

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Tuesday, March 24, 1992 /Chaitra 4,
1914 (Saka)

*The Lok Sabha met at
Eleven of the Clock*

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

OBITUARY REFERENCE

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Hon'ble Members, it is with a deep sense of sorrow that I inform the House of the sad demise of Dr. Gurdial Singh Dhillon, former Speaker of this august House. He adorned this Chair from 8 August, 1967 to 19 March, 1971 and again from 22 March, 1971 to 1 December, 1975.

Dr. Dhillon passed away at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi on 23 March, 1992 following a massive heart attack. He had undergone heart by-pass surgery a few days back.

Dr. Dhillon was a suave, gentle and very affectionate person. By these qualities he instantly endeared himself and made innumerable friends within the country and abroad.

Before entering this House in 1967, he

was a Member of the Punjab Legislative Assembly since 1952. During his tenure of membership of the State Legislative Assembly, he had occupied the office of Deputy Speaker between 1952-54. He was elected as the Speaker of the Vidhan Sabha in 1954 and continued to be in that office till 1962. He served as a Cabinet Minister in Punjab during 1964-66.

Dr. Dhillon was elected to the Fourth Lok Sabha in 1967 from Taran Taran Constituency to the State of Punjab and represented the same constituency in the Fifth Lok Sabha during 1971-77. He was again elected to the Eighth Lok Sabha from the Ferozepur Constituency during 1984-89. As Union Cabinet Minister he held the portfolios of Transport and Shipping in seventies and of Agriculture in eighties with great distinction. He represented India as the High Commissioner to Canada during 1980-82. He was a Member of the Planning Commission in 1980.

The Parliamentary life of Dr. Dhillon spanned for more than three decades. He was elected as Speaker of the Lok Sabha twice and he guided very able its deliberations. Rulings and observations of Dr. Dhillon have become precedents for the successive Speakers. The proceedings of the House bear ample testimony to his deep knowledge of parliamentary practices and procedure. His eminence in the parliamentary field and his soft spoken and charming personality earned recognition when he was elected as the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Chairman of the Commonwealth Parlia-

mentary Association Executive Committee. He was also the Chairman of the Standing Committee of Commonwealth Speakers during 1971-74.

As the Chairman of All India Presiding Officers' Conference he guided the deliberations of this apex parliamentary body in India for almost a decade. As the Leader of Indian Parliamentary delegations he brought great prestige and dignity to India and Indian Parliament and Indian people. Parliaments of several leading countries honoured him on various occasions. He led Indian delegations to 41st and 42nd Sessions of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva in 1985 and in 1986.

A veteran freedom fighter he was awarded Tamra patra in recognition of his services to the nation.

An erudite scholar, a lawyer and a journalist, Dr. Dhillon was actively associated in promoting many social, cultural and educational organisations and academic bodies. He had taken keen interest in promotion of higher education, rural sports and social service.

His passing away has created a void which will be felt by all of us.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am unable to believe that Dhillon sahib is not with us any more. Just about three or four days back I had occasion to meet him. He was in perfect health. No one could have predicted this sad end so soon.

One of our senior most political workers, senior most politicians, he adorned, as you have just been pleased to say, many position. But apart from the positions he adorned, what was remarkable about the person was his personality, very pleasant, soft-spoken, firm where it is needed and a person of charm all along.

As Minister I had occasion to meet him. I was not in the Lok Sabha when he was Speaker. But we did follow his firmness as Speaker, his rulings given from time to time as precedents in the Legislative Assemblies, where we were active and we found lot of guidance from his rulings. When we came together, we found him a person whose company just drove away gloom and sadness the moment you started talking to him. Even in that very soft-spoken manner, he was full of humour and seemed to be a person who never allowed any sadness, any sorrow, to come anywhere near him. It was a difficult thing for us to make him accept the High Commissionership in Canada. He did not want to leave the country. He was not in Parliament, but he said:

"my place is here".

