

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Monday, April 9, 1979/Chaitra 19
1901 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of
Clock.*

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair].

OBITUARY REFERENCES

MR. SPEAKER: I have to inform the House of the sad demise of Shri A. V. P. Asaithambi, a sitting Member of this House representing Madras North constituency of Tamil Nadu. He passed away at Rangat in Andaman and Nicobar group of Islands on the 7th April, 1979 at the age of 55.

Shri Asaithambi prior to his election to Lok Sabha was a Member of the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly from 1957 to 1962 and again from 1967 to 1971. A seasoned parliamentarian, he was Chairman of the Estimates Committee in the Tamil Nadu Assembly in 1968-69.

During his long political career he suffered imprisonment ten times from 1946 to 1977.

He was a great labour leader and was the President of Madras Auto Rickshaw Drivers' Cooperative Society Limited and also of Tamil Nadu Taxi and Auto-Drivers' Union from 1969 to 1976.

He served as Chairman, Tamil Nadu Tourism Development Corporation from 1971 to 1976.

A journalist and a prolific writer, he wrote a large number of books in Tamil language.

He was a well travelled person who had visited several countries in Europe. He was a delegate to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in 1968.

We deeply mourn the loss of this friend and I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolences to the bereaved family.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMEN-
TARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR
(SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): Sir, on behalf of the Leader of the House and the Government, I rise to associate myself with the sense of shock and profound grief at the sad and untimely demise of our dear colleague Shri Asaithambi. The cruel hand of fate has removed yet another of our dear and valued colleague in the prime of his life. As you, Sir, said, Shri Asaithambi had been a distinguished social reformer. From very early in his life, he had distinguished himself by his devotion to the cause of radical social reform. He was associated for many years with the Self-Respect Movement and the DMK. He was an idealist whose idealism was apparent in everything that he did; he was an idealist who was prepared to pay the penalty for his beliefs, for his idealism, and for his devotion to the cause of the poor. He served many terms of imprisonment in the course of his struggle for the ideals that he cherished. He was always in the forefront of the struggle against discrimination, inequality and poverty. Even during the emergency, he served a term as a detenu under the MISA. He identified himself with the poor and the down-trodden. He took keen interest in the problems of workers and the trade union movement. He worked in the Municipal Council, in the Legislative Assembly of Tamilnadu; and wherever

he worked, he left an indelible impression of his dynamic personality and the calibre of his genius. He was a scholar, a trade unionist and an author of reputation, reputation not only for prolificity but also for effect and versatility. He was a powerful orator whose eloquence was unforgettable, whose eloquence will be long remembered throughout the length and breadth of Tamilnadu and in fact in every country where the language of Tamil is spoken. As a humanist, a man who had an affable, friendly and almost infectiously affable temperament, he had many friends in this House and the other House. Millions of people in Tamilnadu and other parts of the country will mourn the loss of this dynamic social reformer and revolutionary, this thinker, this writer and this great speaker. In his death I would say that I have lost a personal friend. On this sad occasion when we have lost yet another colleague, I, on behalf of the Government and the leader of the House associate myself with the sentiments that you have expressed and request you to convey our profound sorrow to the members of the bereaved family.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN (Idukkai): It has again become our unfortunate duty within so to say a few days to rise up to record our condolences on the demise of a colleague of ours. It was only last week, the middle of last week or the end of the last week, when Shri Asaithambi made what has become his last speech in this House. He was the only Member representing his party, representing the city of Madras in this House and he has been, as we could see, doing his duty conscientiously, strongly and consistently. I am having a feeling of loss in the demise of that dear colleague of ours. Again it reminds of how fleeting the life is, of how uncertain the fortunes of life are and how imaginary the glories of life.

I want to make another mention that his body is still in Andamans. An effort was made, as per my informa-

tion, to take his body over here by Indian Air Force Plane, as no service plane was available and it so happens, there is no facility in Andamans for mortuary and for preservation of body, that is my information. Now this is a matter which I would like to raise after obituary references are over. Some explanation will be necessary as to how Members of Parliament will be treated if they die away from the mainland. At the moment I want only to share with the House our deep feelings of sorrow over the demise of this great colleague of ours and I request you, on behalf of myself and on behalf of my party to convey to the members of the bereaved family the deep condolence, all of us are now feeling.

