend, Shri C. K. Bhattacharya. These things actually estranged the feelings. This had reaction in the Assam valley and a large number of students got themselves involved in these agitational activities.

**Shri N. C. Laskar (Cachar-Reserved—Sch. Castes)**: My friend has not seen the resolution which was moved in the conference. This resolution was accepted by the Prime Minister and the parliamentary delegation.

**Shri P. C. Borooah**: I am not speaking anything about the resolution. I am speaking about the conference. Was it the opportune time for holding the conference and for the conference to be presided over by a responsible Member of this House, Shri C. K. Bhattacharya? That was my contention.

[Shri P. C. Borooah]

In such a time, the anti-Ministry group, the anti-Congress group, reactionaries, individuals—everybody—tried to take the chance and they actually exploited the situation. In the students' meeting, lectures were delivered and Korea, Turkey and Japan students' activities were brought in in an exaggerated way. This way, the students came in; they practically got the upper hand and the agitation assumed serious turn.

I say, what has happened has happened. We have seen that the Assam Government has sanctioned for rehabilitation purposes a sum of Rs. 1,04,00,000. The Assamese people with the help of the Assam Government, have already rebuilt 40 per cent of the burnt houses. 5,000 people have been arrested and out of that 1,000 are still in the jails. What are we to do now is that we must have peace and create a sense of unity among them. We can do it in two ways. One is on the point of bayonet and the other is by a change of heart. On the point of a bayonet we can remove external security but for the internal security we must have a change of heart. How we can have a change of heart? For that a proper atmosphere must be created. **All the ill-feelings** must be removed and aspirations fulfilled to the extent possible.

For this purpose, as far as Assam is concerned, I think the language question must be solved and that without delay. As has been declared by the Government of Assam, they should discuss it in the next session of their Assembly. I think this should not be pushed out. Something should be done about the language issue.

On the other side, so far as the Bengali-speaking people are concerned, let them consider Assam as their own home; let them feel Assamese people as their own people; let them look at the Assam Government as their own Government. Let them not look to the West Bengal

Government for their help and let them not feel dependent of the West Bengal people. I think if their angle of vision is changed, there will be peace between these two differing communities, and that will be to the good of not only Assam and Bengal but also to the good of the whole of India

**Shri C. K. Bhattacharya:** I am thankful to you for having called me. Just now, my predecessor, Shri P. C. Borooah, has done me the honour by referring to me with reference to the conference at Cachar. I am proud to say that it was this conference which first broached the idea which has been later, if I may be permitted to say so, adopted by the Prime Minister and even by the Ajit Prasad Jain delegation. It is this conference which proposed:

"But it further resolved that the *status quo* based on intrinsic multi-lingual character of Assam be maintained and no steps be taken for declaration of any official language till there is complete agreement among different linguistic groups of Assam on the question of official language."

This is the formula that has now been broached by the hon. Prime Minister and has been adopted. I am glad to find, by the Parliamentary Delegation. If anything, the conference had a soothing effect and it showed the way how things should proceed.

As I refer to the Resolution, I must make a grievance in this respect. The framers of this report have acted in a one-sided way. They have put in the resolution of all other groups and parties, but they have avoided putting the resolution of the All-Assam non-Assamese Languages Conference. All the non-Assamese languages have passed this resolution but the kind framers of this report have avoided the resolution and have only made a

passing reference to it, stating that they have passed a lengthy resolution. I have even counted the words. The Communist Party resolution, which they have put into this report, contains 1,600 words, and the resolution of the conference, which my humble self had the honour to preside over, was expressed in 1,200 words. They found this resolution lengthy to be avoided but they did not find the Communist Party resolution so lengthy as to be avoided. This is the grievance which I make against the framers of this report, that in this respect at least they have acted in a one-sided fashion.

While looking at the Report I find that they have suggested two major things. Firstly, they have suggested that there should be no Central intervention and, secondly, there should be no enquiry. I am of the opinion that if there was any situation in the contemplation of the framers of the Constitution when they put in that article about the President's special powers, that situation had arisen in Assam, and if the exercise of those special powers of the President had been made at the proper time, such large-scale evacuations would not have taken place and people who had come away would have gone back immediately. I consider it as a failure on the part of those who decided that President's rule should not be introduced in Assam.

