

[Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee]

will be passed in 15 minutes. Have we ever had such an experience in the House? No Bill can be passed before two hours. I, therefore, suggest that either Budget discussion should be taken up now or it should not be taken up tonight at all.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Let us try to pass it in half-an-hour. The Minister has submitted in the House and I have taken the sense of the House.

SHRI SURESH PRABHU (Rajapur) : What happens to the ruling of the Speaker in the House? ... (*Interruptions*)

18.08 hrs.

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE : DISAPPROVAL OF LALIT KALA AKADAMI (TAKING OVER OF MANAGEMENT) ORDINANCE—1997

AND

LALIT KALA AKADAMI (TAKING OVER OF MANAGEMENT) BILL—1997

*As Passed by Rajya Sabha*

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Item Nos. 34 and 35 will be taken up together. Shri Ram Naik.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM NAIK (Mumbai-North) : Sir, I beg to move:

"That this House disapproves of the Lalit Kala Akadami (Taking Over of Management) Ordinance, 1997 (No. 10 of 1997) promulgated by the President on January 24, 1997."

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to oppose the manner in which the ordinance was issued. While supporting the Bill, introduced by the Government, I would like to express my views.

Sir, the question of opposing is arising time and again only when ordinance is issued. I think, so long as 13th Ordinance is not approved by the House, a new record of issuing ordinances cannot be set up by this Government. Today, I went to library to find out the maximum number of ordinances issued between two sessions. I could not get information of issuing such ordinances more than 5 to 10.

[*English*]

This Government has established a new record in issuing ordinances. It goes to the credit of this Government.

[*Translation*]

Now the question arises as to what was the necessity of issuing this ordinance. In the Objectives and reasons given in the Bill it has been stated that a Haksar Committee was appointed in 1988 which gave its report in 1990 but later on no action was taken on this report. Then some hon.

Members, including Shri George Fernandes and myself made some complaints. Then an Administrative Enquiry was ordered to look into the complaints and thereafter the Government thought that an ordinance should be issued in this regard. This has been stated in the Bill. This was under consideration since 1990 and our last winter session ended on 22nd December. When this matter was under consideration for last 6-7 years then why you have not brought a bill to this effect in the last session itself. No action was taken on this report during last 6-7 years and you can say that you were not in the Government during this period but I fail to understand that when nothing was done in the last 6 years, what major damage would have been caused, had it been delayed by a month or so. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to state the reason for bringing it through an ordinance. What I think is that we have started a system of Standing Committee and this Government, on one pretext or the other, is trying to oppose this system because if a new Bill is referred to the Standing Committee, the Committee would go through it very minutely and make improvement in the Bill. But this Government does not want any such improvement. It seems that the Government want to keep everything in its own hands and that is why it is by-passing the Standing Committee in this process. That is why I am condemning this ordinance.

After talking about ordinance, now I would like to say about this Bill that on August 5, 1954 a Resolution was adopted by the Parliament to set up a Lalit Kala Akadami. This Akadami was registered forty years ago on March 11, 1957. After giving all sorts of autonomy, it was most unfortunate that this Akadami could not rise to the occasion in the field of art and literature. I think if we look at the working of this Lalit Kala Akadami during the last 40 years we would find that the artists have themselves blemished their names. The artists and their leaders have lost the confidence expressed in them by the Parliament. They should not have done so. I think it is necessary to criticise each and every one who headed this Kala Akadami. It is very sad that the Parliament has expressed confidence in them but they could not rise to the occasion. Such persons were appointed there to head the Kala Akadami. Now what would happen by the elections? Due to elections, many wrong things are happening in politics and I think the same thing is happening in Kala Akadami and corruptions, irregularities, discriminations and many such other things are going on there for last 15-20 years. That is why it has reached to this condition today.

Now it is an age of privatisation. The Government Organisations are not working properly, so we are going for privatisation. But in this Akadami, the private people have not worked properly and that is why it is being taken over by the Government. This is the motive of this Bill. This is a reverse trend and the Government should not resort to it so frequently. In this context I would like to say that it is the duty of the management of the Akadami to bring forward

the new talented artists, but it has not done so as a result of which a wide gap has been created between the new artists and the artists sitting in the management. Now we have to think as to how that gap can be filled and how such gaps may not be created in future. I have referred to the report of the Haksar Committee. It has also been mentioned in the objectives and reasons of the Bill.

This report was submitted in July 1990 but I fail to understand as to why this report was made confidential. The Government has made this report confidential which is relating to a most important field. I demand that it should be made public.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (Kottayam) : It was confidential earlier but now it is public.

