

[Secretary.]

Sir, I beg to lay a copy of each of these Bills on the Table.

#### BILLS LAID ON THE TABLE

Sir, I also beg to lay on the Table a copy of each of the following three Bills passed by the Lok Sabha, the messages in respect of which have already been circulated to the Members:—

1. The Tripura Municipal Law (Repeal) Bill, 1960.
2. The Delhi Land Holdings (Ceiling) Bill, 1960.
3. The Plantations Labour (Amendment) Bill, 1960

#### REQUEST FOR DISCUSSION ON THE SITUATION IN ASSAM AND THE STRIKE OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

SHRI GANGA SHARAN SINHA (Bihar): Sir, some time ago I wrote to you and afterwards we also put in a formal motion signed by five of us, namely, myself, Shri Rohit M. Dave, Dr. A. N. Bose, Shri D. P. Singh and Shri Sudhir Ghosh, requesting you to allow us to have a discussion regarding the tragic events that took place in Assam. A discussion is very necessary and I do not think anybody will deny the importance and necessity of this situation being discussed in this House. Of course there has been some improvement; some refugees have returned to Assam yet normal conditions do not prevail there. Still there is apprehension; still the people are not feeling very secure and safe after the events that had taken place there. I do not think such events have taken place in this country in the recent past. Immediately after the partition, of course, we had such occurrences on a very big scale, but since partition never had such happenings taken place in our country. Every citizen of India

is feeling for the people who suffered in Assam and is anxious for their continued safety, and I think, Sir, in order to heal the wounds inflicted on them, in order to create a better atmosphere there, in order to go into the reasons for the happenings there and at the same time to punish those who were responsible for such things and to devise some means by which we can prevent such happenings in future, I think it is necessary that we have a discussion in this House as soon as possible.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): Sir, from our group we have given a whole number of motions on the situation in Assam, specially to highlight the responsibility of the Central Government, the Assam Government and certain Congress leaders there in that matter. Now, Sir, this debate should not be delayed any more and since there has already been a good deal of delay, we should immediately take it up. This has nothing to do with any delegation going or not going there. It is a matter of great public importance. It has stirred the conscience of the nation and we want to discuss it with a view to bringing about an atmosphere of friendship and amity there. We want to expose the culprits. We want to suggest measures as to how the uprooted people could be brought back and rehabilitated in their places. A way must be found and in that connection Parliament has an important part to play. What are we in Parliament for unless and until we take up such matters immediately for discussion? It is a great tragedy that had taken place. You know it very well, Sir, and you have spoken on this subject elsewhere. Therefore, I beg of you not to give any quarter to the Government manoeuvre to delay this debate. It should be taken up as early as possible which you may decide.

Then, Sir, about the Central Government employees' strike. I do not know how many motions we have

given on that also. The constitutional point is also there. The Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance has been laid on the Table of the House, and we have a right under article 123 to seek to disapprove of the said Ordinance issued last month. We gave notice of it; we did not delay. That should also be taken up immediately. Sir, victimisation is going on on a scale unknown in Indian history. It is no less great a tragedy—one crore of families are suffering. Therefore, Sir, I request you to have sympathies for these victimised employees who have been set upon by the Government in Delhi, and fix dates for discussion here so that we can discuss the great crime the Government has committed in this matter and request them to remedy the situation.

*(Laughter from Congress Benches)*

You may laugh but the people will have the last laugh. Here is the kind of cynicism which has come on the Congress Benches.

DR. R. B. GOUR (Andhra Pradesh): It is this that had led to the strike.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: It is this attitude that led to the strike. This will take the country to rack and ruin.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That will do.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I know that will do, Sir, but when are we going to have this debate? In the other House at least the Home Minister made a statement and tabled simultaneously a motion that the situation be taken into account. In our House the Home Minister is not present but the Prime Minister is, happily for us, present, but he makes no such motion. Therefore, I would like to know when, how and on whose motion this will be discussed. We have given notice of a motion and there are other motions, and other resolutions and motions under all the conceivable procedures of Parliament are before you. Which ever is given, let it be taken up. Let

us have a discussion. Let them face it. Let there be a public enquiry in such matters.

