

thinking whether the administration suits our purpose. Similarly we have adopted with only minor changes the constitution devised by the British in 1935. A constitution is a tool to help a people to do national work in the best way possible. It is not a halter to pull a people down.^ We have been guilty of framing, or rather imitating a constitution, without taking into account our problems and the background against which they must be tackled. Our problem is the poverty and misery and backwardness of our people.

[MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

We must rapidly develop our productive resources to create better conditions of life for our people. To achieve our objectives, we must have a Government machinery and a Constitution that make it possible for us to develop our resources rapidly and effectively. In order to do it, we must use all the technical knowledge that is available in industry, agriculture and health. These can be employed effectively and to the fullest purpose only if we have an atmosphere in which vested interests do not operate, the status quo is not maintained and, what is more, economic inequalities do not flourish. We have to create a situation in which we can work on a planned economy. That is the only intelligent way of utilising modern technical knowledge for increasing our productive resources as rapidly as possible. Instead of doing the job, we are play-acting. We imitate the parliamentary system of Britain, under which our beloved President is made to give a homily which does not inspire any one, while what was needed was an inspiring speech which would electrify the whole nation to put its shoulders to the wheel and make it go. I would once more say. "Let us be realistic and bring about a better administrative machinery and a suitable Constitution so that we could successfully do the jobs that require to be done." 131 C. of S.

CALLING OUT OF MILITARY IN ALCUTTA IN CONNECTION WITH TEACHERS' STRIKE. 6 P.M.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We will now take up the discussion on the calling out of the military in Calcutta on the 16th February 1954, in connection with the strike of the secondary school teachers and the situation arising therefrom. I should like to appeal to the Members to speak with restraint and a sense of responsibility so as to help ease the situation and not worsen it.

SHRI B. GUPTA (West Bengal): Mr. Chairman, we are very grateful that Parliament has been afforded an opportunity now to discuss a problem of very great national importance and concern, which affects not only the educationists of the country but all men of goodwill regardless of political and party affiliations. It is in the fitness of things that we should not have allowed rigid constitutional interpretations to come in the way of Members of Parliament, who are the representatives of the people, taking up this urgent matter when certain vital questions to our cultural life are being decided in Calcutta. Sir, as you have been an educationist yourself, I have not a doubt that you will understand the importance of such a discussion and I wish to engage in the discussion in a spirit in which such a subject should be discussed with a view to easing the situation and solving the crisis, that has unfortunately been created as a result of the policy pursued by the West Bengal State Government.

This situation in Calcutta has two aspects. On the one hand there is the question of the secondary school teachers who have been on strike since the 10th of this month. On the other hand there is the broad question of the civil and democratic rights. Sir, first of all, I would like to take up the question of the secondary school teachers.

As you know, there are about 25,000 secondary school teachers who work in about 1,300 to 1,400 secondary schools

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some of these schools are Government schools, others are Government-aided schools and yet another large number of schools are run absolutely by the public without any Government aid. Now, if you take into account the position of these secondary schools, you will find that we have got roughly one secondary school for every 2,000 or 2,200 of population, and if you look at the State Budget, you will see that in West Bengal, compared to other 'A' States, the budget allocation is the lowest, being only 7 per cent, of the total revenue, whereas in other States it is slightly higher. In some States it is even 20 per cent, but West Bengal has the lowest budget allocation and again in that State you find that the Police Budget comes much higher than the budget allocations for education. In fact West Bengal today is spending much more than what undivided Bengal used to spend on the Police items. Therefore it cannot be said that the Government even by the standards of the existing regime, has done everything possible to see that education has all the facilities that they can give. Now for the last 3 or 4 years, the 25,000 secondary school teachers—mostly very poor people—have been trying to get some of their grievances met by the Government and they have always been trying through negotiations. And these teachers, as you know, belong to all ages, all political affiliations, all religions—people who have found their place in the cultural make-up of Bengal. Now the Secondary School Board was appointed by the Government which has an official majority. Not only that. The Chairman of the Secondary School Board is himself an official. Even this Board was constrained to recommend that the secondary school teacher should be given a dearness allowance of Rs. 35 a month and a pay scale ranging from Rs. 70 to Rs. 125, excluding, of course, the case of Headmasters. This would seem a very reasonable proposition. If you only remember that the majority of the secondary school teachers in West Bengal today do not even get Rs. 60—and I need not tell the House I

how difficult it is for any decent human being to live on Rs. 60—that money is not even sufficient for a starvation level. This money puts you into a state which can be described as sub-human. Naturally the secondary school teachers in whose hands we had reposed the education of our children demanded a little better life.

And they advanced their demands according to the recommendations of the Secondary School Board itself. On the basis of these demands which are universally accepted as very, very legitimate, they entered into negotiations with the Government, and these negotiations continued for a number of years. In the beginning, Sir, unfortunately, the West Bengal Government did not even agree to see them, would not even discuss with the teachers. But life asserts itself and as the movement began to gather momentum, reason dawned upon certain officials of the Education Ministry there and ways were found of talking with the teachers. It was found that the teachers were very reasonable in their demand. After all, how can the Government deny the demands which had been put forward by the Secondary School Board itself which is a semi-official body.