As Foreign Minister, I had to go to him

convince him that he is needed there. And we were convinced that his services would be invaluable and we could not think of any other person apart from the IFS people of course who were available. That one assignment, Sir, I have some personal knowledge about it. And I can say without any fear of contradiction that one assignment really turned the tide in Canada. The way he handled the problem, the main problem, which we all know about, it was exemplary and his successors built upon that. The foundation was laid by him. We can never forget his service to India, to his motherland, as the Indian High Commissioner in Canada. This is not very well-known. But, since I know it from the close quarters, I would like to place this on record. He was an out and out nationalist. He was prepared to do anything in the cause of nationalism. He faced a lot of difficulties in Punjab. He was there in every meeting; every meeting concerning Punjab. He came on his own and offered suggestions which were invaluable to us. We miss him very much today. Personally, I

think it has been a great loss that he has left us. Even without being in any position, he was of great service, great utility, usefulness to all of us. We grieve his death. We send our condolences to the bereaved family.

[Translation]

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI: (Gandi Nagar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I associate myself with the sentiments expressed about Shri G. S. Dhillon by your goodself and the hon. Prime Minister. Yesterday evening when we got this sad news we could not believe it, because only a few days back he was hale and hearty. He was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences for by-pass surgery and the operation was successful and it was reported that he was recovering fast. But suddenly his condition deteriorated and he could not survive the massive heart attack that he suffered yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have been a member of the Rajya Sabha for many years, but I had an opportunity to see him from close quarters about 20 years back when I went with him to Czechoslovakia with a Parliamentary delegation of which he was the leader. At that time he was the Speaker of Lok Sabha. His grace and gentility left a deep imprint on all his colleagues. Later he was a Minister being a senior most parliamentarian. Sometimes one feels that he too would have been amidst us today as we have with us two ex-speakers. He was always vigilant towards his duties, though he was in Delhi for years now. I am living in Pandara Park and he was my neighbour, even then he went to Punjab to participate in the elections and cast his vote. All those who have seen him closely and worked with him feel a void, because he was a man of qualities. I pay my tributes to him and express my condolences to the bereaved family.

SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN (Rosera): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Prime Minister,

your goodself and the leader of opposition have paid their tributes to Shri Dhillon. I also share those sentiments and pay my tributes to the departed soul.

We did not have an opportunity to work with Shri Dhillon but whatever we heard about him reflects that he proved his worth in all the positions that he held. He worked in various capacities and rose to the top. He served as the Speaker of State Legislative Assembly, and Speaker, Lok Sabha and rose to various positions ranging from the office of a Minister to that of High Commissioner and Member of Planning Commission. He was a paragon of qualities. He is not amidst us today. This is the law of nature. Nobody has to remain here forever. Death is inevitable and everyone has to leave this mortal world one day, but there are few personalities who leave a mark of their own and Shri Dhillon was one among them.

• Mr. Speaker, Sir, I once again express sorrow at the sad demise of Shri Dhillon and send my condolences to the bereaved family.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I mourn the passing away of Dr. Dhillon and I fully associate myself and my party with what has been said here.

I have had the privilege of being in the House when Dr. Dhillon was the Speaker, and I can say that he discharged his functions as a Speaker with great efficiency and with commitment to the true principles of parliamentary democracy. Even during Emergency, I remember, he always tried to give fullest opportunity to the Opposition.

The Fifth Lok Sabha, when he was the Speaker, one may say, was a turbulent one but, we never felt in the Opposition that we

had an unsympathetic Speaker. He gave us fullest opportunity and as a newcomer in the Fifth Lok Sabha, we all enjoyed his affection and guidance.

In the Fifth Lok Sabha, Jyotirmoy Basu was in his full form with Madhu Limaye, but I remember very distinctly his great affection for Jyotirmoy Basu. One would have thought that he was the stormy veteran and he would always be troubling the Speaker. He used to be in the seat where Dr. Pandeya is now. The only thing he used to say was : "Jyotirmoy Basu, you should go a little bit back and not be so near me. His affection for him was something to be emulated.

He achieved many distinctions in life, and quite rightly. Not only he was a perfect gentleman, he had interest in so many aspects of our life - national life, social life and cultural life also. I remember, when he went to Calcutta once and, as a Speaker, was staying in Raj Bhavan, I had occasion to meet him. He invited us to meet him and spent considerable time discussing so many things other than politics - about our cultural life, about our social life, about educational problems. This was a man, a complete man, who dedicated his life for strengthening the foundations of parliamentary democracy in this country, for a better life for the common people of this country and we greatly mourn the loss of such an outstanding Indian.

I request you to convey our sincere condolence to the members of the bereaved family. Through you, Sir, we do that. I hope, all of us will remember the contribution made by him and should try to emulate him in discharging our day-to-day affairs.

