

is indicated, and that is the reason why Government have been taking special steps of patrolling the whole area during the night. Fifteen hundred police personnel are put on patrolling duty during the night.

PASTORAL LETTER FROM BISHOPS IN KERALA ASKING CATHOLICS TO VOTE IN PARTICULAR WAY

•158. SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Will the Minister of LAW be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of the Government of India has been drawn to the Pastoral Letter issued by the Bishops of the Catholic Church in Kerala calling on Catholics to vote in a particular way in the recent elections; and

(b) whether such letters or statements had been issued in Bombay and other centres where the Catholics are there in large numbers?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF LAW (SHRI R. M. HAJARNAVIS): (a) Yes, Sir. The Hon'ble Member himself had sent a telegram to the President inviting attention to the Joint Pastoral Letter calling upon the Catholics not to vote for communists.

(b) No, Sir.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Is the hon. Minister aware that this telegram of mine was also sent to the Prime Minister and that the Prime Minister had in his reply stated that he had condemned this practice of issuing pastoral letters? I have got the letter before me of the Prime Minister. May I know, Sir, whether it is not a fact that after the Prime Minister's speeches in Kerala in condemnation of such issuance of pastoral letters the Working Committee of the Kerala Catholic Congress issued a statement on the 19th, repudiating the Prime Minister's statement, and that the Congress leaders of Kerala, including Mr. Panampachi Govinda Menon, issued statements supporting the pastoral letter and calling upon the Catholics

and others to vote according to the pastoral letter?

SHRI R. M. HAJARNAVIS: I am not aware of that, Sir.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know, Sir, whether the hon. Minister is aware that in his letter to me the Prime Minister wondered what else he could do, apart from disapproving of it in public. He said he had done that. In view of that, may I know whether the Law Ministry has considered the advisability of reviewing article 25 of the Constitution which enables the Government of India to legislate in order to prevent such practices of intrusion of religion into politics?

SHRI R. M. HAJARNAVIS: It is a suggestion for action.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: It is not a suggestion for action, Sir. Here is, Sir, what the Prime Minister writes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all right.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, the Law Minister should take note of it. This is what the Prime Minister has ; stated in his letter:

"Yesterday I was in Kerala and I referred in several speeches of mine to the Bishops Pastoral letter. I expressed my disapproval of it. I do not know what more we can do about it."

Sir, I can understand the Prime Minister writing it. He wrote it on 8th February. May I know whether the Government has considered the advisability of revising that article or passing legislation to prevent such things, especially when the Prime Minister's ' advice in regard to this matter is flouted by the Congressmen in Kerala and of course by the P.S.P.?

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN: Sir, it is a local affair.

SHRI K. SANTHANAM: May I know Sir, if this letter was illegal? If it was

not illegal, why should anybody object to it? Every man is entitled to exercise his legal rights.

SHRI R. M. HAJARNAVIS: Sir, I have not seen the letter, but I believe that it is not actionable under section 125 as it stands at present. That is clear from such reports as I have been able to gather.

SHRI T. SRINIVASAN: Is it not the fundamental right of every Indian to express his opinion on political matters and that the Kerala Bishops are all Indians?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: There you are.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: But that matter should not be left to sleep.

OPENING OF BRANCHES BY U. S. BANK IN SOUTH INDIA

*159. SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a well-known United States Bank has been allowed to open branches in South India; and

(b) if so, what is the name of that bank?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRIMATI TARKESHWARI SINHA): (a) and (b) The First National City Bank of New York has been granted a licence by the Reserve Bank of India to open a branch in Madras city.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know whether it is not a fact that in the banking circles strong opposition has been expressed about Government sanctioning this proposal of opening a branch by a foreign bank?

SHRIMATI TARKESHWARI SINHA: Government does not sanction. Under section 23 of the Banking Companies

Act, the Reserve Bank has got the power to sanction the opening of branches if the Reserve Bank is satisfied by its criteria that it is in the public interest to allow this branch to be opened.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know whether it is not a fact that it has been pointed out to the Reserve Bank and also otherwise to the Government that the opening of such a branch by a foreign bank would mean a drain of our foreign exchange because the branch will be taking away the profits and secondly it would also work in competition against Indian banking interests?

SHRIMATI TARKESHWARI SINHA: The Reserve Bank has taken into consideration all the facts and then has come to the conclusion that this Bank should be allowed to open a branch in Madras. It is already functioning in Bombay and Calcutta.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Do I understand that our banking industry has become so bankrupt that we cannot meet the needs of our people by opening either a branch of the State Bank or a branch of some other Indian bank there?

SHRI MORARJI R. DESAI: This inference is absolutely unwarranted as all his inferences are.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Why unwarranted?

SHRI GOPIKRISHNA VIJAIVAR-GIYA: I want to know whether more applications are pending, applications from foreign banks, for the opening of branches here in India.

SHRIMATI TARKESHWARI SINHA: This Bank is already functioning in India, having branches in Bombay and Calcutta, and permission has been given to open another branch at Madras. That is a separate question that the hon. Member is putting.