

be reduced. These are some of the terms which have been given in detail in the Press Note issued by the Government.

FLOOR CROSSING BY LEGISLATORS

*597. SHRI SITARAM JAIPURIA: Will the Minister of LAW be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a recent statement made by the Chief Election Commissioner published in the "Hindustan Times" of 8th November, 1967 in which he has stated that legislation is to be introduced against floor crossing by the elected representatives in the legislatures;

(b) if so, by when such a legislation is likely to be introduced; and

(c) whether any statistics of defections have been maintained by the Election Commission after the Fourth General Elections, and if so, the number of such defectors State-wise and party-wise?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW (SHRI MOHAMMAD YUNUS SALEEM): (a) The Chief Election Commissioner did not make any categorical statement that "legislation is to be introduced against floor crossing". He only stated that legislation against floor crossing by the elected representatives of people to Parliament and State Legislatures might have to be considered if the present alarming trend of floor crossing did not come to a stop.

(b) In pursuance of a Private Members' Resolution adopted in the Lok Sabha on the 8th December, 1967 a high level Committee consisting of representatives of political parties and Constitutional experts is being set up by Government to consider the problem of legislators changing their allegiance from one party to another and their frequent crossing of the floor in all its aspects and make recommendations in this regard. The question of introducing legislation will arise only after the recommendations of the Committee are known.

(c) The Election Commission does not maintain statistics of defections of Members of Legislatures.

SHRI SITARAM JAIPURIA: May I know from the hon. Minister, since this virus infection of defection is on the increase and quite an alarming situation has been created by it and since the very democracy might be in danger, how long will the Government like to wait? Would they want the already alarming situation take a turn to the worse or would they take an immediate decision?

SHRI P. GOVINDA MENON: The answer is contained in part (b) of the reply. A Committee is being set up and we shall await its recommendations.

SHRI SITARAM JAIPURIA: May I know whether the statement made by the Chief Election Commissioner was in consultation with the Government or the Government has realised the seriousness of the situation after the statement of the Chief Election Commissioner?

SHRI P. GOVINDA MENON: The Chief Election Commissioner is an independent authority. The Government is also aware of the situation and that is why the Resolution moved in the other House was accepted by the Government.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA: May I know if the Government are applying their mind to another aspect of the matter that while formal changing of parties may be prevented and penalised, the evil consequence of instability and other consequences which flow from change of parties cannot be prevented or penalised because the Constitution guarantees freedom of expression and vote inside the legislature or Parliament and a man may formally continue to belong to a party but always vote against that party and always speak against that party and the instability which is sought to be prevented will continue?

SHRI P. GOVINDA MENON: The possibility of existence of Members of that type has also to be taken into consideration.

श्री विमलकुमार मन्नालालजी चौरड़िया : क्या श्रीमन् यह बतलाने की कृपा करेंगे कि यह कमेटी बनाने का जो निश्चय किया है तो यह निश्चय कब तक कार्यान्वित हो सकेगा ? अगर इसके कुछ टर्म्स आफ रेफरेन्स वगैरह वर्क आऊट किये हैं तो वे कौन से हैं और कब तक इसकी रिपोर्ट अपेक्षित है ?

SHRI P. GOVINDA MENON: Sir, the Resolution was passed only on the 8th December and only ten or eleven days have passed. It will be done forthwith.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Yesterday, Sir, an article appeared in the "Hindusthan Standard" by the hon. Minister in which he calls himself or describes himself as Kerala Jennings. Jennings, we know, was a famous constitutional lawyer and here he describes himself as Kerala Jennings. May I now ask the Kerala Jennings whether he has considered the advisability of providing in the appropriate chapter in the Constitution for the recall of the defectors giving the electorate the right to recall their representatives and force them to seek re-election should they desire to continue after crossing the floor? I should like to know from our hon. Kerala Jennings whether such a proposal has been under consideration by Government.

SHRI P. GOVINDA MENON: I have not published an article in the "Hindusthan Standard". A representative of that paper sought an interview and I gave the interview. In that interview I said some persons gave that nickname to me in the other House and elsewhere.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: But many people have given you many nicknames but how is it that you only . . .

SHRI V. M. CHORDIA: That is a personal matter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let us confine ourselves to the question.

SHRI P. GOVINDA MENON: Regarding the substantive part of the question whether a provision for recall will be introduced in the Constitution, all that I have to say is that no such proposal is there now.

SHRI BANKA BEHARY DAS: Floor crossing has become very nauseating. May I know from the Minister whether his attention has been drawn to the recommendations of the Whips Conference held at Simla where the Whips of the different State Assemblies were also present and whether these recommendations were considered before this final decision of the Government was made?

SHRI P. GOVINDA MENON: Now, the decision is only to set up a Committee and the recommendations of the Whips Conference also, I believe, will be considered by the Committee.

SHRI B. K. GAIKWAD: The hon. Minister while replying had said that a Committee consisting of other political parties have been formed. May I know which are the parties that constitute this Committee and whether the Republican Party of India is there ?

SHRI P. GOVINDA MENON: I did not say that the Committee has been formed. It will be formed and then all these questions will be considered.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

(Many hon. Members stood up)

MR. CHAIRMAN: A Committee is being formed and everyone of you can send your views to the Committee. Why should we waste time now ?

SHRI NIREN GHOSH: Sir, one question. Sir. . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Niren Ghosh, you are a leader. You must allow me to go on with my work. After all a Committee is being formed and every one of you can send your queries. I think you ought to be reasonable.

NUMBER OF TELEPHONE CONNECTIONS IN GOVERNMENT OFFICES

*598. **SHRI ARJUN ARORA:** Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of telephone connections which are in use at present in the various Ministries and other offices of the Government of India in New Delhi and Delhi ; and