So these talks started. But nothing came out of the discussions, though these discussions went on. For three years at least, these discussions continued, these efforts of the teachers continued. But patience has its limit. Even so, when they were at the end of their patience, they tried hard for a settlement. They went to Dr. Roy and asked for a solution of the problem. Dr. Roy sent them away with a proposal which could not be acceptable to any of them, because, in the first instance, the proposal that Dr. Roy made on the 16th January affected only 10 per cent, of the teachers, if at all, and the remaining 90 per cent, of the teachers did not come within the scope of the proposal that was made. Naturally, the teachers could not accept such a proposal. They still wanted further consideration of their demand. Then after a time, Dr. Roy made an-

other proposal in which he came out with yet another set of proposals and in these he forgot to mention the proposal that he had made earlier on the 16th January. In the earlier statement of the 16th January, Dr. Roy had said that he was prepared to give them Rs. 17/8 provided the schools themselves would find another Rs. 17/8 from their own resources, for meeting the demand for the dearness allowance.

Now, Sir, in Bengal, most of the schools are not in a position to find that money. In fact they are very, very poor and a large number of schools are on the point of closing down because of financial difficulties. So those terms could not be accepted. Dr. Roy's second proposal did not mention this offer at all. He said that he was prepared to increase their wages by Rs. 5 or so. Naturally, the situation became greatly confused. The teachers did not know as to what had happened to that promise about Rs. 17/8 in the latter proposals that were made. They wanted more negotiations to understand the position. But for reasons best known to Dr. Roy, the position was never clarified, as to what happened with regard to the proposal of giving them Rs. 17/8. The other proposal, the second proposal, the teachers discussed dispassionately, but they found it unacceptable because it did not meet their requirements, even their very minimum requirements, to say nothing of the basic demands that they had put forth.

Then came the deadlock. The teachers decided to cease work from the 10th of February. This "cease work" was put into effect from that date and it was complete. All the teachers went on strike, ceased work, except for one or two here and there. But looking at Bengal I think anybody would admit that it was a completely successful cease-work on the part of these secondary school teachers. They were extremely peaceful and they made it known that they had to make this peaceful effort for the fulfilment of their demands, because every other avenue had been closed to them, as

a result of the policy of the Congress Ministry there. Then the teachers saw through their experience that these proposals were not meant to settle the dispute. It was understood by them, and rightly so, and also by the public at large, that the Government wanted to play up one section of the teachers against another as if to break their morale so that tomorrow they would be left to the mercies of the Government. The teachers understood it that way and they thought that it was but adding insult to injury. Therefore, they came out of their institutions on the 10th, and it was an absolutely peaceful strike. No paper in Bengal, whether it belongs to the Congress Party or to any other Party, had ever said that there was any breach of peace or any indication of breach of peace on the part of the teachers. They came out, and on the 11th the teachers in a peaceful procession • proceeded to the Writers' Buildings to place their demands. People have the right to proceed to the Writers' Buildings, where the Government sits, to place their demand. On the way they were intercepted by the police and the procession squatted on the streets in front of Raj Bhavan. There was no attempt at breach of the police cordon and if you look at the picture of how they squatted you will find that the policemen and the teachers are all sleeping in the night. It was so peaceful a situation that not only were the teachers asleep but the policemen were given such an assurance of peaceful conduct that they also went to sleep. Now, Sir, when there is an apprehension of breach of peace or of violent events taking place, usually our policemen are not instructed to go to sleep. Now, these pictures appeared in the press, which belongs to the Congress, in the *Statesman* and in other papers in Bengal. That can be seen. Then public support began to gather as also sympathy for the teachers. The hon. the Prime Minister will understand that though we may have lost many things, we cherish our cultural heritage, the heritage that Tagore has given us and, naturally, true to th<* traditions of our people, true to our

[Shri B. Gupta.] cultural traditions which we share with the rest of India, the people of West Bengal rallied to a man to the support of the teachers. Now, as the teachers squatted there, sympathy flowed like the Ganges there so much so, that in one day a sum of not less than Rs. 7,000 was collected. I am only mentioning this to indicate how great was the public support. Now, that support did not know party barriers because Congressmen came out on the open platform to signify their support to tin demand. Amongst those who were squatting, I found people whom one had seen at the Kalyani Congress. Therefore, to call it a political party show would be a profound mistake,

MR. CHAIRMAN: How did you go there?