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN (Satara): Death is inevitable to everybody. Sometimes it strikes the younger and middle aged people like the hon member of whom we are talking today, it becomes more sad. I think of this hon Member whose speech I happened to hear when he spoke last in the middle of last week. He was a typical product of a self respect movement of the South. He worked hard. The information about him I got, when I tried to look through his career, was that after independence nearly ten times he had to go to jail for the cause, for which he steadfastly fought. That shows the man. He was a trade unionist who championed the cause of the weaker sections of people, rikshawwalas, other labourers and small people. He was also acceptable by the people because I found from the record that he started his representative career functioning as a member of the Municipality, then he was twice Member of the Legislative Assembly of Madras. He was Chairman of the Estimates Committee of Madras Assembly. Then he had become Member of Parliament where he was working very conscientiously and effectively and in the course of duty, I think, he had gone to Andamans. Unfortunately, death caught him there.

It is a sad occasion but let everybody know that we, all his colleagues in this House, remember him with affection and express our grief and great sadness.

I hope, you will convey our grief and our sorrow not only to the members of his family but to the members of his party also.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): On behalf of my Party, I rise with a very heavy heart to join the House in the obituary reference on the death of Thiru A. V. P. Asaithambi, a mild man and gentle personality whom we have been from the beginning of this House. Perhaps, many of us do not know that he had been a very outstanding journalist and in that he had been an editor of a well circulated paper in Tamil Nadu. He has written as many as 40 books and as the previous speaker mentioned, he had gone to jail, for standing by his conviction, not less than ten times between 1946 and 1947. In 1976-77, during the last Emergency, he was also a detenu under MISA. We have known about his parliamentary activities as an MLA of Madras Assembly for two terms and also he was the Chairman of the Estimates Committee of Tamil Nadu Assembly. His going away is not only a loss to the DMK Party but a loss to this House and to the people of the country.

Kindly convey our sincerest condolences to his family.

SHRI A. BALA PAJANOR (Pondicherry): Mr. Speaker, Sir, with a heavy heart I have to express our feelings and join other Members at the loss of our great friend, Thiru Asaithambi.

He was the founder member of the DMK along with the great Anna, our revered leader. It is also known that he was called as little Periyar in our parts. The Tamil community is at a very sad state. I do not find adequate words because, as expressed by the

Leader of the Opposition, we all really feel for the Member who was with us till yesterday and is no more today. At the same time, I do not know how to express the feeling at this critical hour of which you are aware. Unfortunately, his widowed wife now is with the dead body that is lying thousands and thousands miles away in the Island and we pay our respects to our beloved friend, Shri Asaithambi. I cannot imagine how we can tolerate such a jeraying body there and pay our homage here.

I am not trying to say anything but I want to touch the hearts of all the Member.. Please imagine, thousands and thousands of miles away the dead body is lying and thousands of people in Tamil Nadu are crying and expecting the body to be brought there. He passed away on Saturday evening at about 8 O'clock. Still the body of our beloved Asaithambi is in Andamans. The same fate may happen to anyone of us, the Members of Parliament who are protecting the interest of the nation.

Sir, at this hour I also bring to your notice and to the notice of the nation that Mr Asaithambi went on an intermediate journey during the session. His wife is there. I do not know who is consoling her. I do not know whether my feeling or the feelings of this House reach her and console her. I only pray that the God or Almighty, whatever it may be, give her more strength to bear the burden at this odd hour when she is crying there. I have never seen such an occasion for our Members of Parliament in the past. We people who come from the South and especially from Tamil Nadu, feel that we are neglected at this odd hour. It is not such an easy thing for us to forget so easily and leave it as it is. We join every one of you here. Of course, we are grateful for the sentiments that have been expressed, but I am very much concerned about the way my beloved friend, Mr. Asaithambi's body is lying there. Of course, his spirit will fight for the cause

because, as some others have mentioned he fought for the cause with full conviction as taught to him by the great leaders like Periyar and 'Anna. That tradition will go on for ever. You know, that one or two people started this movement and fought for this great cause. I see that Mr. Asaithambi has also died in the style fighting for the cause. And yet we are making these references here.