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI ABID ALI): We are prepared to face it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I want you to consider that these two issues, the general strike and the Assam situation, are not party matters but they are of concern to the whole Parliament and the people, and you must get over all these party differences when you discuss these things. They are of great concern to us—there is no doubt about it—and you can rest assured that the Business Advisory Committee which is meeting tomorrow will fix the dates subject to the convenience of the Ministers concerned. The discussions will be held in this Session. Would you like to say anything?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU): Sir, I think it is very necessary; the two matters referred to, that is, the occurrences in Assam and the general strike, both in their different ways are of the greatest importance, and both these should be discussed in this House. It is true that, so far as the Assam occurrences are concerned, they are, unfortunately, quite unique in the way they occurred and it is a tragedy that took place, and such a thing cannot be ignored or passed over; it has to be considered. The question in regard to it is how best to consider it, when to consider it and in what way, so as to be helpful in the situation that has arisen and so as to prevent any such thing happening again. In this matter there is the question of fixing proper dates for this. This matter is going to be discussed in the other House too and it is obvious that the two discussions should not overlap each other—on the same subject—and therefore in fixing a date, that has to be considered.

The hon. Member on the other side referred to the fact that some kind of a delegation from Parliament con-

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru.]  
sisting of Members from both Houses is going to Assam at your instance, Sir, and that of the Speaker of the other House, more or less on behalf of Parliament, to see what the position there is, to find out what the position there is in the course of a few days, and it is worth considering whether the debate should not take place after the return of those Members, who are likely to go there in two or three days' time.

DR. H. N. KUNZRU (Uttar Pradesh): Will those Members be required to submit a report to Parliament after their visit?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: That is entirely for the Chairman.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: But that does not take on the status of Parliament as such.

SHRI GANGA SHARAN SINHA (Bihar): If the Members are being sent at the instance of the Speaker and the Chairman, then we must know what these Members are going to do?

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the delegation going to do, he asks.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: I have no idea as far as that is concerned. That is for you and the Speaker, Sir, to decide.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Why should the Bengalis and Assamese have been kept out of it?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I was told that there was a Member from Bengal.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: No, Sir. I do not know how the hon. Member got this idea of somebody being kept out. Obviously if six or eight or nine persons go, somebody has to be kept out and somebody has to come in.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: We have been told in the group in Parliament that no Member from either West Bengal or from Assam would be included as a matter of principle on this delegation. I am questioning that principle.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: The hon. Member should not listen to gossips.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I take it as a gossip, but from a very high quarter.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: Therefore, Sir, that is in so far as the occurrences are concerned. I submit that a date should be fixed but it should be seen that it does not conflict with other matters, with the same matter being considered in the other House. I would prefer—Government would prefer—as some people are going there, Members of this House, to await their return. I do not know how long they should go into this matter. They are being sent not by any party, nor by any Government but rather at the instance of you, Sir, and Mr. Speaker, and it is for you to instruct them what to do. Whether they have to report or not, it is entirely outside my scope.

About strike, it is obvious that a question of such very great importance, which led to the hon. Member, Shri Bhupesh Gupta, rather warming up, should be discussed here, because Mr. Bhupesh Gupta and others have also had an intimate part in it, that should be discussed.

DR. H. N. KUNZRU: Sir, I should like to know whether the Committee that is being sent—the committee of Members of both the Houses that will soon go to Assam—will present a report to Parliament. If it does not, its visit can be of no interest to Members of Parliament because it will not add to their information. This visit of the committee may be useful to the members of the committee themselves but it cannot be of any use to the two Houses.

Again, Sir, while I am all for having full information on the subject, the importance of the discussion in regard to Assam requires that the discussion should take place soon. If we wait, say, for a month, many things may happen in the interval. What I feel is—and we are as much interested in the consideration of this question as Government themselves—that we may have to find out what the Government of Assam and the Central Government have done in the matter, what steps are going to be taken to prevent a recurrence of such tragic events and so on. Therefore, if Parliament is to wait for a month or so in order to discuss a matter of grave importance, surely that would be a dereliction of duty on its part. The duty of this Parliament to take into account all such events as soon as possible after they have happened, is as great as that of the executive itself. In fact, the duty of the executive is, as soon as it comes to know of these events, to do what it can to put an end to them. I do not want to speak any longer, but I do want to impress on you again, Sir, the importance of allowing us to discuss this matter, the like of which has not happened in India during the last fifty years, as early as possible.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I would like only to get one clarification from the Prime Minister. This delegation that is going is not to be confused with any parliamentary inquest or enquiry. If it were to be a delegation on behalf of this House, then, Sir, the proper course would be to elect a delegation or to nominate one on a motion. We lay down the procedure. Then it goes. It is nothing of the kind. The Government has conceived this delegation with a view to delaying the discussion. That we cannot accept.