SHRI RAM NAIK : It has not been made public.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Your name is also in the list of speakers but if you interrupt like this again and again I would consider that you have expressed your views.

SHRI RAM NAIK : It is a separate thing as to how I have obtained its copy, but people should know about it. The Parliament should know and the common man should know about it. Even today 'confidential' is written on it. My first demand is that it should be published for the people.

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (Kota) : Sir, I was also a member of the Standing Committee of Human Resource Development Ministry constituted to look into the report of Haksar Committee. No where it was mentioned as to what was said in the report....

MR. CHAIRMAN : Joshi ji, your name is also in the list, therefore, you need not to interrupt.

SHRI RAM NAIK : Secondly, it has been said that letters from some MPs were received and some criticism also appeared in newspapers and then Administrative enquiry was ordered. It came to know that 3000 books and several precious exhibits have been lost. I was also surprised to know that many people who had to pay rent even more than one lakh, did not pay it. Not only this, many exhibits which were sent to Bangladesh and Japan, returned by ordinary ships but the Akadami had to pay Rs. One lakh 40 thousand to Bombay Port Trust as demurrage. When the exhibits were returned from Bangladesh Rs. one lakh and ten thousand was paid as demurrages. So these irregularities which were investigated through an administrative enquiry along with the Haksar Committee report should be laid on the Table of the House. This would help in bringing the guilty to book. These persons would get exposed. We do not only want the report but also the action taken by the Government in this regard. An Action Taken Report on the similar pattern as in case of Standing Committees should be prepared and I demand that it should be laid here within three months.

It is most unfortunate that this Bill provides for taking over of the management of Lalit Kala Akadami. We are handing it over to the bureaucracy. It has been said that in this case the

[English]

remedy should not be worse than the disease.

[Translation]

The bureaucrat who takes over the reins of this Akadami may be well versed in the field of fine arts. That is a different matter. The taking over of the Akadami is for a limited period of three years. I feel that remedy should not be worse than the disease. The situation should not turn from bad to worse with this change. I demand that an advisory committee should be constituted to aid and advise the Administrator. This Committee should constitute of eminent persons from the field of fine arts and other allied fields. This work should be completed within one year instead of three years.

[English]

The reconstruction of any institute within a year is not a very difficult job.

[Translation]

I feel that the hon. Minister should intervene in the matter. What are the consequences of Lalit Kala Akadami not working properly. Rs. 5000 is awarded to the prize winning exhibit. It is a meagre amount. It should be at least Rs. 25,000 to 50,000. A token amount of Rs. 5,000 along with a certificate and TA/DA is very meagre and is not the proper way to recognise the services of an artist. This should stop. The Prize amount should be increased. Besides the exhibits which are sent abroad should reflect the true spirit of Indian culture. There is lot of discrimination and corruption in selection of these exhibits. Most of them are not original but even then a claim to this effect is made. The hon. Minister should clarify the position in this regard while replying to the debate.

The functioning of Lalit Kala Akadami has been derailed. To bring it back on the rails this Bill has been brought forward in the shape of an Ordinance. It is very important to keep this Akadami on rails and make progress. The Government must complete this task within one year. With these words I would urge the Government to stop this tendency of issuing Ordinance repeatedly.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI S.R. BOMMAI) : Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to provide for the taking over of the management of the Lalit Kala Akadami for a limited period in the public interest and for matters connected

[Shri S.R. Bommal]

therewith or incidental thereto, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

Sir, my task has been made easy by the senior hon. Member, Shri Ram Naik because he has narrated the background justifying the take over of the Lalit Kala Akadami by the Government.

This Akadami and other Akadamies were established with a high objective of helping the artists and encouraging them. We give them autonomy so that the artists themselves should manage and keep the standard and the Government should not interfere in these matters. It should have the freedom. With this high objective in mind, this Akadami was established. Earlier years, I must say, the office-bearers, the Chairman and the Members had done yeomen's service to the artists. They had kept a very high standard. But later on, deterioration has taken place and therefore, the Haksar Committee was appointed in 1988 and the Committee gave a report in the year 1990. The Committee's recommendation, so far as Lalit Kala Akadami was concerned, was sent to the Akadami for acceptance. They did not accept that. They refused to act. Meanwhile, there was maladministration, favouritism and nepotism. Favouritism was shown to their own relatives and I must say that there are rare instances of the Chairman getting award for himself of a Committee.

They were also giving awards to their kith and kin. Everywhere defalcation was there. Disappearance of articles was there.