Sir, it is a matter of concern to us especially Members of Parliament who have taken to public work. We have our wives and children. But, Sir, today when I convey my feelings to the bereaved family on behalf of my Party and on my own behalf his children are crying at Madras waiting for their daddy's body to be brought home. We do not know at what time it will reach there whether in a decayed condition or in a perfect condition. This is the position of a Member of Parliament for whom we are mourning today.

Sir, I am soaked with emotion. I do not want to say anything further because I am afraid this is not the time for me to give out my full feelings. Still I imagine if I am dead there like this what will happen to my wife and children here? If this is the way we are going about it I do not know what to say. I don't believe in words and I simply express my feelings. "Asaithambi, you are no more. But how can I express my feelings and send you and your wife to your children?" People are crying at Madras at the airport and at the station. The whole night they could not sleep because of this I have to say some words.

Sir, I can only present myself and not my feelings and words. I hope the House will understand. I pray to Nature and God Almighty to give us strength to bear this loss and give strength to Asaithambi's family also to bear it. Let his wife come down with his body. That is all I can say. At least in future let this not happen

to any one of us. We pray to the Almighty to give strength.

SHRI M N GOVINDAN NAIR (Trivandrum) Sir, I join in the sorrow that has already been expressed here by the Members of this House. But what is most shocking is the way the Government have dealt with this. As has been pointed out here, Shri Asaithambi's body is still there lying. This can happen to anybody. Officially or otherwise all of us travel and if something happens if the responsible people here have no commonsense but they only stick to certain rules and find out excuses what will be the fate of all of us? I do not know why there could not be any rules by which his dead body could be brought back. Was there any rule banning such use of the plane? If that is so then how is it that certain living beings are taken in IAF plane for treatment and all that? Therefore even if there are no rules the rules have to be framed. But how callous were the people here in not allowing the plane to go and fetch the body back? As has been said here his wife alone is with him. All his family members are in Madras. Have we no human feelings at all? I can not understand this.

About him already it has been said and we know that he was one of the very efficient Members of this House. He was the only Member of the DMK. But you know, as an orator, as a public worker, he had made a mark both in Madras and also in this House. He was not a non-entity. I am not blaming the Government alone. I think, Mr. Speaker, it is your responsibility to protect us. But how is it that you also were silent on this? If the Speaker did his best, then, who is the person in this country to deny your request? This House is supreme and you are the Speaker and if your requests are turned down, then it is a much more serious matter than anything else. Therefore, let this not happen again. If the rules have to be changed, let them be changed. Even today the body is there. When

is it going to be brought? Is there any facility to embalm the body? In what condition will it be brought to his relatives? I do not know, what to say, about all these things I share the sorrow that everyone in this House is feeling at his sudden death.

PROF. P. G. MAVALANKAR (Gandhinagar): Mr. Speaker, I am more than shocked and terribly distressed at the very untimely and very sudden and very unfortunate death of a very dear and a very affectionate colleague. I am very sad when I look back, as has been my practice and vice Asaithambi—sitting there—now he is not here. I share the feeling of agony, and if I may say so, even disgust at the manner in which his body lies at a far off place, though a part of our country, distant from the mainland. Sir, Asaithambi was a very diligent, sincere, earnest, hard working Member of the House. He always took great pains in making his speech, and he spoke eloquently, effectively and persuasively. I think that is what is expected of Members of Parliament, how they should talk to each other in that style.

I am really trembling at the thought that while he was alone as a member of this House his dead body also should be in lone place, left there in a lone way, in a far off place, as I said, a part of our country and yet distant from the mainland.

It was Tagore who said "Ekla Chalo Re" and it was Asaithambi who in the midst of many vicissitudes of life was determined to go "Ekla Chalo Re" for the convictions and opinions, which he held so dear to his heart and for which he was prepared to pay any price, not only, as Mr. Yashwantrao Chavan and Mr. Jyotirmoy Boshu said, to suffer imprisonments ten times, but if it comes to that, even the end of his own life. I feel extremely sorry. I request you Mr. Speaker to kindly convey our deep sympathies and condolences not only to the members of

the bereaved family but to all my unfortunate fellow brothers and sisters of Tamil Nadu, which is as much a part of my being as any other place else where in this great motherland of ours.