As regards the enquiry,—already it has been referred to—the presumption on which this Report proceeds is that unless something unforeseen happens such a thing will not recur in future. I do not know on what basis this conclusion has been arrived at by this Delegation. In fact, this is a chronic symptom in Assam which happens under every Ministry. The very thing happened under the first Ministry of the late Mr. Bardoloi in 1948 when the Bengali-speaking people in Gauhati were attacked. The same thing happened in 1950. It happened again in 1955 under the Chief Ministership of Shri Bishnu Ram

Mehdi. The same thing has happened under the Chaliha Ministry. Each time it happened, and it happened in a more extensive form, in a more disastrous form. Therefore, if any conclusion can be made from the sequence of events, the conclusion is that it is a chronic symptom with Assam, and unless some special steps are taken they are not going to be cured of this symptom.

You will be surprised to know that in none of these cases has a man been brought to book or punished. In 1948 the police gave a final report, and nobody was found guilty and nobody was punished. The same thing happened in 1950—none punished. The same thing in 1955—nobody was punished. And I am afraid, in spite of these 4,000 arrests, of which Shri Borooah spoke just now, with the experiences of 1948, 1950 and 1955, are going to recur, ultimately it will be found that nobody is brought to book and everybody escapes.

Why is this thing happening? It seems that every Ministry seems to be thriving upon this particular type of disturbance. Shri Chaliha is certainly a very good man, but history will associate his Ministry with one of the greatest human tragedies that has taken place, and there is no escape from that. History will not allow the Chaliha Ministry to escape from this position, that while a very good man presided over the Ministry, when the Ministry is itself judge, this holocaust took place in Assam in an extensive area from east to west.

I come to the report again. The Prime Minister himself repeatedly referred to the date, the 4th of July. An impression seems to be created that nothing had happened before 4th July and 4th July was the starting point. I quote here the terms of reference of the enquiry commission set up by the Assam Government to enquire into the firings in which that particular student is said to have died. One of the terms of reference is this:

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"causes and nature of the disturbances in the town of Gauhati and its suburbs that took place from 27th June 1960 onwards up to the time when the firing incident took place."

The Assam Government's communique itself admits that incidents had taken place on the 27th of June. And our Prime Minister has stated that about that time the Governor was here and he had informed the Prime Minister that nothing very serious had happened. I do not know, Madam, what sort of a Governor was there then.

In fact, my conclusion is that while the Governor remained in his palace, the Chief Minister was in the nursing home, the Finance Minister was in Kashmir, the entire Government of Assam had passed under the control of the students' council of action. That thing nobody has mentioned. There was no vacuum. The Students' council of action had seized power. As the hon. Prime Minister stated in his speech, one of them came and asked him to hand over law and order. In fact, they had seized law and order by that time. It must be a surprising piece of information to the hon. Members of this House that they had set up a system of permits. No conveyance could go out without permits from the students' action council and the Magistrate of Gauhati had to take two permits on a payment of Rs. 25 for each permit in order to run the Indian Airlines Corporation's buses. They may enquire and it will be found to be correct. It was the students' council of action that had seized power in Assam those days and it was this students' council of action led by that 40-year-old-and-father-of-five-children student leader who had done all this havoc from the district of Goalpara to the district of Sibsagar. That is what had happened. That fact should be noted.

Let me go through the report again. The report gives a very objective and

realistic picture, but it should be noted that it gives only a very small fraction of what had happened. Not even the tenth part of what had happened is revealed in this report. Shri Borooah just now referred to how the Assamese were feeling about the Bengalis. The report also refers to how the Bengalis were feeling about the Assamese. It says:

"The Bengalees, on the other hand, believe that the recent disturbances were a part of an organised plan, called the 'Bengal Kheda Movement', to drive them out of Assam. In support of this, some of them brought to our notice two publications, the MATIKAR and ASHIRWAD..."

I would have been glad if the framers of the report had quoted some relevant passages from these two books. The "*Matikar*" was published in Assamese and has circulated in Assam since 1957. It means "To whom does the land belong" and to prove that the land belongs only to the Assamese-speaking people and that the non-Assamese-speaking people have to be got out of the area, this is the technique that it describes. I translate.

**Shri P. C. Borooah:** It is not correct.

**Shri Narasimhan (Krishnagiri):** Is it a magazine? What is it?

**Shri C. K. Bhattacharya:** It is a book. The report has referred to it.

**Mr. Chairman:** The book is there. We have all seen it. So there is no question of its being correct or not.

**Shri Basumatari (Goalpara—Reserved—Sch. Tribes):** May I know the name of the author? Is it by a politician or by....

**Shri C. K. Bhattacharya:** The name of the author is Hitesh Deka. Deka is an Assamese surname. He may be anybody.

**Shri Atulya Ghosh:** The book was recognised and approved by the Education Department of the Government of Assam.

**Mr. Chairman:** The book may be laid on the Table.

**Shri C. K. Bhattacharya:** I am giving the translation. What is there in the book? Since the framers of the report have been kind enough to bring to the notice of the House the particular book, I am reading out, a passage. It is a novel and the plot describes as to how these things have to be done. How this attack will have to be made? The attack is to be directed against the Bengali agriculturists. How the agriculturists have to be thrown out? It says:

"Simultaneously many houses will have to be set fire together. This thing will have to be done in the night. When the agriculturists will come out to quench the fire we shall just go on and attack them."

