

[Shri Prithviraj Kapoor.]

he says, life started changing for him. Otherwise he had done so many things in jail.

Sir, in moving this Resolution I again appeal to the power of the heart that we have and not only profess. We have fully experimented with it and achieved great results. Therefore we should have faith in ourselves, faith in humanity and faith in the goodness of man. With heart within and God overhead, let us move forward and do something. Let us take a step whereby we could certainly bring in a great revolutionary thing in saving life, in saving humanity from this great insult. I should say it is a stigma and we should save ourselves and our future generation from this stigma. We should save our children, save our brethren, save the children of the soil for the service of the soil so that we can go ahead with greater speed, with greater strength, forward onward and onward. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Resolution moved:

"This House is of opinion that Government should appoint a Committee consisting of Members of Parliament and other persons having special knowledge of the subject to examine the question of the abolition of capital punishment in India and submit a report thereon."

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sinha, you can move your amendments without a speech now.

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA (Bihar): Sir, I beg to move:

1. "That for the words 'the abolition of capital punishment in India' the words 'capital punishment in India, including its abolition; the crimes for which, if any, it should be retained; the defences that should be available to an accused in a murder trial in extenuation of his crime or for elimination of his criminal responsibility; the manner

of execution of a capital sentence if retained and other ancillary matters' be substituted."

2. "That at the end of the Resolution, the words 'within the period prescribed by Government' be added."

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Resolution and the amendments are now before the House.

But before we take up the discussion, I shall ask the Home Minister to make a statement.

STATEMENT REGARDING ACCIDENT INVOLVING A SCHOOL BUS

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI GOVIND BALLABH PANT): I regret Sir, that I was not present here in the House when a reference was made yesterday to the shocking incident which occurred on Wednesday at the junction of the Lodi Road and the Lodi Estate Road. I fully appreciate the sentiments to which expression was given by hon. Members of the House. Their reactions were but natural. It was a matter of profound grief and sorrow and even distress to everyone of us that little children while being carried to their respective homes from their school should have been involved in such an accident. Two of the little ones, whom we cannot now bring back to life, expired. The police appeared at the scene immediately. Other children were extricated and all who were in the bus were carried to the hospital. From the information that I have, the children who are there in the hospital and others also are now fairly out of danger. The place is not usually cramped; traffic there is not ordinarily heavy. As I said, it is merely a junction of the Lodi Road and the Lodi Estate Road but we have to take stock of . . .

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU (Uttar Pradesh): We cannot hear the Home Minister.

SHRI GOVIND BALLABH PANT: I was saying that traffic at that particular spot is not generally heavy. But I have asked the police to examine the position further and to post regular traffic police there and to set up, if necessary, a box for that purpose. I have also directed the D.I.G. to seek the permission of the authority who is in charge of motor vehicles so that the police officers may examine the vehicles in which the school children are taken and see that they are sound. We will try to do what we can. As I said, it is a matter of profound sorrow and all that we can do now is to express our sympathy with the guardians and parents of the children and to resolve to take such steps as are open to us to guard against the possibility of a recurrence of such a tragedy.

I would just mention that the police here have not been generally indifferent. In the course of the year 3,451 drivers were prosecuted for driving above the prescribed limit. The proportion of fatal accidents in Delhi to its total population is also less than it is in some other cities but that is no consideration to us. So long as there is even one fatal accident, it is indication of the fact that there is room for improvement and for further care. So we express our sorrow and our sympathy, and, as I have said, I have given necessary instructions to the police. I was perhaps dealing with this very subject in the Lok Sabha at the time when this question was raised here. That, I think, explains my inability to be here but all the same I apologise to the House for my unavoidable absence.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE (Bombay): May I know from the hon. Minister the cause of this accident? We are thankful to him for the statement that he has made at the earliest opportunity but in the statement we did not get from him what exactly was the cause of this accident and what the police findings primarily have shown.

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU: Before he replies, may I also ask him whether

the Government propose to take any action against the lorry driver?

SHRI GOVIND BALLABH PANT: The lorry driver has already been arrested and is in custody. The case against him will be put up, I hope, very shortly. The matter is under investigation; as to the exact cause of this accident, I think it will be possible to reach definite conclusions after the enquiry has been completed. It will not be proper for me to make any statement at this stage.

SHRIMATI T. NALLAMUTHU RAMAMURTI (Madras): Is it not possible to prevent heavy traffic during the rush hours of school in school areas, prevent access to school areas? We have done that in Madras for some of the schools where children attend schools.

SHRI GOVIND BALLABH PANT: I do not know. I will convey the suggestion to the police authorities. But that is a matter of detail and if we were to stop others from making use of the road at any particular hour, that may interfere with the ordinary traffic, trade, business and other matters. So, all these things have to be considered carefully with due regard to the interests of all concerned.

SHRIMATI YASHODA REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): If any lives have been lost, do Government propose to pay compensation?

SHRI GOVIND BALLABH PANT: I have not been able to get your words. Well, I do not know if anyone would like to take compensation in cases of this type. We are very sorry, and we would like to help, if any help is needed.

RESOLUTION REGARDING ABOLITION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT— *continued*

SHRI B. K. P. SINHA: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the Motion of Shri Prithviraj Kapoor and commend