SHRI P.G. NARAYANAN-(Gobichettipalayam): Mr. Speaker, Sir, Shri Dhillon has served this country in various capacities - as a freedom fighter, as a State Minister, as a Cabinet Minister and as a Speaker of this House. He has also served as an Indian High

Commissioner to Canada. By his death, we have lost an eminent politician and a distinguished parliamentarian. He has contributed a lot to this country. His death is a great loss to the nation.

On behalf of AIADMK, I express my heart-felt condolence to the bereaved family.

SHRI NANI BHATTACHARYA (Bengaluru): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I fully share the feelings of all colleagues in the House and also your feelings. I was not personally acquainted with him. I have not had the privilege of associating or having direct acquaintance with him. But I have gone through his literature. I have seen reports about him. But you have already narrated in detail about his contribution to India, to parliamentary policy and in other fields of learning. I am not going to repeat those things.

We pay our respects in memory of Dr. Dhillon and also we convey our condolence to the bereaved family. Thank you.

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I join you, the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition and other distinguished colleagues in expressing the deep sense of sorrow and grief at the demise of Dr. Dhillon. Dr. Dhillon was a patriot, a freedom fighter and a champion of secular and democratic values. As a parliamentarian he was of rare qualities. He had distinguished career in different capacities during his life time.

When he was the Speaker of this House in the Fifth Lok Sabha, I had not had the opportunity of serving this House. I was then in the other House. But I was told that as a Speaker he upheld the rights and privileges of the Members of the House during that turbulent period, as has been noted by Shri Somnath Chatterjee. I am also told that he

had the rich traditions and values and the conventions that this House has built up during his entire career. I take this opportunity to offer my respectful homage to the memory of the departed and also convey on my behalf and on behalf of my party the deep sense of condolence to the members of the bereaved family. Thank you.

SHRI EBRAHIM SULAIMAN SAIT (Ponnani): Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is sad that Dhillionji has passed away. We all now mourn his sad death. It is really an irreparable national loss. He served the country in various capacities - as Speaker and Minister in Punjab State, Minister in the Centre, High Commissioner in Canada and as Speaker, twice, of this august House. I had the privilege to be a Member of this House when our Dhillionji was the Speaker here. I know what affection he had for all of us. It is a personal loss to me. I see that I have lost an affectionate elder brother. He had that much of affection for me. I must say that he carried on the proceedings of this House in an admirable manner by getting the support of all sections of this House. He was a man of high qualities of head and heart. Particularly I must say he had a very high sense of humour. He was a gentleman to the core. I have had of knowing him closely as I was in Parliamentary delegation led by Dhillionji to Switzerland. We all mourn his death. I consider this to be a loss for all of us, this august House and to the entire nation.

With these few words I pay my tributes to the great personality that passed away and convey, through you, my deep condolence to the bereaved family. I have only to quote an Urdu couplet of which I am reminded of:

"Baghbane Gulshane hasthi yeh kya kiya

Jane chaman tha gul jo wahi toone chun liya".

Thank you.

So sad it is.

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR): Mr. Speaker Sir, Shri Dhillion is no more. Whatever has been said about him by your goodself, the hon. Prime Minister and other veteran leaders of the opposition holds good. But I would like to say a few words. I was associated with him not merely because of being a Punjabi not merely because of being a farmer but because of a strong bond of brotherhood. I had been with him from the beginning, observed him from close quarters, suffered a lot with him and achieved a lot with him. As a human being I can say, he had achieved perfection and was the symbol of humanity. I am reminded of an urdu couplet of Shri Mahendra Singh 'Sahar'

"Yun to Hazaron baras hai aadmi ka wazood

Magar aankh aaj bhi tarasti hai aadmi ke liye"

He was a person for whom the eyes could wait forever. Mere number of people have increased manifold, but what about humanity or humaneness? Let us see this aspect. I have seen him closely as the Deputy Speaker of Punjab Legislative Assembly, Speaker, Punjab Legislative Assembly as Minister in the State and later as Speaker, Lok Sabha. I used to get lot of solace whenever I met him as there was a strong bond of brotherhood between us. His rulings as Speaker have always guided me here. Besides, he was simple at heart, sort and suave and jovial person. Even his small remarks made the House go into a peal of laughter.

