

[Shrimati Lakshmi Menon.]

When the news of these unhappy developments came to India, there was immediately a strong and wide-spread reaction. The Government did not bring about this reaction. Nor was this reaction essentially political. It was largely one of sympathy based on sentiment and humanitarian reasons. Also on a certain feeling of kinship with the Tibetan people derived from long-established religious and cultural contacts. It was an instinctive reaction. It is true that some people in India sought to profit by it by turning it in an undesirable direction. But the fact of that reaction of the Indian people was there. If that was the reaction here, one may well imagine the reaction among the Tibetans themselves. Probably this reaction is shared in the other Buddhist countries of Asia. When there are such strong feelings, which are essentially not political, they cannot be dealt with by political methods alone, much less by military methods. We have no desire whatever to interfere in Tibet; we have every desire to maintain the friendship between India and China; but at the same time we have every sympathy for the people of Tibet, and we are greatly distressed at their hapless plight. We hope still that the authorities of China, in their wisdom, will not use their great strength against the Tibetans but will win them to friendly co-operation in accordance with the assurances they have themselves given about the autonomy of the Tibet region. Above all, we hope that the present fighting and killing will cease.

As I have said above, I had a long talk with the Dalai Lama three days ago at Mussoorie. He told me of the difficulties he had to face, of the growing resentment of his people at the conditions existing there and how he sought to restrain them, of his feelings that the religion of the Buddha, which was more to him than life itself, was being endangered. He said that up to

the last moment he did not wish to leave Lhasa. It was only on the afternoon of the 17th March when, according to him, some shells were fired at his palace and fell in a pond nearby, that the sudden decision was taken to leave Lhasa. Within a few hours the same day he and his party left Lhasa and took the perilous journey to the Indian frontier. The departure was so hurried that even an adequate supply of clothes could not be brought. When I met the Dalai Lama, no member of his entourage was present. Even the interpreter was our own. The Dalai Lama told me that the two statements which had been issued were entirely his own and there was no question of anybody coercing him to make them. Even though he is young, I could not easily imagine that he could be coerced into doing something he did not wish. All my sympathy goes out to this young man who at an early age has had to shoulder heavy burdens and to face tremendous responsibilities. During the last few weeks he has suffered great physical and mental strain. I advised him to rest for a while and not to take any hurried decisions. He felt very unhappy at conditions in Tibet and was especially anxious that fighting should stop."

MESSAGE FROM THE LOK SABHA

THE COAL GRADING BOARD (REPEAL) BILL, 1959

SECRETARY: Sir, I have to report to the House the following Message received from the Lok Sabha, signed by the Secretary of the Lok Sabha:

"In accordance with the provisions of Rule 96 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, I am directed to enclose herewith a copy of the Coal Grading Board (Repeal) Bill, 1959, as passed by Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 24th April, 1959".

Sir, I lay the Bill on the Table.