As to how the fire will have to be set, they say,

"Balls of cloth will have to be soaked...."

**Shri Basumatari:** For your information I want to tell you.....

**Mr. Chairman:** Let the hon. Member read.

**Shri C. K. Bhattacharya:** I am reading.

**Shri Basumatari:** I think he does not follow.

**Mr. Chairman:** Two hon. Members cannot get up at the same time. Since the hon. Member does not yield.....

**Shri C. K. Bhattacharya:** I am only translating the passage.

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, order. I will give the hon. Member a chance to

explain. Let the hon. Member who is in possession of the floor finish.

**Shri C. K. Bhattacharya:** It reads:

"Balls of cloth will have to be soaked in kerosene oil and stuck to arrows and these will have to be thrown on huts of the agriculturists."

"When they come to quench the fire, we go together and just create such a row that they will not be able to do anything. They will just fly away. It is not our intention to kill them. It is our intention to drive them away. These things will have to be done in the course of 7 days. Otherwise, the Government will come upon us and arrest us."

The writer of this book is wise and farsighted enough. He has seen what would follow.

"After that, of course, the question of rehabilitation will come. Even then, we people should endear ourselves to the Government and take charge of the rehabilitation so that the Government will never know that we were at the root of the whole business. We would take charge of rehabilitation and through rehabilitation we carry out our own business."

This describes the whole process as to how it has to be done. I do not know if rehabilitation in Assam is proceeding along the programme stated here.

**An Hon. Member:** This is an old book.

**Shri C. K. Bhattacharya:** This book was printed in 1957 and has been circulated in Assam to prepare the mind of the younger generation for these things.

Then, there is another book, "Ashirwad". This Book is approved by this Government for the "Clubs" and

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libraries. What does this book say? There is a dialogue between an Assamese lawyer and his wife. The wife asks him, "I do not find any client in your drawing room, why are you so very anxious". He says, "I am just thinking about how to drive out the Bengalees from Assam". Then, the wife says, "This is not your work, the Government will do it". Then, the lawyer says, "Yes, yes, the Government will do it; we shall have to show the way. Anyway, Assam is only meant for the Assamese and only if a few Bengalee families are allowed to live, they will be completely under our control". The wife says, "You do not want to destroy the Bengalees altogether". The lawyer says, "No, no; this is not my work; this is the work of others; they will themselves decide what to do with the Bengalees; we only show the way". These are the quotations that I made from the two books to which reference has been made in this report.

**Mr. Chairman:** The hon. Member will try to be more precise. Two minutes.

**Shri C. K. Bhattacharya:** A little more, Madam.

Shri P. C. Borooah referred to the percentage of Bengalees as 17 lakhs. The percentage of Bengalees, if there were a correct census, would be not less than 33. That is my contention and that is the contention of the Bengali-speaking people of Assam. Assam is a land of minorities. There is no majority for any community. This is not my statement. This is the statement of Assamese leaders themselves. In a meeting at Nalbari, Assam's Finance Minister Shri Moti Ram said on April 28, 1953, "out of 96 lakhs of Assam's population, only 30 lakhs were pure Assamese". This is reported in the *Assam Tribune* of 5th May, 1953. Then, Shri Bishnu Ram Medhi, the then Chief Minister of Assam spoke at Silchar in April, 1955. He said that the various minority communities in Assam constitute

66 per cent of the population. This is from the speech of the *ex-Chief Minister*. This, I have taken from the report in the "*Statesman*" of 15th April, 1955. There is no difficulty in accepting these two reports, one from the "*Statesman*" and the other from the "*Assam Tribune*".

In fact, there have been talks about who rules Assam? What is the caucus? It is neither the Congress, nor the P.S.P. nor the Communists nor the C.P.I. It is the Assam Jatiya Mahasabha that rules. The political parties are mere facets. Nothing more than that. It is the Mahasabha which pulls the strings, and they somehow follow.