SHRI B. GUPTA: On the 15th, in the early hours of the 16th morning, suddenly the police swooped down on them and arrested about 250 of them including 50 women teachers. Now, this was absolutely uncalled for so much so that even the *Statesman* has had to write, "We think that the State Government was wrong to remove them from the scene of their demonstration in the early hours of Tuesday". This is what the *Statesman* said; the *Statesman* is not very charitably disposed either towards the teachers or towards the public of Calcutta and even that paper had to advise Dr. Roy in this manner. I do not know how evil counsel prevailed, but things happened that way. From that time, something started which was absolutely unnecessary and uncalled for. After the arrest, the next morning, section 144 was clamped down all over the Assembly area and then there was a demonstration. A meeting was held and 40,000 people—a number unheard of in Calcutta processions—went in a procession towards the Assembly House to place their demand. The 40,000 people were not violent people; they were non-violent and they were only going to show their support, as the Assembly was meeting. A police cordon was immediately thrown; the

mounted police and other came, charged them, used tear gas and then lathi-charged them and the situation went absolutely out of control. After office hours people from the offices were going towards the Assembly and that was something which was not liked. That procession was attacked in a most provocative manner.

Now, Sir, I should mention here that this took place at about 4 p. M. or thereafter. At about 1 p. M. the Congress Party in its Assembly Party meeting had decided to make another proposal and the three hours that intervened, between that decision and the incidents near the *maidan* were not enough for communicating to the teachers that certain other proposals had been made.

How is it, Sir, that, if the Congress party has decided upon another set of proposals, these proposals were not communicated? On the contrary the police went there to attack them. A Congress paper has said that. How is it that these things—these proposals—which might have averted the crisis were not taken to the teachers in time? It was only when the procession was advancing that some attempt was made to take these things to them and the 40,000 people did not know exactly who was making that attempt. Leaders of the various parties wanted to go and tell them but then the repression already had started. Then the incidents took place and naturally in the whole of Calcutta the situation went out of control and the police attacked as if it were a battle taking place all over the city. Now these incidents took place. Nobody wanted these incidents—neither the teachers nor the public. But when you provoke the people like that, when you attack them, naturally things happen; things take their course. It is very difficult to explain. Six persons have already been killed as a result of random shooting. People on the first floor of their houses have been shot. Their houses have been entered into. I have got the names here:

Ravindra Nath—a P. & T. employee.

Lakshman—He was living in his quarters; he was shot in his house.

Manmohan Burman—He was called out of his house and shot.

And a 26-year old lady has been also shot.

The Statesman, after all, was not participating in this strike, but five of their employees have been hit in front of *The Statesman* office. All this shows that there was shooting at random. And when you begin to shoot like that at random and when you become so trigger-happy it is very difficult to control the situation. That is the point. - It was most unfortunate that when they were discussing certain other proposals, the police were on the street shooting people at random. Now, Sir, I know all sorts of pictures have been published in the *bourgeois* Press which show burning tram cars and which show State buses burning. I do not deny that these had been burnt but at the same time one would like to see pictures of those people who had been shot in their houses. Sir, journalism, if it had been honest, should have presented this picture to the public of India. I want to place that untold story before the House because it does not find a place in the Press of the ruling class. That is the position.

Then what happened? Random arrests started. Houses were searched and a dozen M. L. A.s were arrested. Two of them had to find asylum in the Assembly now. Many were arrested—some under the Preventive Detention Act, some under certain other Acts. Of course, Acts are in plenty; if you want to arrest people you have no dearth of them. I do not know, how many have been arrested up till now. maybe a thousand. About a dozen were members of the State legislature. Was it necessary? Do you solve a problem that way? At the same time Dr. Roy was pleading that he had no money. He was trying to convince the people that it was the Cen-

tre which was responsible. It was not helping him in this matter. Sir, I do not know the relations between the Centre and the State. This is none of my affairs but it seems to me by reading the Bengal Press that it has been the complaint of Dr. Roy that the Centre is not helping him in finding the money. Now, all these matters could have been dispassionately discussed by sheathing the sword, by putting the revolvers and the guns in their proper places, and not by using this against the people. But that was not done. I do not know how things are happening. It seems everybody is prepared to discuss and negotiate but before that they demand the release of these people. Release the teachers; release the Executive Committee, a part of which had been put in jail, so that discussion can take place. Take away the Preventive Detention measures. Stop applying them. Remove the military. The military came out on the scene. I do not know whether the hon. the Prime Minister consented to the calling out of the Military, but it seems to me the military is more at the back and call of Dr. Roy than at the orders of the Central Government.

It is very strange that military comes out in the city. I know that the Government will have to make out a case— and I know how they make it out— but I would like to urge upon this House, first of all, to decide as to whether the demands of the teachers are legitimate or not. Now, not a person in West Bengal has said that the demands are not legitimate. Now taking that the demands are legitimate, then how can these be met? If the West Bengal Government is in genuine need of funds, let the Central Government advance them money. And, towards the conclusion of my speech I would like to offer certain suggestions. Solutions can be found if the Government changes the policy, if the Government would make a different approach.

