

[Shri Govinda Reddy.] appointed now, to go into these questions and I am sure that they will look into the matter and take proper decisions. With these few words, Sir, I extend my support to the Bill.

SHRI RAJAGOPAL NAIDU : May I, Sir, seek at least a clarification from the hon. Minister?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : Not now. At the end.

SHRI T. R. DEOGIRIKAR (Bombay) : Mr. Deputy Chairmen, though I do not want to make a grievance, yet I am sorry that coming as I am from the four Cantonment Boards, none of us is represented on the Select Committee. Therefore, I take this opportunity to express my thoughts on the whole Bill.

From the Statement of Objects and Reasons appended to the Bill, it is clear that this Amending Bill is introduced for the purpose of increasing efficiency in the Cantonment Boards and not for the purpose of giving up the Municipal Administration in those areas. According to the recommendations contained in the Report made by the Central Committee on Cantonments, out of 56 Cantonment Boards, Ambala is likely to have a municipality and 17 others can be merged in the adjoining municipalities. This Bill obviously is intended for the remaining 38 Cantonment Boards. I think, unless those areas are of strategic importance and unless they are likely to be deteriorated by being constituted into separate bodies to the detriment of the military personnel, the Defence Department should not continue to administer them. I do not understand why after independence the Defence Department should aspire to take civil powers in those areas. Those areas may not be large enough to constitute themselves into municipalities or they may not be large enough to be merged into adjoining areas, but I fail to understand why those 38 Cantonment Boards cannot form themselves into borough municipalities or a village panchayat or why they cannot come under District Local Boards. Less

area and less population should not be the reason for the continuance of this Defence Department Administration in those areas. To me it seems there is a divergence of views between the framers of this Bill and the signatories to the Report. On page 7 of the Report category 3 is given and in the bracketed portion it is stated :

" Cantonments in which the civil areas by reason of their size or situation are not covered by categories 1 and 2 above and which may continue to be administered under the Cantonments Act (II of 1924)....."

So the reason is size and situation and not want of efficiency. Out of 38 Boards in category 3, 24 are running at a loss amounting to Rs. 5,02,000.

I do not know who makes up the loss—the Defence Department or the Boards themselves. If it is the former why should public money be wasted on those Boards ?

Coming to category 2 the present Bill seeks amendment to section 4 of the Act of 1924. The original section vested the authority for altering the boundaries in the Central Government. Now that authority is to be exercised by the Central Government in consultation with the State Governments and the poor cantonment boards are nowhere to be found. I do not understand why non-official element on the cantonment board should not be consulted in the process of this merger. That is rather strange. Supposing certain cantonment boards do not desire to merge in the adjoining municipalities and want to remain as a separate body, can they do so ? Take for instance Kirkee and Poona Cantonments. The incidence of taxation in Kirkee is Rs. 14 per head per year, but in Poona Cantonment it is Rs. 33, though Poona Cantonment is only five miles away from Kirkee. After the merger it is likely that the taxes in the Kirkee cantonment board or the cantonment area will increase, and naturally the population in Kirkee will not welcome the merger. Both these boards, according to me, can have *statutable* borough and municipalities. On the other hand, let us suppose, a certain municipality does not desire to absorb

these cantonment boards. Can that municipality do so? The boards to which I referred are not well developed. Though they were administered by the then military authorities, the sanitary arrangements are highly deficient as compared to the arrangements in the adjoining areas. In order to bring these backward boards up to a certain level, capital expenditure will have to be incurred; and, who is going to provide that capital? If we are going to ask the municipal tax-payers to pay, it is really penalising them. Then, take the question of payments. The payments in the boards and municipalities are not the same. They will have to be equalised. Then the question about pension, provident fund etc., will come up. Then again, accommodation will have to be provided for. All this will mean additional burden on the flimsy finances of the municipalities. I am sure the labour unions will get ample field to reap a rich harvest by organising strikes. I am therefore of the opinion that the whole issue should be kept open. The option of merging or not merging should be decided by the cantonment boards and the municipalities concerned.

Coming to category 3, I think if the Government is not willing to give up their rule on those boards, at least twenty or more boards can be shifted from category 3 to category 2, as suggested by Mr. Sidhwa in his note of dissent. I think the policy of the Government should be to abolish these boards as early as possible. They are antiquated. They are legacies of the British Government and are not in keeping with the democratic traditions which we are trying to build up. Let this Bill be a step in that direction. I support the motion for Select Committee.

SHRI RAJAGOPAL NAIDU : Sir, just one question for clarification. Sir, in the Local Self-Government Ministers conference.....

SHRI S. C. KARAYALAR (Travancore-Cochin) : Sir, on a point of order, the hon. Minister is not in possession of the House. No question can be put to him at this stage.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN : You can speak.

SHRI RAJAGOPAL NAIDU : Resolution No. 2 was with regard to the excision of civil areas from cantonments, and consequent delimitation of the boundaries thereof. Sir, the Central Committee on Cantonments went through the whole thing and submitted a report recommending the J excision of certain Civil areas from cantonment and the consequent delimitation of the boundaries thereof. That J has been reported Sir, on pages 6—7 1 of the Report of the Central Committee. As I said, Sir, having regard to all these factors, they have decided that I the cantonment should be divided into 3 categories. Category I includes the cantonments in which large areas redundant to the requirements of the army can be excised and formed into separate local bodies. Regarding the other two categories my hon. friend has just now mentioned, and has explained why this ! Bill has been now brought before this House. I refer to only Part I of the 1 recommendations of the Central Committee. This Bill does not refer to anything with regard to the recommendations of the Central Committee in Part j I. May I ask Sir, what has Government done with regard to the recommendations in Part I of the Central Committee's Report? Secondly, I find that—it is my own opinion—the whole Act can be re-opened and amended because, there are several items, very important things, that have been recommended by the Central Committee, and according to the Bill before us, we want that it should be referred to a Select Committee. The whole Act may be referred to the Select Committee as has been pointed out by two honourable Members a little while ago.

SARDAR S. S. MAJITHIA : Sir, I am very grateful to the hon. Members who have taken part in today's discussion. As I said in my opening remarks, I still feel that there is a certain amount of distrust in the minds of Members about our officials, both civil and military. I beg to submit Sir,