

[Shri C. M. Poonacha.]

subsequently on the 6th of June, the Ordinance was promulgated. There are certain requirement of certificates and other things being issued not only to our merchant navy but for the ships carrying foreign flags also. Now, if in respect of that, certain things have been done, for which there is no specific sanction of law, well, such a thing will have to be remedied and it is only to cover such a lacuna, if at all, which might have arisen during that interregnum, that this provision comes into operation.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is—

“That the amendments made by the Lok Sabha in the Bill be agreed to.”

*The motion was adopted.*

STATEMENT BY MINISTER RE. A  
STATEMENT REPORTED TO HAVE  
BEEN MADE BY HIM ABOUT POST-  
PONEMENT OF GENERAL ELECTIONS

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Next item. The Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Bill, 1966. The Railway Minister.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI S. K. PATIL): Madam Deputy Chairman, before I make my motion on the Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Bill, 1966, there is a little matter which, with your permission, I would like to bring to your notice.

I was told that while I was not here after the Question Hour, because I was in the other House, somebody said that I said somewhere that the elections are likely to be postponed, in one of my speeches. And I took the earliest opportunity because there were several friends who asked me what exactly happened. I was speaking in Hindi and possibly, the reporter of this particular paper, I must say, must be a man who does not know Hindi. The report of that speech was read out to me by the PFI in Bombay because they themselves were surprised, they knew my views and knew that I would not talk such a thing, and they reported that because of violence, etc. there is a likelihood arising that the elections may be postponed. I never said any such thing. What I said was, there is so much of violence in the air that I doubt very much whether the elections will be

peaceful. That is one thing and saying that the elections will be postponed would be quite another thing. Therefore, that report, that corrected report, appeared everywhere. In only one paper in Bombay I saw the other report appearing, and everybody thinks that that is the thing. I would not have taken the time of the House but for the fact that what was in fact not the case should not go abroad. Therefore, to talk about violence is a different matter and to say that the constitutional election, which is the only guarantee in a parliamentary democracy, should be postponed is a different matter. At any rate, I would not be guilty of it. And if anybody had said that, I would have opposed it. Therefore, there is no substance in it. With these words, I refer to the second thing.

THE RAILWAY PROPERTY (UNLAW-  
FUL POSSESSION) BILL, 1966

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI S. K. PATIL): Madam, I move:

“That the Bill to consolidate and amend the law relating to unlawful possession of railway property be taken into consideration.”

Madam, this Bill that I am moving today is a non-controversial Bill. It seeks some authority which we lack today, and for that matter we are suffering or we have to pay more because of heavy losses of the property. I shall indicate what it is.

The proposed Bill is being sponsored in replacement of the existing Railway Stores (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1955, to provide for proper investigation and prosecution of cases relating to railway property (including goods in transit), as also to provide for deterrent punishment being awarded to offenders connected therewith. Today the word “property” has also to be defined because until now the property was only railway property, property that belonged to the Railways. We are custodians of other properties also. That property is worth crores of rupees for which we have to pay compensation. That has also got to be done. Consequently the provisions of this Act cannot be invoked for cases of thefts of goods, consignments, etc. Now it is intended to replace the words “Railway Stores” by the words “Railway Property” so as to include any goods