

STATEMENT RE SETTING UP OF A COMMISSION FOR REORGANI- ZATION OF STATES

THE MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS AND STATES (DR. K. N. KATJU): Mr. Chairman, the Government of India have been giving careful consideration to the problem of the States which are the constituent units of the Indian Union. These States, as they exist today, are largely the result of historical processes and the spread and consolidation of the British power in India. On the attainment of independence, India was partitioned and the independent State of Pakistan was created. A process of merger and integration took place in regard to what were then called the Indian States. This integration of the old Indian States which was brought about within a very short period was an event of historic significance. The integration, however, was naturally based to a large extent on the old patterns which existed before independence. The pattern of our States in the Union is thus the result of historical accident and circumstances. The mere existence for a hundred years or more developed political, administrative and cultural associations within and between them. The greater development of political consciousness among the people and the growing importance of the great regional languages led gradually to the demand for the formation of certain States on a linguistic basis. Each such separate problem was however closely inter-related with other problems and any formation of a new State necessarily affected a number of other States. It thus became increasingly difficult to consider any such problem in isolation. The language and culture of an area have an undoubted importance as they represent a pattern of living which is common in that area. In considering reorganization of States, however, there are other important factors which should also be borne in mind. The first essential consideration is the preservation and strengthening of the unity and security of India. Financial, economic and administrative considera-

tions are almost equally important not only from the point of view of each State but for the whole nation. India has embarked upon a great ordered plan for her economic, cultural and moral progress. Changes which interfere with the successful prosecution of such a national plan would be harmful to the national interests. The Government of India have come to the conclusion that the whole question of the reorganization of the States within the Indian Union should be carefully examined objectively and dispassionately so that the well-being of the people of each constituent unit as well as of the nation as a whole is promoted. Government have accordingly decided to appoint a Commission to conduct such an examination. The Commission will investigate the conditions of the problem, the historical background, the existing situation and the bearing of all important and relevant factors thereon. They will be free to consider any proposal relating to such reorganization. The Commission will be at liberty to devise their own procedure for their work, for collecting information and for ascertaining public opinion. The Commission will ordinarily hold their sittings in private. The Commission will make their recommendations to the Government as soon as may be practicable but not later than the 30th of June, 1955. The Government expect that the Commission would in the first instance not go into details but make recommendations with regard to the broad principles which should govern the solution of this problem, and if they so choose, the broad lines on which particular States should be reorganized, and submit interim reports for the consideration of the Government. The Commission will have a secretary and such staff and advisers as may be considered necessary. The Commission will consist of (1) Shri Saiyid Fazl Ali at present Governor of Orissa, (2) Shri Hriday Nath Kunzru, a Member of the Council of States and (3) Shri Kavalam Madhava Panikkar, at present Ambassador of India in Egypt, of whom Shri Saiyid Fazl Ali shall be the Chairman of the Commission.