Now, Sir, it is possible to come to a solution if we for a moment leave

[Shri B. Gupta.] bitterness behind. If only the Government realise that they should be prepared to discuss with the teachers all their problems and reach a settlement and solve them, the orders can be passed here. The hon. the Prime Minister, who is sitting here, can pass the orders even now. He can indicate his point of view that all these people should be released. The teachers should be released and all the charges against them or other people should be withdrawn, so that the matter could be discussed mutually. We can discuss that matter and a solution can be found. Now it is very necessary that since we have taken up this matter, we shall discuss it with sympathy. Let us discuss it with understanding; let us discuss it with a view to doing justice to the teachers of Calcutta and at the same time for restoring normal conditions in the city's life, normal conditions which we all want to be restored. I hope the hon'ble the Prime Minister will rise to the occasion and do something which would help us in solving the problem and returning to the normal life that we all cherish.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH: (Madras): Sir, on a point of information. Rs. 60 which he has mentioned as the salary of a teacher—does it include the dearness allowances or is it basic salary?

THE MINISTER FOR DEFENCE ORGANISATION (SHRI MAHAVIR TYAGI): It is the basic salary.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE (West Bengal): Although the recent happenings in Calcutta are so serious and deplorable as to rouse passions, I will as suggested by you, Sir, try to restrain myself and place before the House the bare facts of the case. My hon. friend, Shri B. Gupta, has related to you the history of the teachers' demand and I do not think it is necessary for me to elaborate that aspect. But I should like this hon. House to remember this about this demand of the teachers that it is not like some work-

ers demands where the demands are pitched up at the highest with a view to coming to a settlement later on. This demand was something which was adjudged to be moderate and reasonable by an organisation called the Secondary Education Board. The original demands of the teachers were very much higher, but the demand for which they went on strike was the scale of pay and dearness allowance recommended by the Secondary Education Board. And, therefore, it cannot be said that the teachers were making an unreasonable demand.

The next question arises as to what happened thereafter. There would be two things. The West Bengal Government could have felt that they had not the money to pay those scales of wages or dearness allowance. The Government had never said that the recommendations of the Secondary Education Board were unreasonable; and then if they had not got the money the proper course would have been for them to approach the Government of India for financial assistance. I would like to know what the West Bengal Government did, as to whether the West Bengal Government did approach the Central Government in this matter. The West Bengal Government knew fully well what the situation in Calcutta was like.

The second point, Sir, that I want to put before you is this. Even if we accept that the West Bengal Government had no money, it is significant that the last proposal of that Government which they made after giving concessions after concessions—and by dribblets—is very much on the lines of the demand made by the teachers. The question arises as to why the West Bengal Government should, at such a late hour, have agreed virtually to the demand of the teachers. And even if they have now done so, let us examine the manner in which they have done it. The teachers were on strike—a peaceful strike it was; everybody is agreed on that. They were squatting on the roads. The squatting went on and the Government did not interfere with

them until Monday night. On Monday night the police came along and arrested the teachers. On Tuesday evening, in the Assembly, Dr. Roy comes along with his proposals which, I believe would have formed the basis of a reasonable settlement. But he brings the proposal at a time when *no* negotiations can be held, because on the previous night the teachers have been arrested. How can you expect, Sir, negotiations to go on under those conditions? And I really fail to see the wisdom of the West Bengal Government in acting in this fashion.

One thing more about this agitation. I am sure the hon. the Home Minister would say that there are political parties trying to take advantage of the situation. Why should the political parties not take advantage of the situation, if the Government is unwise and foolish and does not meet the legitimate demands of the people? The whole of West Bengal is behind the teachers' strike. It is a reasonable demand. A few Communists or a few P. S. P members cannot create all the trouble in Calcutta unless the people are behind them. Let the Government understand and appreciate that. Whenever they condemn the people, they must realise that if the Government goes against the wishes of the people or against what is considered to be just and reasonable, they cannot but expect the consequences that follow. So it is no good saying that political parties are just trying to create trouble. And it is no good giving Calcutta a bad name, because although there have been disturbances, I should like to tell you, Sir, that in every case the cause that the people have espoused or the political parties have espoused has been just and reasonable. Only in recent times, during the last one or two years there have been three such mass movements in Calcutta. There was the food resistance movement; there was the tram movement. And now there is the tea-ohers' strike. What was the tram movement agitation for? It has been described as a one-pice war. But have we enquired into the middleman's

budget who would have to pay about Rs. 3 a month from out of his income of Rs. 60 or Rs. 70? And probably that would mean the cost of milk for his child. And may I tell you, Sir, that the West Bengal Government had appointed a one-man committee to go into the question as to whether the tramway company was justified in increasing its II class fare by one pice? Where is the report of that committee? Why have not the West Bengal Government published it? We know that it was not published because the committee held that the company was not justified in increasing the fare. So without enquiring into the justice of the case you do things and then if the people do not support you, you come and say that the people are lawless, and if the people violate the laws, the Government cannot do anything but call the police and the military to cow them down. But what can the people do in such circumstances? Taking recourse to the army is certainly against the interests of the people.

