

MR. CHAIRMAN: We will consider it. Today is the first day. Don't let off all your steam today.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: This is the greatest scandal. This should be allowed to be discussed.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Amendment of the Constitution to give more powers to the Prime Minister

*5. SHRI ERA SEZHIYAN:
SHRI RAMAKRISHNA HEGDE:

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

(a) whether it is a fact that the Chief Minister of Maharashtra while addressing a lawyers' gathering at Bombay on the 14th October, 1980 had demanded for an amendment of the Constitution of India to give more powers to the Prime Minister; and

(b) if so, whether Government have given any consideration to this proposal?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIV SHANKAR): (a) It is learnt from the Maharashtra Information Centre at New Delhi that the Chief Minister of Maharashtra addressed a lawyers' gathering at Bombay on the 14th October, 1980. However, there is no mention in the teleprinter message received from that Centre that the Chief Minister "demanded for an amendment of the Constitution of India to give more powers to the Prime Minister".

(b) As no proposal favouring such an amendment has been received by the Government from the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, the question of considering it does not arise.

Free legal aid

*6. SHRI RAM LAKHAN PRASAD GUPTA:

SHRI SUNDER SINGH BHANDARI:

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

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the observations made by Mr. Justice P. N. Bhagwati of the Supreme Court, while inaugurating the function of the National Youth Organisation in New Delhi on the 3rd August, 1980, that the concept of equal justice would remain a dream unless free legal aid was available to all sections of the Society;

(b) if so, what steps Government have taken so far to give legal aid to the poor;

(c) whether Government have given thought to the problem that even if free legal aid is given, persons from far off States like Kerala or Tripura seeking justice from the Supreme Court located in Delhi would have to incur large amount of money to cover the long distance; and

(d) if so, what is Government's reaction in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI SHIV SHANKAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government agrees that legal aid and advice should be available to the needy and indigent sections of the society.

The Government has by a Resolution dated 26-9-1980 appointed a small Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. Justice P.N. Bhagwati, Judge of the Supreme Court to formulate and to implement comprehensive legal aid schemes and to monitor the schemes for legal aid and advice in the States and Union Territories as also to take or recommend such other steps as are necessary to secure the proper working of the legal aid schemes.