

Complaints of malpractice during bye-elections

*205. SHRI LAL K. ADVANI:
SHRI LAKHAN SINGH:

Will the Minister of LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of complaints relating to bye-elections received by the Election Commission of India in the last twenty months from the public and political parties about rigging, misuse of Government power and money and also of employing ex-dacoits; and

(b) the steps suggested by the Election Commission of India to Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JAGAN NATH KAUSHAL):

(a) A statement received from the Election Commission with respect to details of complaints relating to bye-elections received in the last twenty months by Election Commission from the public and political parties about rigging, misuse of government power and money and also of employing ex-dacoits is set out in Annexure I. [See Appendix CXXI, Annexure No. 50].

(b) The Commission has suggested various changes in the electoral system for dealing with the problem. The principal recommendations made by the Election Commission in this behalf are set out in Annexure II [See Appendix CXXI, Annexure No. 51.]

Further, the Election Commission has, on the eve of each General Election to Lok Sabha/State Assemblies been adopting the practice of issuing suitable guidelines for dealing with the matter. A copy of the Election Commission's letter dated 22nd April, 1980 which contains the guide-

lines issued in connection with the General Elections to the Legislative Assemblies of certain States is set out in Annexure III. [See Appendix CXXI, Annexure No. 52.]

Demand of Dhobis for cheaper Soda Ash

*206. SHRI YOGENDRA SHARMA:
Will the Minister of PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to a news item which appeared in the Economic Times of Calcutta dated the 15th February, 1982 regarding demands of Dhobis asking for cheaper soda ash;

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard; and

(c) whether any representations has been received in this connection and if so, what are the details thereof and what action has been taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM, CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The news item refers to a memorandum submitted to the Prime Minister by 400 Sarvodaya workers representing dhobis. The memorandum is reported to have alleged that 4 monopoly houses which control production, distribution and pricing of soda ash in the country, have made huge profits at the cost of consumers. The memorandum has sought continuance of the present Import Policy, reduction of import duty, nationalisation of the soda ash industry and issue of directions to the producers to make soda ash available to dhobis at Rs. 1.60 Kg.

(c) A representation has been received by Government from the All India Washermen's Federation. The contents of the representation are