It may be stated that Assam was born out of Bengal. In fact up to a certain date Assam was a division of Bengal comprising the five districts, the same five districts in which this holocaust has occurred. Afterwards, by gradual accretion from different areas, Assam grew to its present size, so that the Assamese-speaking area is now one-fifth of the whole area. What my Assamese friends now want is that the will and domination of this one-fifth should be imposed on the other four-fifths of the State. This, I maintain, cannot be done. If they want to have Assam for Assamese, then the non-Assamese-speaking areas must be allowed to get out of Assam altogether. Otherwise, they cannot have it.

**Mr. Chairman:** The hon. Member must conclude now.

**Shri C. K. Bhattacharya:** I shall give only one quotation from Shri Gokhale, President of the Banaras Congress in 1905. He refers to the partition of Bengal in his speech and says:

"Gentlemen, I have carefully gone through all the papers which have been published by Government on the subject of partition. Three things have struck me forcibly: the determination to dismember Bengal at all costs, the



anxiety to promote the interests of Assam at the cost of Bengal, and the desire to suit everything to the necessities and convenience of the civil service."

This is the evidence of no less a person than Gopala Krishna Gokhale in 1905 that Bengal was partitioned to promote the interests of Assam at the cost of Bengal. Of course, there is no gratefulness in the world. What shall I say about it?

**Mr. Chairman:** Shri Basumatari may now clarify what he wanted to say.

**Shri Basumatari:** I only want to clarify the position about the book mentioned by him. The position is not as he explained. He has not read the whole book. It is a novel dealing with community projects and co-operative farming and its theme is that the land should go to the tiller of the soil; it does not advocate the expulsion of Bangalis—nothing of the kind. I may explain that Bengal does not refer to the Bengaleese but all non-Assamese.

**Mr. Chairman:** I think he wants to make a speech, not only offer a clarification on a particular point. He will have his chance.

**Shri Hem Barua (Gauhati):** May I make a clarification.

**Mr. Chairman:** He will have his chance. Then he can explain. Shri Jaipal Singh.

**Shri Jaipal Singh:** \*\* \*\* \*\*  
I am grateful that I have been enabled to participate in this debate because I am, I think, in this particular debate, a rare specimen. I think I was one of the disinterested Members of Parliament to be in Assam actually

during the riots. My interest in Assam is nothing new. Some of my relatives are settled in Assam, not because they wanted to go and settle there, but because famine conditions in the Jharkhand area more than fifty years ago made them go there, and they are there.

I have been listening with great interest to some of the restrained speeches. I have been shocked by the lack of control some people have brought into their speeches. I do not think we get anywhere by being venomous.

As a matter of fact, if my counsel can prevail at all, I would ask Members of Parliament from Assam to refrain from participating in this debate. Let those who have suffered, who say they are aggrieved, have their say, and we shall assess whether they are telling the truth or exaggerating it, or fabricating news. I think in the circumstances that would be a better thing, but it is only my personal and individual counsel.

I am one of the sponsors of an amendment, amendment No. 7, where I am bracketed with several others, about a probe, a judicial probe being necessary. I do not think I need expand on that.

Now, linguistic chauvinism is, has been the greatest disaster of our time. It is not a question of Assam. I am today not particularly concerned with what happened in Assam because of this linguistic dispute, because to my mind, it is very clear that it is not a linguistic dispute; language is being brought into the picture, but there are deeper reasons which have been responsible in the past. Hon. Members have already stated that these riots or communal riots, only between two communities have taken place

[Shri Jaipal Singh]

in the past. They were there during the time of the States Reorganisation Commission and at other times also. So, we have really to request that Government should graciously agree; otherwise, they will be forced to agree later on, if they do not agree now—that there should be a commission of enquiry at the highest level to find out what are the things that have led to such riots in the past and even last month, and the month before last.

I was in Assam from the very beginning. As a matter of fact, I had heard whispers about this from foreigners we accuse day and night. I was in the tea gardens. As I was moving about, I was told that it was not safe for me to go from one place to the other place, because I might be waylaid, because I was not an Assamese. But, anyway, a very dear friend, who used to be the Chief Whip of the Congress Party here not long ago.....

**Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri:** Deputy Chief Whip.

**Shri Jaipal Singh:** I have promoted him since then.

He told me that I looked much too much of a *pahadi* to be mistaken for a Bengali. Well, this was good enough assurance, as far as I was concerned. So, I was able to move about. I was in the tea plantations on the very first day when the most brutal murder was committed of a Bengali manager of the tea estate and his twelve-year old son. I was there almost watching it. I could not quite understand it. But, at any rate, I thought it was my duty to find out what had happened. The next day, I found in the Calcutta press, the metropolitan press, a very powerful press with a powerful circulation, the whole story twisted. The reason why I was bringing the press into the picture is that some people think that the freedom of the press

should be curbed because of these riots. I would always resist any curb on the Press, because, as has already been pointed out by previous speakers, the Government failed to give out information not only to the people of Assam, Bengalis or hill tribes or Assamese, whatever they were, but to the outside world, with the result that the Press, wherever they were, had to depend upon whatever could trickle out to them. So, let us not make a mountain of the exaggeration that the Press might have indulged in. I know they did, because there are several incidents that I myself watched with my own eyes and when I read the accounts as they appeared not only in the Assam Press but in the Calcutta Press, I was astonished. I was ashamed that the claim to maturity we make is so ill-founded.

**17 hrs.**

There were two warring camps, as it were, each vying with the other, as to how the rest of India could be made to believe what was obviously grossly mis-portrayed. I went all over. On the actual day the disturbances took place in Gauhati, I was there. I cannot say I saw the actual incidents. I have travelled very extensively in this territory, specially in the backward areas. Assam is a backward area, whether you like it or not, and that is really the tragedy of the whole situation. Assam was in Bengal, and because it was in Bengal, Bengalis—by 'Bengalis', I mean Bengali-speaking people who had a flying start on others, 'others' meaning Assamese people, hill people, Ram Subhag Singh, Biharis, Oriyas here, who were all third-class people—Bengalis were the first-class citizens.

**An Hon. Member:** Why?

**Shri Jaipal Singh:** Because the Bengali was the top-dog. He was everywhere. He had a flying start, in education and otherwise. He was

everywhere. Now, with partition, with a new consciousness coming about, we find it in Orissa the same way, in Bihar the same way. What is this Bengali-Bihari thing? It is exactly the same thing that has been taking place in Assam. What are these racial riots? And the communal riots we had in Rourkela only the other day? Let my hon. friends from Orissa answer that. What is it that must create a Jharkhand State? I am telling this to my hon. friends over there and those in the rest of the country who say, 'There shall not be a Jharkhand State', 'You cannot prevent it'. It is the same disease that is corrupting and corroding our country. Let us not run away from it.

From Gauhati, I thought it was my duty to meet the highest in the State and see what could be done, in a very inconspicuous way. So I went up the hill. On arrival, I discovered that the Governor was missing. He was in the capital here conferring with our Prime Minister and the rest of his colleagues. I had already written to the Chief Minister, an old colleague in this Parliament. He was not very well. Anyway, I saw him several times. It is wrong for Shri C. K. Bhattacharya to say that he was in a nursing home. He was not in a nursing home. At any rate, when I met him, he was in his own house. He was not very well, but he certainly was well enough so that both of us could talk freely about things, not only the riots but other interesting matters.....

**Mr. Chairman:** Will the hon. Member continue? I think he has had only ten minutes.

**Shri Jaipal Singh:** Yes\*\*\*.....

**Mr. Chairman:** The hon. Member will continue tomorrow. The discussion is adjourned now.

17.05 hrs.

The House will now take up the half-hour discussion on foodgrain prices.

#### FOODGRAIN PRICES\*

**Shri S. M. Banerjee** (Kanpur): Madam Chairman, on the 10th August, 1960, in reply to Starred Question No. 279, regarding the prices of foodgrains, the hon. Minister replied that the prices of rice and other kharif grains had actually risen to some extent during May and June, 1960, as this is the lean period for the kharif grains and also a statement was attached to the reply.

After going through the statement I found that the price of rice had increased in some of the States and the price of wheat, which according to the hon. Minister was in abundance in this country, out of 8 States, in 7 States, had increased. I am referring to the period up to the 25th June, 1960.

Supplementaries were put and a very pertinent question was put by you, Madam Chairman, about the retail prices in the country. Whenever we ask for the foodgrain prices, we are only given the wholesale prices. The difficulty is that when the consumer goes to the market he is not supposed to purchase the foodgrains at wholesale prices. He wants 5 seers, or 10 seers or 20 seers or even one maund. But, it is not possible for him to purchase bags of wheat or rice.

A question was put about the price of rice in West Bengal on 25th June, 1959. The hon. Deputy Minister replied that the price was varying from Rs. 26 to Rs. 30-4. In the statement, the wholesale price was Rs. 26; but when it actually came to the retail price, it rose to Rs. 30, according to the statement of the hon. Deputy Minister.

I put another question to him about the wheat prices in U.P. According

\*\*\*Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

\*Half-An-Hour Discussion.