

Shri Biswanath Das (Orissa : General) : Sir, I am amazed and upset at the speeches and the way in which the discussion is being carried on, over this Bill. Sir, we have been told that the Bill is vague. I do not know how it is so. The Bill proposes to make provisions under two heads. The first relates to evacuee property, and the second to any anticipated election in West Bengal. On these questions, the provisions are clear, distinct and are quite normal. I do not see any abnormality in any of these provisions that are set out and that are sought to be amended, in the Government of India, Act, 1935, as adapted. Sir, it specially pains me to hear from my honourable Friend Dr. Deshmukh that we are functioning as a single party. True it is mainly so. But is it a sin? Is it a sin, after all to have a House mostly of one party? That is the natural course of things in democracy and democratic institutions. The very fact that we ourselves are running the Government and playing the role of opposition goes to prove the highest democratic traditions maintained by the Congress. Sir, even a casual look into the proceedings of the Constituent Assembly, either in framing the Constitution, or on the parliamentary side, will prove beyond doubt the highest traditions of such democracy maintained by the Congress Party. The very fact that my honourable Friends Mr. Kamath and Dr. Deshmukh always raise their voice of protest, though Congress members, without being interfered or hindered by the party goes to prove the highest traditions of democracy maintained by the Congress and its official section who today run the Government. Under these circumstances, I do not see how my honourable Friends would be justified in speaking of one-party rule. At least this aspect of the criticisms comes with the least fairness to themselves and to the party to which they have the honour to belong.

Sir, my honourable Friend Mr. Kamath, for whom I have always have affection, speaks of the monstrosity of the provisions of the Bill. I pause to hear from him wherein lies the monstrosity of the proposals.

Shri Biswanath Das : I am thankful to him, if it is his view that the teeming millions of evacuees who have been uprooted and migrated from Pakistan should have no representation or franchise; if that is so, certainly it is a monstrosity! But I think the opposite holds true in this case.

I recollect what has been done in Pakistan. This change has already been done in Pakistan both in the Centre as well as in the West Punjab. Therefore, there is nothing to call it a monstrosity of the Constitution. I hope my honourable Friends will not hereafter use similar expression, because the very fact that we have declared, that our leaders have thought of declaring themselves to abide by the wishes of the popular verdict goes to confirm the opinion, namely, that the Congress is the greatest democratic body and the greatest democratic institution that you have in the world.

Sir, much has been said about the elections in West Bengal. I do not agree with my honourable Friends' declaration that they would dissolve the Bengal Ministry and have fresh elections. I do not see any basis, much less any justification for the same. One single bye-election is not a test of the confidence or non-confidence of the people. If the confidence of the people in the Congress organisation is the test, I think we have amply demonstrated it. In my own province we have, soon after the election in Bengal shown to the world that even today we carry the confidence of the rural masses, the millions and crores of rural masses who constitute the people of India. Sir, not only in the Assembly bye-election.....

Shri Biswanath Das : I am glad if no decision has been taken regarding Bengal bye-election, but the statement issued by the Honourable the Prime Minister soon after his visit to Calcutta goes to show that they are at least thinking loudly in terms of dissolving the Assembly and ordering elections. That is why it is a relevant point. I shall, however, be brief in my remarks in regard to that matter. Furthermore, the recent district board elections in Madras have proved to the hilt that even in the province of Madras Congressmen have not at all agree with our leaders and I am very glad to be assured that that decision is not final.

Sir, much has been said about democracy. I do not know wherein anything has been done in the course of the Bill to affect the democratic notions of the people, or the democratic notions as they are realised and understood by Congressmen. If composition of differences and leaving everything to the will of the people means democracy, both these are being satisfied in full within the four corners of the Bill.

Sir, regarding evacuee property the Government have been negotiating with the Pakistan Government. Sub-clause (1) of paragraph 1 reads : "Property has been left behind in either Dominion by those who have migrated to the other. This is being called evacuee property. It has to be taken over, managed and disposed of according to any agreement reached between the two Dominions". They propose to have further negotiations in this regard. There cannot, therefore, be any objection in this regard from any quarter. I for myself feel that strong measures in this regard are necessary to ensure rehabilitation of evacuees who have migrated from Pakistan. To me it seems that the Bill is a necessity and that it should be passed without much discussion, and the sooner you do it the better for all.