Now, Sir, one point more and I have finished. It is this. Much has been said about the propriety of bringing in such a motion before this House.

PROF. G. RANGA (Andhra)- That need not be discussed now.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE: What I have got to say is something different. I quite agree that on State subject* Parliament should not intervene. It will be very bad indeed if Parliament intervenes in State subjects, because they have their own spheres and it would be improper for us to enter into their preserves, but there is one point to consider: How many times have the military had to go to the help of the West Bengal Government in aid of the civil authority? I would ask the Government to realise that the military might go to the aid of civil authority under conditions which at least in their genesis could be likened to civil commotion and widespread subversive activities. That alone would justify calling out the military, if there are just grievances and the West Bengal

[Shri B. C. Ghose.] Government cannot meet them with wisdom and justice and if every time they fail and they create a situation when the military have to be called out, certainly the Central Government becomes involved. Then, I ask you Sir, "Has not the Central Government a responsibility in the matter?" That is the question that I want to place before you, before this hon. House and before the Council of Ministers. Surely there must be something wrong with the West Bengal Government. Why, of all the States, should the West Bengal Government require the calling out of the military so many times to aid civil authority? That is why I feel that, although the strike of the teachers is an educational problem and within the competence of the State Government, a situation has developed there which, if you dismiss it as the work of trouble-makers of trouble-shooters, you will be deceiving yourself and you will be doing a dis-service to the country. It is a portent of which adequate note should be taken. If that is not done, we shall rue the day when things are allowed to happen in this manner.

DR. KALIDAS NAG (Nominated): Mr. Chairman, I start probably from the wrong end. I do not accept that the Bengal Teachers' problem is a State subject or a provincial problem. It is a vital subject which affects the destiny of our whole nation. Incidentally it is in Calcutta. But this has a symbolic aspect and it has got a symptomatic character. It is this nature of the tragedy that I want to bring before my hon. colleagues here. What is this symptom? The symptom is that we, who are fairly well-placed in life, are not sufficiently conscious of the silent, yet serious, tragedy that we are allowing by our policy of drift to develop in our social life. Therefore, though geographically the occurrence is a Calcutta incident, it is an all-India affair; and from that point of view, I beg to draw the attention of the Members of Parliament and especially yours, Mr. Chairman, who gave many

years of your life to Calcutta. I take you into my confidence—you, Sir, who have spent over 20 years in Calcutta and Bengal. Why this progressive deterioration in the relationship between the educated leaders and the teaching classes? I feel that something serious is happening in the very foundation of our educational life. We ought to be ashamed, Sir, and as a teacher, I know that before independence we had teachers who were paid less than Rs. 30 per month! From Rs. 30 you have raised the basic salary to Rs. 60, but, then, what is the worth of a rupee these days? My hon. friend, Prof. Ranga, knows what a rupee meant in our school days and what a rupee means today. If you as responsible Parliamentarians, delude yourselves with the belief that by slightly raising the percentage here or there, you have solved the problem, you are very much mistaken. You are not even touching the fringe of the dangerous problem. The teachers who are silently suffering this hardship are vital members of our body politic. We should feel for silent sufferers rather than for the talkative people who go about and shout that they are asserting their rights. These humble teachers have also their "civil rights, nay, their God-given rights. You know, Sir, that when you started your great career as an educationist with the first University Commission (1917), there were few notes or sketching chapters here and there on the victims of this lower grade education, for we were too busy then with the so-called "higher education"! In those days it was fashionable under the British regime, to classify teachers under higher education and lower education! I am not concerned with higher education though I have wasted my life in that branch of the education. I came to be concerned because I was invited by my friends of Orissa to preside over the Primary Teachers' Conference in Puri. I felt ashamed and humiliated in my conscience to find that such low salaries are paid to our rural teachers—and they are all family men with wives and children. There are experienced ladies

in this House and I request them to give their candid opinion on this vital subject. It is not a question of party or of a province. It is the basic problem of the whole of India and there has been no All-India Commission from the days of Lord Macaulay, for full one century (1830—1930), to examine and have a realistic and intensive analysis of the economic and social condition of the Indian teachers who are to support the whole superstructure of higher education in India. It is an inverted pyramid (three times have I climbed the Pyramids!) and I give you this warning that if this precariously balanced pyramid topples over, it will be one of the greatest disasters not only to Bengal or to India but to the whole world. We are not seriously looking after the basic living requirements of millions of our teachers. They are condemned to live in sub-human conditions and I appeal to all of you hon friends to forget the party and consider whether as a free nation we should not take up this challenge of life to the Common Sea where some sections of our own community are obliged perpetually to live under such tragic conditions. The question is not of giving much but only of giving the irreducible minimum on which they are to live. Very little has been discussed on this issue in the two University Commissions' reports, including the Radhakrishnan Commission. Let there be real Basic Education Commission—and no more omissions! We want a Commission actually of the Central Government to determine an all-India basic standard of living for teachers and on that basis to regulate the budget. In this last speech which I deliver in this Session, I request every responsible Member of the House of the People and our Council to think of the teachers of the nation who silently bore this burden all these years and who naturally, with the dawn of Independence, are entitled to ask the question—"What is the meaning of Independence to me if I do not find food and education for my own children and my family?" In illness they have no surplus to pay the doctors. Let us go to their homes; they are our kith and kin and