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): May I join you and other Members of the House in expressing our deep sorrow and grief at the sudden and untimely demise of one of our dear colleagues Shri Asaithambi who was sitting on our side of this Hon. House. As you and other distinguished colleagues have already mentioned, he was a powerful and eloquent orator in Tamil a great journalist, a hard-working Trade Unionist and a social reformer. In his demise, the people of Tamilnadu have to suffer a loss and, to his party, the DMK it is a loss which is irreparable. He was a pillar of strength to that party, and he was the only representative of that Party in this House. I would request you to kindly convey our deep sorrow and our condolences to his bereaved family.

In conclusion I would request the Government to see that proper treatment is meted out to him, who has died far away from the mainland of our country.

श्री केशवराव धोंडो (नांदेड़) :
सदर ग़ाहव, मरहम श्री असाइथाम्ब के बारे में सम्मानीय सभ गृह में जिन क्यालाक का इज्जत किया गया है उनक में ताईद करना हूँ और अपनी पार्टी को तरफ से दिग्गत नेता को श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करता हूँ। जय कांटे ।

MR. SPEAKER: Normally, the convention is that only Leaders of Parties speak. If you want to make an exception, I have no objection, but we will be creating a new convention. Of course you are within your own rights. Two or three slips have come to me already; it means we would be creating a new convention.

SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI (Bengaluru): I associate myself with the sentiments that have been expressed and pay my respectful homage to the departed colleague of ours who had made his mark both in the State Legislature and here, in the national Parliament, as an orator, speaker, author and a servant of the people.

I hope Sir, that so far as the bringing of his body to the mainland is concerned, some way can yet be found so that his wife may not feel helpless there. Some way can always be found. We know from experience that in many other cases, where civilian planes were not available, IAF planes were put into service; and dead bodies not only of Members of Parliament but of distinguished public leaders were flown from Delhi to their native places. Something like that should be done even though it is somewhat late. I again plead with the Government that they should see to it that even now they do something.

I again pay my respects.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Swaminathan. I hope this will not be taken as a precedent hereafter.

SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN (Madurai): I was terribly shocked when I heard that my friend Shri Asaithambi is no more with us. Mr. Asaithambi and myself come from the same District, the Ramnad District. I have had the great privilege of moving with him though we belonged to different parties. Sir, Mr. Asaithambi was a prominent leader in the D. K. Movement—Dravida Kazhagam Movement. Later when Arigyar Annadurai broke away from the D.K. and formed a separate party, Mr. Asaithambi was the one of the promoters of the D.M.K. Party. He was also one of the stalwarts in the D.M.K. Though he had differences of opinion with many of his colleagues, he had never given vent to his feelings and was sticking to DMK party. Though we were fighting each other—he in the D.M.K.

and I in the Congress Party—he never partook in any party bickerings nor entertained any ill-feelings. He was friendly with all and he was very friendly with the great leader, Mr. Kamaraj. He went to jail several times for his principles by which he stood firm. He was a good orator in Tamil and he had also written several books. He was also a short-story writer. It is a great loss not only to Ramnad District but to the whole of Tamil Nadu and the country as a whole.

Now, my mind goes to a far away place thousands of miles away in Andaman Islands where the poor lady, Mr. Asaithambi's wife has been sitting by the side of the dead body and weeping and weeping since yesterday. I am very sorry to point out that in such cases Government should have come forward to do something and arrange immediately to bring the body to his native place. I cannot understand the callous attitude of the Government in not following the elementary principle of doing something to a sitting Member of Parliament at this critical moment. After all he had gone back to the Andaman Islands on parliamentary work. It is the duty of the Parliament and also the Government to arrange immediately for bringing his body to the mainland. It is shocking to know that the Government has not made any provision for embalming the dead body. We have also had a very bad experience that this Government had not provided life-saving drugs in the Jaslok Hospital when J. P. was recently admitted. This shows the callous attitude of the Government. Now, I would only plead that the Government should come forward and arrange to bring his body immediately from the Andaman Islands. Every minute is precious. With these words, I also pay my homage to the departed Member.

