

REPUBLICAN PARTY LEADER'S MEETING
WITH P.M.

*448. { SHRI T. V. ANANDAN†:
SHRI U. S. DUGAL:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some leaders of the Republican Party met the Prime Minister on the 30th January, 1965 and sought his intervention for the distribution of land to the landless Harijans and extension of concessions available to Scheduled Castes to the Neo-Buddhists; and

(b) if so, what action is being taken in the matter?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L. N. MISHRA: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The demands of the Republican Party of India already been passed on to the authorities concerned with them.

SHRI T. V. ANANDAN: Sir, Harijan uplift was very dear to the Father of the Nation and it was an ambitious programme of his. Although we are now seventeen years after independence, there are yet about one and a half crores of Harijan families distributed all over the villages in the country and there are two crores of acres of waste land available. Has the Government taken any steps so far to fulfil the ambition of the Father of the Nation?

SHRI JAISUKHLAL HATHI: As was said, the deputation was received by the Prime Minister and their demands have been sent to the various Ministries and the State Governments concerned because distribution of land really falls within their jurisdiction.

SHRI A. B. VAJPAYEE: Is it a fact that the hon. Prime Minister gave certain assurances to the members of the delegation and if so what are those assurances? May I know whether any steps have been

taken to distribute land in the Union Territories which are under the direct control of the Central Government?

SHRI JAISUKHLAL HATHI: He heard them sympathetically and the assurance was that whatever could be done—and he will use his good offices—will be done.

SHRI B. K. GAIKWAD: Sir, may I ask . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, Mr. Sinha.

SHRI B. K. GAIKWAD: Sir, many a time we stand up but . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I refuse to discuss this. Please sit down.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA: May I know what the Government understands exactly by 'Neo-Buddhists' and how are they distinguished from Buddhists? What is the distinction between Buddhists and Neo-Buddhists and are they under any disability?

SHRI JAISUKHLAL HATHI: So far as I understand they are converts.

SHRI M. M. DHARIA: After the interview of the Buddhist leaders with the Prime Minister may we know what exact steps were taken by the Government and whether the Government has received any reports from the State Governments and if no such reports have yet been received whether the Government is going to insist upon the legitimate demands made by the Buddhist leaders being met?

SHRI JAISUKHLAL HATHI: The interview took place I think only in January last, and it was not really an interview. It was a deputation of the Republican Party people who had come with a memorandum and they submitted that memorandum. There were a number of demands which could not be fulfilled straightway. For example, one of the demands, as I have said earlier, was to place a portrait

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri T. V. Anandan.

of the late Dr. Ambedkar in the Library of the Central Hall of Parliament. The Prime Minister said that he will have to discuss this point with the Chairman and the Speaker of the Lok Sabha because it was not within the Prime Minister's powers to do that. There were several things on which he could not then and there pass orders. He had to send them to the Ministries and the State Governments.

SHRI B. K. GAIKWAD: May I know whether it is a fact that at the end of the amicable settlement it was assured that as soon as the satyagraha agitation was withdrawn all the satyagrahis who were arrested under any pretext in the satyagraha movement would be released and if so, whether that assurance has been implemented by the Governments of U.P. and Punjab; if not why not?

SHRI JAISUKHLAL HATHI: I do not think the U.P. and Punjab Governments gave any assurance but one thing is certain that the Prime Minister did hear them sympathetically and said that he would communicate to the State Governments. If there is any instance where the satyagraha has been withdrawn and yet the persons have not been released, the hon. Member may let me know.

SHRI B. K. GAIKWAD: May I know whether the hon. Minister is under the impression that the satyagraha agitation is not yet withdrawn and is it not a fact that the assurance was not only given by the Prime Minister but also the hon. the Home Minister and the Defence Minister that as soon as the satyagraha is withdrawn orders will be issued to the State Governments to release all the satyagrahis? And for the information of the hon. Minister I may say I have written several letters to the Home Minister saying that the satyagrahis who were arrested in U.P. and Punjab have not yet been released.

SHRI JAISUKHLAL HATHI: That is what I say; if in any State after the withdrawal of the satyagraha any persons have not yet been released, the hon. Member can let us know.

SHRI B. K. GAIKWAD: I have already informed them.

SHRI JAISUKHLAL HATHI: So far as U.P. is concerned, the Home Minister has already spoken personally and written to the Chief Minister.

SHRI G. M. MIR: Since the deputation was promised and given an assurance by the hon. Prime Minister that land will be distributed to these people, I would like to know how much land has been distributed so far to these Harijans.

SHRI JAISUKHLAL HATHI: There were no such details as to how much land is available and how much will be distributed. It was a general question of policy to which the Prime Minister said he would certainly consider it.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA: May I know if the Government are aware that there are, not one, but several organised and recognised Buddhist institutions operating in the country and may I know if the representatives of any of those Buddhist institutions formed part of this deputation and if not, may I draw the attention of the Government to this aspect that while proclaiming the ideals of secularism if you encourage the political parties to speak on behalf of religion you are assisting the process of lumping together politics and religion?

SHRI JAISUKHLAL HATHI: This is not a question of religion as the hon. Member appears to think. Really this is the question of the Scheduled Castes and the backward classes and the Harijans and the policy of the Government has always been to help them. There is no question of religion here. They are the people who are at a particular level in society where they require sympathy and consideration and it was from that angle of view that the Prime Minister said that he would do all he could.

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*449. **SHRIMATI DEVAKI GOPIDAS:** Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to refer to the answer given to Unstarred