all of you know how reasonable the humble teachers are, but we have refused them even the barest needs of life. We cannot maintain our independence by keeping millions of teachers in this condition. It is a question of tomorrow and the day after. It is not Five Year Plan. Many of us will be eliminated before our five year plans have materialised. I request every one to think of these teachers. We may, if necessary, adjourn this House and go there in the streets of Calcutta and see the real situation. We are all one country, one India and the humble teachers support the structure of higher education. We should come down to their level and join hands with them and say that they, too, have the right to live decently. For this is a Fundamental Right in our Constitution as well as in any progressive Constitution in the world." I have gone through the world several times and I am ashamed to find that after seven years of Independence, we have given our teachers such a treatment. India's future is linked up with the amelioration of the teacher's condition. Let justice be done and let truth alone triumph. That is my humble submission.

PRINCIPAL DEVAPRASAD GHOSH (West Bengal): Mr. Chairman, I shall be very brief, but I should like to say a few words for the simple reason that I happened to be connected, till the recent past, with many of the organisations whose names now figure prominently in the press. My hon. friends must have read in the papers about the A. B. T. A. It is called the All-Bengal Teachers' Association. It is not a mushroom organisation started overnight for agitational purposes. It is an old association of about 25 to 30 years' standing, and I myself have had the honour of presiding over this association for about two years, some three years ago, and my esteemed friend, Prof. Satyen Bose,—the eminent scientist and an eminent colleague of ours—was the president of the Association for another term. This I say for the simple purpose of showing that the demands or the grievances

[Principal Devaprasad Ghosh.] which the All-Bengal Teachers' Association has been formulating are not the demands of an irresponsible body which has been got up by extremist agitators. It is nothing of the kind. And these demands were formulated by them—not the present demands, hut demands about salaries and dear-ness allowances of teachers. They were formulated three years ago in a session of the All-Bengal Teachers' Association at Jaloaiguri over which our friend Prof. Satyen Bose presided. These demands were pitched in a much higher key than the demands over which the present agitation or the present movement has been launched. You know, Sir, there is in Bengal the Board of Secondary Education, and as has been lucidly explained by the hon. Shri Bhupesh Gupta, it is a very responsible, body, and it is practically in charge of the whole of the secondary education structure in the State of West Bengal. The fact is, over a year ago, this Board of Secondary Education made certain recommendations about the initial salaries and scales of salaries of the teachers of various categories—M. A., B. A., B. T., Honours B. A., ordinary untrained B. A., not B. A., but undergraduates—and so on. The Board made recommendations about the initial salaries and scales for these teachers, and they made recommendations for their dearness allowance. These recommendations have been before the Government of West Bengal in the Education Department for over a year, and as my hon. friend, Shri Bhupesh Gupta, has very clearly explained—these are nothing new. About a year ago, I suppose in April last, in Chinsura, the annual conference of the All-Bengal Teachers' Association took place in which, fed up by the callous attitude of the Education Department of West Bengal, they came to a decision. As we all know, Sir, and as you may know, Sir, the whole Government of West Bengal is dominated by one figure, and that is the figure of my esteemed friend Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy. The teachers were very much disappointed that noth-

ing tangible had been done by the Government of West Bengal, that is to say, by Dr. Roy, that they had not even negotiated with the teachers to find out whether they were in the right or in the wrong, or about the possibility or otherwise of giving effect to those recommendations that had been made by the Board of Secondary Education. And in sheer desperation, in Chinsura, the resolution was adopted that, failing all other means, the teachers of the secondary schools in West Bengal should go on "cease-work". That was no "strike". "Strike" was not the word used; but the Resolution said that they should "cease work" with effect from the 10th February 1954. And mind you, Sir, this Resolution was adopted in April 1953. So about a year or ten months' notice was given in order that the Government might realise the gravity of the situation. But nothing was done. That is the pity of the whole situation, that time was allowed to run out, that months were allowed to pass. Then only in January last, just on the eve of the Kalyan! session of the Congress, when barely one month remained for the 10th of February to come up. Dr. Roy woke up to the seriousness of the situation. It is possible that he had thought that the whole idea would fizzle out, that nothing would come out of it all, *an* the teachers were such a harmless lot. And I will not be committing any breach of confidence if I tell you, Sir, and the House, that many of the teachers, if not all of them, were and are very much averse to taking any action that looked like a strike on the lines of trade unions.