SHRI V. ARUNCHALAM alias 'ALADI ARUNA' (Thiruvallur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of All India

Anna D.M.K. I take this opportunity to express our heart-felt condolence for the sad demise of the Hon'ble Member, Thiru A. V. P. Asaithambi. He entered politics with the self-respect movement and continued to maintain his identity with the spirit of the same movement throughout his life. He was imprisoned more than ten times for political reasons. The iron hands of Emergency rule did not spare him. He was the victim of the Emergency rule. In all his trials and tribulations, he had proved to the nation that he was a true disciple of Perarigya Dr. Anna. He was a man of letters in Tamil, man of action in politics, man of steel framed mind in policy and principle, man of nobility in his friendship and a man of outstanding character in his deeds and demeanour.

He was a good orator in Tamil. His mode of expression style of language and art of presentation in Press and on the Platform were like that of Periyar Ramasamy. Therefore, he was regarded by our people as the young Periyar of Tamil Nadu.

While the Government of Tamil Nadu is holding the centenary celebrations of Periyar Ramasamy, alas, we have lost our young Periyar, Thiru A. V. P. Asaithambi.

Edmund Burk once said that great men are like landmarks and guide posts. In fact he was more than that. His literary works and revered service are the scientific signals for Tamil people.

Let his service be remembered for ever. Let his teachings be followed by all.

MR SPEAKER: May I request the hon. Members not to press for more speeches? The House may now stand in silence for a short while as a mark of respect for the departed soul.

The Members then stood in silence for a short while.

(Interruptions)

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): I take objection against this shabby treatment.

MR. SPEAKER: You speak one by one. I will call one by one.

Even on an occasion like this, you are behaving like this.

(Interruptions)

MR SPEAKER. Why don't you speak one by one?

(Interruptions)

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: It is a very serious matter.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K GOPAL (Karur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, just now, all the leaders had expressed their feelings about our good friend, Mr Asaithambi. He went to Port Blair on Thursday last and he died on Saturday night at 8 O'clock. He was going to Rangat in the middle of the Session. His body was brought back to Port Blair. And immediately telegrams were sent to you, Sir, and also to the former Chief Minister of Tamilnadu, Mr. Karunanidhi. The Chief Secretary said: "There are no mortuary facilities here. So, the body may be taken as early as possible." Yesterday, you were kind enough—I will be failing in my duty if I do not mention that. My good friend, Mr. Govindan Nair was not aware of it,—and so also the Secretary of the Lok Sabha, Mr. Rukhy to help us. Throughout the day, they tried their best.

MR SPEAKER: You should not drag them either for praise or for condemnation.

SHRI K GOPAL: Throughout the day, they tried their best.

MR. SPEAKER: You should not.

SHRI K. GOPAL: And Mr. Maran, a Member of the Rajya Sabha contacted Mr. Advani, because yesterday, the Prime Minister was not in town. The Defence Minister could not be contacted. The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs was not in

town. The Home Minister was not aware of it. Therefore, Mr. Maran went to Mr. Advani, and Mr. Advani contacted the Defence Minister who flatly refused saying that rules did not permit the body being taken. As far as we are concerned, we did not demand it as a matter of luxury, but in a place like Andaman where there is no other mode of transport, we have to do something to lift the body. Civil flight is going to operate only on Tuesday. He died on Saturday. His body had got to be kept there; and it has been decaying for three days. His wife is alone there. Mr. Asaithambi, was the person who was respected by lakhs and lakhs of people in the Madras city. He was elected from Madras alone. His popularity can be judged by the fact that he was the only member who got elected in the last election against heavy odds. What I want to bring to your notice is that it is not that the aircraft was not available. There was an aircraft in Port Blair, because there is a cruiser service; a small airport unit is there. There is an aircraft. The cruiser has to go up and down. It does not entail any extra expenditure. I do not want to go even for that. The Chief Minister of Tamilnadu contacted Mr. Purushottam Kaushik who was in Bombay, who was also kind enough to see that something, could be done. First of all, there is a shortage of aircrafts. At night, they could not take the aircraft. How can they land it at Port Blair, because Port Blair is a sub-standard airport? So, against the heavy odds, there was no other go than to demand for the Indian Airforce plane. It is not that I had just mentioned it; that we just wanted that the body must be flown by an aircraft. It is not our intention. Here, just now, the Government spokesman had expressed his feelings. As an individual, Mr. Ravindra Varma is very sincere. I have got no doubt about it. Whatever he says we take it as his feelings and not the Government's feelings. So, this Government deserves strong condemnation for the irresponsible, inhuman attitude