I was in the jail with him for 25 days when we courted arrest in support of Indiraji. But I never felt that I was in jail. I felt as if I was on a picnic. Time just flew away and we never faced any hardship. Not only this he was full of spirit of nationalism. There will be no exaggeration to say that he was the pillar of nationalism in our State. He had actively participated in the freedom struggle and had firm determination and will power. He never backed out from his stand. I think he was not a person to leave this world in such a way. He was hurt by the happening in his state, where humanity is being butchered. I used to visit him often at his residence. He was anguished at the state of affairs in the country and used to say "was it for this that we sought Independence". He used to recite an Urdu Couplet to prove his point:-

Kya khoob rang badla hai jamane ka
apne apno par war karte hein

Pahle marte the yar yaron par, aaj
yaron se yar marte hein.

He was pained at the present state of affairs. His heart used to weep. But whatever he said was a cry in the wilderness. He did not leave any stone unturned to find a solution to the vexed terrorism problem. The strife torn state made him suffer heart ailment, otherwise he was such a jovial person that disease dare not touch him. He had a disarming smile with which many patients got cured of their disease. Today he has left us so that humanity may again come together and live with a feeling of tolerance, brotherhood and human values and we may once again defend mother India unitedly. I have always respected him and I think the entire House would agree that a person who had identified himself with the sufferings of the masses is no more with us today.

With these words, I pay my tributes to the departed soul and express my condolences to the bereaved family.

SHRI RABI RAY (Kendrapara): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was out of station for the last three days and when I returned today, I came to know about the sad demise of Shri Dhillon. When I was elected for the first time to the fourth Lok Sabha, I developed intimate friendship with him. I know him as a friend for the last 24-25 years. Though he was a Member of Parliament of the Ruling Party, but I know him since 1967. I had very few friends like him, though there might have been political differences with him. When I became Speaker he used to come and meet me often and narrate his experiences as Speaker. Once he said "how do you manage the House? I had to take medicine when I was speaker." I told him that I never had medicines, nor would I need them in future. He had been High Commissioner, a Minister and twice the Speaker of Lok Sabha. One thing which we must appreciate and follow is that he was very humble and could sacrifice anything for friendship. I have never seen such a selfless person in my life. He always stood by the values of Parliamentary Democracy. The ambitions of a political person are never fulfilled. In his case, he was betrayed.

I used to tell him that he has served in various capacities and that in itself should be a matter of satisfaction. He always thought in the interest of nation. With the passing away of such a humanist and nationalist leader, a void has been created. I share the views of Hon. Prime Minister and the leader of opposition regarding Shri Dhillon and express my condolences to his bereaved wife and family members.

SHRI BHOGENDRA JHA (Madhubani): Mr. Speaker, Sir, Shri Dhillon is no more with us physically. But as our scriptures say that soul is immortal and therefore, he would be always with us by way of his deeds and ideals that he cherished. Yesterday, when we were celebrating the martyrdom day of Sardar Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru

at Teen Murti Bhavan under the auspices of All India Freedom Fighter's Association, we received the message of the sad demise of Shri Dhillon. We were colleagues during the freedom struggle. The Freedom Fighter's Association paid rich tributes to him yesterday. I also saw him from close quarters when he was Chairman of Public Undertaking Committee and I was a Member of that committee I remember an incident. There was a move to close down IDPL. I was the only Member who opposed it. I will not go into other details and facts. When I gave a note of dissent, Shri Dhillon discussed it in the committee and then in the name of self reliance in the field of medicine, there was unanimity. Shri Dhillon did not decide the case on the basis of majority vote. He served as the Speaker of Lok Sabha and as a Minister and was an active freedom fighter. The tribe of freedom fighters is perishing. There seems to be no hope of addition in it. A great personality has left for heavenly abode and therefore, on behalf of Communist Party of India and its Parliamentary Group I pay tributes to him.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: We deeply mourn the loss of this friend and I am sure, the House will join me in conveying our heart-felt condolences to the bereaved family.

The House may now stand in silence for a sort while as a mark of respect to the departed soul.

The Members then stood in silence for a short while.

MR. SPEAKER: The funeral procession will pass through the premises of Parliament. On behalf of Parliament, wreaths will be placed on the body of the departed soul at Gate No. 1.

Members may please make it convenient to attend.

11.36 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday, March 25, 1992/Chaitra 5, 1914 (Saka).