(Time bell *rings*.)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think you must atop.

PRINCIPAL DEVAPRASAD GHOSH: And so what happened was, on the eve of the Kalyan! Congress, Dr. Roy came out with certain concessions and the pity of it all is that these concessions, as has been pointed out by my hon. friend, Mr. Bimal Coomar Ghose, came out in dribblets, that they were always too late or too little and they smack

of the spirit of the market-place. I am very much pained to say so

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am sorry, we have to finish. Dr Katju has to reply.

PRINCIPAL DEVAPRASAD GHOSH:
.....but if they had come earlier, this situation would not have arisen.

PROF. G. RANGA: Sir, I have a question to put, that is, whether at any stage, after the situation had begun to grow serious, the hon. the Prime Minister offered to go to Bengal and try and get into touch with the Chief Minister there as well as with the leaders of the teachers in order to ease the situation and bring the -{situation under control.

THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND STATES (DR. K. N. KATJU): Mr. Chairman, I am sure that the House has been greatly moved by the very moving speeches which have just now been delivered, eloquent and full of feeling, particularly that of my esteemed friend, Dr. Kalidas Nag. But, I am rather disappointed that while a good deal has been said about the plight of the teachers with whom we are all in full sympathy and the conditions in which they live not only in Bengal but elsewhere also, not one word has been said in sympathy with the Bengal Government about the situation that they are facing today.

SHRT S. N. DWTVEDY (Orissa): You are there.

(Interruptions.)

MR. CHAIRMAN: When you were speaking you were not interrupted.

SHRI B. RATH (Orissa): He is provoking, Sir.

DR. K. N. KATJU: Is it being contended here that if the West Bengal Government or any Government is not applying its mind properly to the removal of the grievances, genuine or fancied, of any class of the community, then that particular section of the community or its sympathisers or the

goondafs or—I do not want to go into the details—other persons are entitled to set the whole city on fire?

Mr. Chairman, you are familiar wrtⁿ Calcutta; so am I.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE: So are we

DR. K. N. KATJU: So I should have expected of my hon. friends, who spoke just now and who all come from Calcutta, to have told you something of what actually happened there. The teachers had grievances and they have been agitating. Let us say that they are all perfectly real, genuine demands. Well, they started squatting on the roads. I happen to be familiar with that particular road, East of Government House.

AN HON. MEMBER: Just in front of your House.

DR. K. N. KATJU: That portion is always full of traffic near a tramway zone. They sat there, day and night for twenty four hours, for five solid days, 120 hours, causing obstruction to the traffic, causing everybody the great est inconvenience. They were said to be peaceful. The police bore all that. I ask, is there any country, anywhere in the world where

SHRI V. K. DHAGE (Hyderabad): What happened in the year 1930 when you were offering Satyagraha?

DR. K. N. KATJU: I am not going into 1930.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

SHRI V. K. DHAGE: Let us know, Sir. The argument must be plausible.

DR. K. N. KATJU: You may not agree with me. What is the good of it?

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH (Bihar): In 1930 we were fighting the foreign Government.

(Interruptions.)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

DR. K. N. KATJU: On the 15th, when I read the paper, I was filled with dismay and I was filled with amazement and, I tell you, with deep grief. The Governor, the head of the State, is a highly honoured member of the community. I do not want to go into names, but see the life that he lives. He has spent his whole life in the cause of education; he is a most austere man. He goes to deliver his formal address. He is not allowed to speak for fifteen minutes. He stands there and there is pandemonium in the Council Hall. The political parties took part in it. The Governor waited for fifteen minutes

(Interruptions.)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please allow him to go on.

DR. K. N. KATJU: and then finished his address.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA (Andhra): On a point of order, Sir.

HON. MEMBERS: Order, order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There are only a few minutes more and the time will be exhausted.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA: I only want to say, Sir, that on the request of the Chairman we did not go into all these points and the hon. Dr. Katju, by bringing all these things now, is spoiling the very purpose of the debate and the way in which we have conducted this debate.

DR. K. N. KATJU: I am tracing the history of the whole case for those four days—15th, 16th, 17th and 18th.

(Interruptions.)

That is the temperament in Bengal. My hon. friends are only disturbing me here but there are four million people being disturbed there. The decision taken on the 15th was, that on the 16th the teachers would go and would surround the Assembly. Their J

decision was that they would go and surround every single member and his family so that he may not be able to discharge his legislative duties. (*Cries of shame.*)

Then, Sir, there is a fine word which has now come into existence. Probably you may not be familiar with it. It is called the *gherao* tactics. You *gherao* a man and do not allow him to go out. Now these 15,000 men went to the Assembly with the specific purpose that the legislature should not do its duty. Between the 15th and 16th it is likely that the patience of the Bengal Government was exhausted and the situation worsened because of what had happened on the afternoon of the 15th in the Assembly and there being clear proof that political parties were taking part in this matter and trying to exploit it.....