towards a Member whose body is still lying there. And there are lakhs and lakhs of people in Tamilnadu who are waiting for the body to arrive there. You did your best; you tried your best. We have got nothing against the Lok Sabha Secretariat or the Speaker. But, as far as the Government's attitude is concerned, when they talk about rules, I would like to know under what rules people went to Permar yesterday in the Indian Airforce plane; under what rules, people go for electioneering in the Indian Airforce planes? Is that a human consideration? Should you not do it on your own *suo-motu*? Therefore, I would request the Government through you to make an immediate arrangement to see that the body is lifted to Madras. That is my submission.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: You may be aware that Andaman has a very humid climate and the decomposition is hastened in my imagination. I had been to Andaman and Car Nicobar areas. If there was no lack of political will on the part of the Ruling Party, they could have easily commandeered one of the Airforce planes in Car Nicobar Islands. I have travelled myself several times in that. There is no problem. They come once a week to Barackpur. They could do it on Sunday instead of doing it on Thursday. Would you like the Government to explain to this House as to why this tough attitude was taken and as a result there is a serious discontentment and dissatisfaction and sorrow in the minds of millions in South India and all over the country?

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Chirayinkil): I only join my friends. You know there is a Motion which I tried to move, I will obey your orders in this regard. The only intention was that it needed explanation from the Government because this House, the people of Madras and the people of the country badly wish an explanation from the Government on the

treatment that has been meted out to the hon. Member of this House. It has happened in odd circumstances. It has not happened on the main land. It is where there is non-availability of mode of transport. Could the body be brought by a motor car or anything of this sort, Madras Government was willing to do it. Unfortunately, any type of mode of transport is not available in this tiny island. That is the reason. That is why it was requested through all the people including the Speaker, but nothing happened. Government thinks of rules framed in 1972, by the discretion as well as by the decision of some officers. Is it the way that we treat the Members of Parliament who die abroad or away from the mainland?

MR SPEAKER: I think we have discussed enough. Shall we make it today a controversial issue?

(Interruptions)

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: It is not a question of discussion only or expression of views. There is a situation which we have got to consider. The matter is now before the Parliament. We have passed obituary references. The body is there and as has been stated it is getting decomposed. Now whose exactly is the responsibility, I would like to know? There is, of course, some executive order or some decision by Cabinet that such and such procedure must be followed and all that. It is with respect to the recovery of the charges. I.A. plane can be made available to certain classes of people. Who are entitled to State funeral, in their case no charges be realised. With respect to others, the charges can be realised. This is with respect to liability to pay charges. It is only a decision by the Cabinet, Government decision and not a statutory rule. There is a distinction which has got to be understood. It is only a guideline stipulated by the Government and subsequently modified saying that this facility will be available

to the Members of Parliament also. This is not a statutory rule at all. This is a very important matter which must be borne in mind.

Here is the special situation in which the Member of Parliament has gone on intermediate journey and has died in a place far away from the mainland, although technically part of India. The body cannot be brought over here. The body is getting decomposed. No facility is available. I would like to know in the first place, knowing that no facility is available for preservation of the body why no effort was made to send the proper people from here over there to embalm the body? What was the consideration about it? If the objection is that I.A. plane is not available to take the body over here, the rules stand by it which I do not concede, did anybody take the care to send the proper personnel from here to Andaman in order that the body may be embalmed?

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: What mode of transport—by sending...

