

APPENDIX III

STATEMENT BY HOME MINISTER ON 21ST MARCH 1966 IN LOK SABHA AND RAJYA SABHA

The Committee of Members of Parliament, headed by the Hon'ble Speaker, has made its report which was laid on the Table of the House on 18th March, 1966.

The Committee has come to the conclusion that it would be in the larger interests of the people of Punjab and of the country as a whole, that the present State of Punjab be reorganised on the linguistic basis and has recommended that :

- (a) the Punjabi Region should form a unilingual Punjabi State;
- (b) the hill areas of Punjab included in the Hindi Region, which are contiguous to Himachal Pradesh and have linguistic and cultural affinity with that territory, should be merged with Himachal Pradesh; and
- (c) that the remaining areas should be formed as a separate unit which may be called the Haryana State.

2. The Government have given careful thought to these recommendations. They have decided to accept, in principle, that the present State of Punjab be reorganised on linguistic basis.

3. The Committee further recommended that in case there were any boundary adjustments to be made a Committee of experts be set up immediately to suggest the necessary adjustments. Government accept, in principle that the boundaries may be determined with the help of experts. They intend to take early steps to give effect to the decision to reorganise the State of Punjab on the lines mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

4. Before announcing these decisions, Government took into full and careful consideration representations made to them by various interests including those who were opposed to the reorganisation of the Punjab on the lines proposed. In the course of the long meetings held with some of them, misunderstandings and misgivings regarding the reorganisation that was under consideration were largely removed. The Government have made it clear to them:

- (i) that the proposed reorganisation of Punjab will follow the linguistic basis, without any communal or religious factors being allowed to come into consideration;

- (ii) such common links between the units resulting from the proposed reorganisation as are found feasible will be provided in consultation with the concerned interests;
- (iii) the legitimate rights and interests of the minorities linguistic and others will naturally be fully safeguarded in the units.

5. Government trust and hope that the leaders and people of Punjab, representing all shades of opinion, will lend their constructive co-operation to Government in the maintenance of peaceful conditions, unity and amity between all sections of the people, and above all in the creation of appropriate conditions for the smooth and early implementation of the decisions relating to the reorganisation of Punjab.

6. Sir, I would like to take this opportunity once again, to express on behalf of the Government and if I may, on behalf of this House, our profound sympathies for the families of those who have lost their lives in the recent disturbances.