

Giri signs 24th amending Bill

"The Times of India" News Service
NEW DELHI, November 5.

THE President, Mr. V. V. Giri, today gave his assent to the Constitution (24th Amendment) Bill which restores to Parliament the power to amend any part of the Constitution, including the chapter on fundamental rights.

The Bill, which was passed by the two Houses of Parliament in August, has been ratified by more than half of the State Legislatures as required under the Constitution.

The Government had brought forward the Bill to remedy the situation created by the Supreme Court judgement in the Golaknath case.

The Prime Minister had characterised the measure as a milestone in the march of the Indian people "towards democracy, socialism, secularism and a just and humane society."

PRESIDENT'S POWERS

In both Houses of Parliament, the Bill had received massive support. Discordant voices had been raised by Swatantra and Jana Sangh members during the debate.

They had taken particular exception to the provision which makes it obligatory on the President to give his assent to any future Constitution (Amendment) Bill passed by the two Houses.

They felt that the Bill sought to deprive the President of his discretionary powers. The Law Minister, had, however, assured the critics that Presidential powers were not being curtailed by incorporating this provision.

Parliament will take up for consideration, during its winter session beginning on November 15, the Constitution (25th Amendment) Bill which seeks to make drastic changes in Article 31 relating to property rights.

The word "compensation" from this Article, in respect of property acquired or requisitioned for a public purpose, is sought to be deleted and substituted by the word "amount."

The Government has decided to give top priority to this Bill as well as the Constitution (26th Amendment) Bill which seeks to abolish the privy purses and privileges of ex-rulers.

It is anxious to get both the Bills passed during the winter session.

Once the Constitution (25th Amendment) Bill is passed, the Government will not be under any obligation to pay compensation to ex-rulers for doing away with their purses and privileges.