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: By I.A.F. Is it the dead body that is prohibited? I.A.F. people can fly. The Ministry people can fly in the I.A.F. plane. In order that the preservation of the body may be effectuated, nobody bothered about it. If that has got to be done, then what is the care taken about the body of this particular person?

MR. SPEAKER: It has been got embalmed. This is for your information.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: It has been got embalmed...

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: They have got it embalmed.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: By whom?

MR. SPEAKER: By people there.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K. GOPAL: Keeping it in an ice box is not a proper embalming.

SHRI A. BALA PAJANOR: The All India Radio has misled the nation this morning by saying that the body is being flown there. Till tomorrow, the dead body cannot come to Madras. Now, let them send a plane and bring the body. I endorse the views of Mr. Gopal. I am not on rules. Let them send a plane there. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: I am now requesting the House to give a direction that the body may be flown immediately. This House must give a direction or must authorise you to give a direction that the body must be flown immediately. *(Interruptions)* When the supreme Parliament is sitting when the Supreme Parliament has expressed its condolences when we are aware that the body is in a very miserable position far way, when we are aware that in the South lakhs of people are waiting to see that body and the body is there in a decomposed situation, when a widow is yelling by the side of the body, is it not proper for this House to take measures to ensure that the body is brought there? Is the Government of India so incompetent? Is this House so incompetent, are we so incompetent that we cannot give an order that the body be brought here?

I move that the House should direct the Government to bring the body immediately and take to Madras. This is the request I wanted to make.

SHRI RAGAVALU MOHANARANGAM (Chengalpattu): I was in Madras yesterday when this news came. Thousands of people are waiting there. When I went to his House yesterday evening at 4 p.m. thousands of volunteers were just standing before his house and asked me: "Are you a Member of Parliament? Are you not in a position to bring the body from Andamans to Madras within 48 hours?" Now, we speak of three or four days to bring the body because we do not have sufficient facilities. They are talking about

Asaithambi. We are talking of rules and regulations. All these rules are man-made manifestations. We have made the rules only to give betterment to the citizens of this country. I want to know what are the rules which prevent bringing the body of Mr. Asaithambi by an Air Force plane? They say so because he belongs to a different political party or because he belongs to South India. *(Interruptions)* We do not want to politicise this issue and we cannot because we belong to a ruling Party. Our hon. Chief Minister and the Finance Minister yesterday requested our Government here to take immediate steps to bring that body. I do not know what exactly is the state at which the matters stand today. Let them see towards that woman. That poor widow is there sitting near his dead body. Who is there to console her? Many people in Tamil Nadu are crying "You Members of Parliament, what are you doing there, you resign and come away?" This is what they told me when I saw them yesterday. You kindly take proper steps to bring the body to Madras as soon as possible.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA (Begusarai): The opinion of the House in this matter is unmistakable and unanimous that the body has to be brought from Andamans by a special plane. Sir, may I submit for your consideration that the rule although it was passed during the previous regime, is not a rule to which the Government must adhere because the circumstances in which the executive judgment is required and in this matter, the executive judgment has not been exercised in a proper manner? There is absolutely no doubt about it. And the Government cannot take refuge in the fact that there has been rule existing in their books and so on.

Now, Sir, even so far as the rules are concerned, may I submit for your consideration that we are not

so non-officials or so private individuals as the rules would like to make out because we are also concerned with the Government, we are a part of the Government and the Legislature cannot be treated as any other body or association in the country so that we, Members of the House, are treated as private individuals and so on and particularly, when we are on intermediate journey, we are performing our duties. That is a stipulation behind the intermediate journey that we are on duty and therefore, this hon. Member was on duty. May I also submit that it is the duty of the House to direct the Government to bring the body by an aircraft? But may I also say, Sir, that in these matters the order of the Speaker shall be treated by the executive as of the highest priority and nobody in the country should come in the way of execution of the order of the hon. Speaker?

