

Mr. Jaipal Singh (Bihar: General) : Mr. President, I myself am a member of the advisory Committee. So I would not like to congratulate myself and my colleagues. But I have come to say a few words on behalf of the Adivasis of India in so far as they are affected by the recommendations of the Minorities Sub-Committee. I do felicitate some of the smaller and, if I may, say so in comparison with our own numbers, the infinitesimal minority groups like the Anglo-Indians and the Parsis, on their success. So far as the Anglo-Indian are concerned, they certainly have received more than their desserts. I do not grudge them that let them have that, and good luck to them in the future. Our attitude-has not been on grounds of being a numerical minority at all. Our position has nothing whatever to do with whether we are less than the Hindus or Muslims or more than the Parsis. Our stand point is that there is a tremendous disparity in our social, economic and educational standards, and it is only by some statutory compulsion that we can come up to the general population level: I do not consider the Adibasis are a minority. I have always held that a group of people who are the original owners of this country, even if they are only a few, can never be considered a majority. They have prescriptive rights which no one I can deny. We are not however asking for those prescriptive rights. We want to be treated like anybody else. In the past, thanks to the major political parties, thanks to the British Government and thanks to every enlightened Indian citizen, we have been isolated and kept, as it were, in a zoo. That has been the attitude, of all people in the past. Our point now is that you have got to mix with us. We are willing to mix with you, and it is for that reason, because we shall compel you to come near us, because we must get near you, that we have insisted on a reservation of seats as far as the Legislatures are concerned. We have not asked and, in fact, we have never had separate electorates; only a small portion of the Adibasis, that part of it which was converted to various religious and particularly to the Christian religions of the West, had a separate electorate but the vast majority, wherever it was enfranchised, was on a general electorate with, reservation of seats. So, as far as the Adibasis are concerned there is no change whatever. But numerically there is a very big change. Under the 1935 Act, throughout the Legislatures in India, there were altogether only 24 Adibasi M. L. As. out of a total of 1,585, as far as the Provincial Legislatures were concerned and not a single representative at the Centre. Now in this adult franchise system of one member for one lakh population you can see the big jump. It will be ten times that figure. When I speak of Indian India may I also make my appeal to Princely India. In Princely India nowhere have Adibasis found any representation. I hope the spirit of Indian India, will duly permeate there.