Now, as Dr. Kunzru has said, we would be deprived of a chance to know what steps have been taken for their rehabilitation. We should like

to know what part the Central Government has played in this drama or what part the Assam Government has played. These are matters which should come in a discussion here. I do not know how a Parliamentary delegation, or for that matter a delegation from the United Nations is going to do. We are in possession of facts. They are in the South Block of the Central Secretariat and not in Assam.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bhupesh Gupta, all that we wish to avoid is this sort of petulance, anger and violent language. That is why . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I say it in a very mild language. Would you, Sir, kindly consider the inadvisability of delaying a matter of such supreme importance on the ground that a Parliamentary delegation—illusory or otherwise—is to go there? I have nothing to do with it. Let it go, take its own time, rest there, find out facts and pin down the criminals. But meanwhile Government had the months of May, June and July of this year to find out facts from various sources. Of course, take the advice of this important delegation. A discussion would have been useful for those who go there. They would have the collective wisdom and guidance of Parliament. Why is the Prime Minister shy? Why is he fighting shy of this discussion?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nobody is shy. The only anxiety is that any discussion which takes place here must help us to improve the situation and not to worsen it. I am as much for a discussion as you all are. As I said to you, it is not a matter of this party or that party. It is a matter of national importance and concern, and it is necessary for us to do it. But whatever we may do must be helpful and we should not merely give vent to our wrath and indignation, however justified they may be. We should discuss it in a calm, dis-

[Mr. Chairman.]

passionate atmosphere and try to get matters improved. Would you like to say anything?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: As I have said, I am very anxious to face a discussion in this House and the other House. I also appreciate the point of view that Dr. Kunzru has put forward, that it might have been better to have a discussion as early as possible. But in the balance we should consider this matter.

Of course, Sir, as you might know, in relation to some motions in the other House we felt that in the balance it would be better to hold the discussion a little later. We fixed no date either there or here. It will mean a delay of one month, I know. But we did think that a short interval would be better from every point of view, from Government's point of view. The Speaker there was pleased to accept. There no date has been accepted so far. Some Members of Parliament are going there. That by itself, I quite agree, is no valid reason, but it is a fact that we have to take into consideration.

#### MOTION FOR ELECTION TO THE COIR BOARD AND PROGRAMME THEREOF

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI MANUBHAI SHAH): Sir, I move:

"That in pursuance of clause (e) of sub-section (3) of section 4 of the Coir Industry Act, 1953 (45 of 1953), read with rule 4(1)(e) of the Coir Industry Rules, 1954, this House do proceed to elect, in such manner as the Chairman may direct, one member from among the members of the House to be a member of the Coir Board."

*The question was put and the motion was adopted.*

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have to inform Members that the following dates have been fixed for receiving nominations and for holding election, if necessary, to the Coir Board:—

1. Number of members to be elected One
2. Last date and time for receiving nominations 10th August, 1960  
(Up to 3 P.M.)
3. Last date and time for withdrawal of candidature 11th August, 1960  
(Up to 3 P.M.)
4. Date and time of election 12th August, 1960  
(Between 3 P.M. and 5 P.M.)
5. Place of election Room No. 63, First Floor, Parliament House, New Delhi.
6. Method of election Proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

#### THE PRESS AND REGISTRATION OF BOOKS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1960

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (DR. B. V. KESKAR): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867, be taken into consideration."

Sir, this a short Bill amending the Act which was passed in 1955 and its main object is to smoothen the difficulties encountered in the registration of newspapers by the Registrar, who is really concerned with the proper registration of all newspapers and all the ancillary details connected therewith. I might, at the very outset, emphasise that the Bill has nothing to do either with the editorial side of the papers or the news gathering side of the newspapers. In order to enable Members to understand the necessity for these amendments, I would like to mention something