(Interruptions,

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA (Andaman and Nicobar Islands): Mr. Speaker, Sir, unfortunately our colleague, Shri Asaithambi, has passed away in my constituency and the particular place where this incident happened was in middle Andaman, Rangat, and I am afraid there are no medical facilities to be provided to him because there are no proper medical facilities available in that part. Again, on the question of preserving the body, that is absolutely impossible in that part because there is no mortuary. The second thing is that his body is now kept in the local Tamizar Sangam hall and his widow is sitting by the side of his body and yesterday I got a telephone call from my constituency where a large number of Tamilians are living, that they are gradually becoming violent in that part because of the inaction of the Government to take out the body. The lady is crying there and at this juncture, you know that I also contacted you. I contacted the Home Ministry officials also for this purpose and they replied only one thing that rules are not permitting. (In-

terruptions). Sir, at this juncture I share the concern of the House and I demand that immediately the House should direct the Government to carry the body to Madras. Thank you.

**THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMEN-
TARY AFFAIRS AND LABOUR**
(SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA): Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of the Government I can say that the Government is keenly aware of the seriousness of the situation and of the deep feeling that all hon. Members of the House have on this issue.

SHRI K LAKKAPPA: Then why you have failed?

(Interruptions)

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: As you, Sir, tried to say in the very beginning this is a very sad occasion, and it is not an occasion for controversy. I shall not, therefore, attempt to import any controversy in making a few observations.

Sir, the question of rules was referred to; there is no question of seeking shelter under any rules. At one point one hon. Member asked whether there were any rules. There are rules governing the transport of bodies of dignitaries by IAF aircraft. These stipulate that in the case of those who are entitled to State funerals, when they pass away, their bodies may be transported by IAF aircraft. Later on, as you are, perhaps, aware, in 1968, the Government decided that the same facilities that are extended in the case of Cabinet Ministers, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Judges of the Supreme Court, and others must be made available in the case of hon. Members as well.

Therefore, at his moment, there is no distinction whatsoever between the facilities that will be accorded to the hon. Members of Parliament and Cabinet Ministers or Supreme Court Judges and they are all the

same as far as this is concerned, as far as death is concerned. Unfortunately, in this case, the sad demise has occurred in a part of the country which is very poorly connected. Such a situation might not have arisen if the sad demise had occurred on the mainland wherefrom the body could have been easily transported. Rules are there. But in spite of the fact that the rules are there, a very unforeseen situation has arisen where the death has occurred at a place which is poorly connected. Therefore, it is understandable that hon. Members feel that under the given situation, a way must be found out. Unfortunately, yesterday, the hon. Prime Minister, the hon. Home Minister, the hon. Defence Minister and I too were not here. As soon as I came to know of this, I contacted you this morning, and from you I came to know that perhaps steps have been taken to embalm the body. In view of the sentiments that have been expressed with great force in this House, I shall promptly contact the hon. Prime Minister and all those who are concerned to see what way can be found out under the existing rules to bring the body back. *(Interruptions)* I have not completed my sentence.

SHRI A. BALA PAJANOR: We know what happened yesterday. Let us not be misled.

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: I must be allowed to complete my statement.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please allow him to complete his statement.

(Interruptions)

SHRI A. BALA PAJANOR: If they are sincere, till the body is cremated, the House must stand adjourned.

MR. SPEAKER: You have had your say *(Interruptions)*

SHRI A. BALA PAJANOR: I am not here saying anything just for the sake of it. Please do not make remarks that will injure my feelings.

(Interruptions)

Yesterday, the Defence Minister was here. Mr. Advani contacted him

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Don't record

*(Interruptions)***

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: I said that I shall convey the ..

*(Interruptions)***

12 hrs.

SHRI A. BALA PAJANOR: Mr. Varma, you were not here

(Interruptions)

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN (Idukki): The matter is before the Parliament now. I want to know whether the Parliament of India has got the right to commission a plane for bringing the body of the Member of Parliament here. We are not on an appeal to somebody.

(Interruptions)

THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI CHARAN SINGH): I had just arrived, and did not know what the exact situation was. I am now told that it is only a question of making the plane available. I declare that the plane will be made available.

MR. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned till 2 p.m. in memory of the departed soul.

12.01 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Fourteen of the Clock.

The Lok Sabha then re-assembled at Fourteen of the clock.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]