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA: That is exactly the reason why the political parties are insisting.....(*Interruptions.*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let him go on.

SHRI B. GUPTA: What does it mean?

DR. K. N. KATJU: So at night they went and arrested people and they were all put up before the magistrates on the charge of squatting and obstructing the public highway. Very good. What happens? On the 16th afternoon, I can tell you—Sir, you are very familiar with the whole of Calcutta—in every part of it there was complete lawlessness. Does the hon. Dr. Kalidas Nag support that? He was very eloquent but I did not hear him say a single word in condemnation of that thing. Now I will give you the report:

'Procession intercepted by the police. Near the south-east corner of the Assembly, processionists became violent and brickbatted the police and injured several officers and men seriously. Had to be dispersed by tear gas and mounted police. Subsequently groups of them indulged in an orgy of violence, loot and arson. Six State buses and seven

tram cars were burnt.' My hon. friends from Bengal know that the newspapers have published pictures of the burning tram cars. The report goes on:

'Twenty other State buses and several other trams and private cars damaged. Street lights in some areas put off. Streets barricaded. Fire brigade headquarters at Free School Street and Central Avenue heavily brickbatted. Fire brigades were obstructed in putting out fires and were attacked causing injuries to firemen and damage to vehicles.'

HON. MEMBERS: Horrible, horrible.

DR. K. N. KATJU: Heavy damage caused to private property in Chowringhee and Surendra Nath Banerjee Boad area. Glass panes in several shops in Chowringhee smashed. Several shops in New Market and other areas looted. Taltola police outpost attacked. Bombs thrown on police patrol cars.'

This was what was done on the night of the 16th.

SHRI B. GUPTA: When you start shooting people.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

DR. K. N. KATJU: All this violence was done.

SHRI B. GUPTA: You were nonviolent sitting there? (*Interruptions.*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you do this.....

SHRI B. GUPTA: What is he saying, Sir?

DR. K. N. KATJU: I am only giving you a narrative of what happened. The police force was insufficient, and the West Bengal Government had to call in the aid of the military authorities. They had to do something. They had to quell this disorder. Does my hon. friend want that this thing should have been allowed to go on?

SHRI B. GUPTA: You should never \ have shot people.

DR. K. N. KATJU: Very good. What were the casualties? 67 police personnel were injured and casualties due to police firing were 6 killed and 18 injured. I say this with a full sense of responsibility—you may condemn me as much as you like—that if there is this kind of disturbance and violence propagated and committed by any section of the community, the police must answer by firing. There is no other course.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA: Shame.

DR. K. N. KATJU: You may cry 'shame' as much as you like. There was considerable tear gassing but it proved ineffective.

The hon. Mr. Sundarayya is here saying 'shame'. He should probably go there. There are men living there—40 lakhs of people—and these disturbances occur in every part of the city. I should have expected these gentlemen who come from Bengal—it is their homeland!—they might have said, "we are very sympathetic towards the teachers. But we condemn all this horrible violence." Not one such word have I heard.

(*Interruptions.*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

DR. K. N. KATJU: This causes me the deepest distress. I think there must be some sense of perspective. We are in a free India. The Government is ours. 'If any section of the community is suffering or is not being properly treated, then you have to point out their grievances. The West Bengal Government is doing its best. I do not hold any brief. Here is what they have done so far:

Expenditure under the head "Education" was in the year 1950 about Rs. 2,50,00,000, in 1950-51, Rs. 3,09,00,000, in 1951-52, Rs. 3,71,00,000, in 1952-53, Rs. 3,91,00,000, in 1953-54, Rs. 4 crores.

[Dr. K. N. Katju.]

and in the budget which has been presented it is Rs. 6,59,00,000.

SHRI B. GUPTA: But what were the revenues?

DR. K. N. KATJU: Very well, we will deal with that. But we are not going to subscribe to this doctrine: 'A section of the community which considers that it has not been fairly dealt with, that its grievances have not been removed or its salaries have not been raised, they or their parties who want to sympathise with them are entitled to break the law.' We will not tolerate it. The effective method for having your grievances redressed is the constitutional method. Go and hold meetings and win the public and win the next general elections. Is it because their salaries are not raised that they are entitled to set Calcutta on fire? Now please remember one thing more. Dr. Roy—I think, all of us know him—has spent his life in

service of Calcutta. He has been

the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University. He has been the President of the Calcutta Corporation. Do you think he does not know all these facts? I wish that the hon. Dr. Kalidas Nag, had said something about this.

7 P.M.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He says he hates the employment of violence in these matters.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH: But what do they propose to do to solve this problem? That is what we want to know. Let them say what they are going to do. They do nothing.

(Interruption.)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Council stands adjourned till 2 o'clock tomorrow. We will have two hours' discussion, i.e., from 2 to 4 on the President's Address and we will take the vote on it at the end of two hours.

The Council then adjourned till two of the clock on Friday* the 19th February 1954.