When I took charge of this Ministry, I received letters from hon. Members, Shri George Fernandes and Shri Chaturanan Mishra and number of other Members of Parliament to take it over immediately. The Union of the Akadami came and narrated a story how the Akadami was being run and how it was going to be ruined.

Then I thought it fit that there should be a quick administrative inquiry. I got it done, audited and when I saw the Report then I thought that immediately it should be taken over. As Parliament was not in Session, the Ordinance was issued. In principle, I agree with Shri Ram Naik that we need not have taken recourse to an Ordinance. Incidentally, as he said, when for six years no action was taken why could we not wait for one month more?

I thought that within one month they were going to remove important articles of the Akadami. That may create trouble. And I had to act. I agree with you that such a matter may not go to the Standing Committee bypassing Parliament. Quick action was there. I need not disclose. I was getting queries from the Members of Parliament asking me, what I had done, what action I had taken, and because, I thought also their pressure was in the right direction, therefore I had to resort to an ordinance.

Therefore, I would only assure other Members that I have no intention to prolong as it is a painful job. I want to reorganise the Akadami within one year, if possible. I do not want to extend the period of this Government administration for a longer period. As early as possible within a year, I would like to see that proper action is taken and the Akadami is reorganised and is ready for functioning.

Another thing is, I have already given an assurance in the Rajya Sabha that the appointment of an Advisory Board was under consideration and the right people who have got the academic talents and qualifications and who are qualified to be the Members of this Akadami would be on the Advisory Committee.

With these few words I would like the House to consider this Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Motions moved:

"That this House disapproves of the Lalit Kala Akadami (Taking over of Management) Ordinance, 1997 (No. 10 of 1997) promulgated by the President on January 24, 1997."

"That the Bill to provide for the taking over of the management of the Lalit Kala Akadami for a limited period in the public interest and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur) : Mr. Chairman Sir, I fully agree with what the chief whip of our party said just now. The hon. Minister also said that he had to take recourse to issuing the Ordinance because he wanted to act fast in this matter.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Today you are not tired of speaking?

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Sir, I can speak for a long time, even if I have to sit throughout the night. But this is an injustice that the time of discussion on the Budget has been shifted from 7 to 8. At that time there would be only 2-3 Members. I do not want to say anything else on that, Shri Jena may run the House the way he wants.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please restrict yourself to Lalit Kala Akadami only.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Sir, I am on that subject itself. This Ordinance was issued ... (Interruptions). The Lalit Kala Akadami was established in 1954....

SHRI S.R. BOMMAL : Shri Ram Naik has dwelt on it at length.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Please listen to me. I am referring to the irregularities that were committed there.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : No, no. The details of the dates have already been given.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Anyway, please give time to Joshiji.

DR. GIRIJA VYAS (Udaipur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, as this is an important subject many Members would like to speak on it. Therefore we should fix a day when at least one hour is kept for discussion on Lalit Kala Akadami. If the hon. Minister agrees to it it would be very good.

MR. CHAIRMAN : You may not get time later on. The Bill is here before us, therefore make good use of the time allotted.

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : That is why I was submitting we should conclude with this subject.

MR. CHAIRMAN : If you want one hour, this discussion can continue for one hour.

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : We can take it up later.

MR. CHAIRMAN : It may not be taken up later. This is the right time. If you want to speak you can utilise this time.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Sir, I was submitting that the Advisory Committee of Human Resource Development Ministry did not agree to the suggestions given by the Haksar Committee on the Lalit Kala Akadami. But even then the hon. Minister proposes to hand over the Akadami to famous artists like Shanku Chaudhary, Krishan Khanna and S. Bhushan. It is a matter of regret that they have been occupying the workshop studio for the last 20 years illegally and the Haksar Committee had given suggestion in that regard and there should be a discussion on it. In the Rajya Sabha the hon. Minister said that the Administration of Akadami is being taken over because during investigation it was found that 3000 books were printed less.

MR. CHAIRMAN : This has been admitted by the hon. Minister himself.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : If he has agreed then elections can be held within one year. The reconstruction work should be completed within one year. There will be no controversy then.

MR. CHAIRMAN : All right. You have given your suggestion.

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA : Sir, you are in the Chair and I seek your protection. The charge of misuse of autonomy by the Akadami administration is wrong. The hon. Minister has said in the Rajya Sabha that there is enough evidence of large scale irregularities in appointments. There was a report to this effect in *Janasatta* dated 11.3.1997. Besides, there are other reports also. The person who has

been appointed in the Culture Department has no experience in the field of fine arts and he has been appointed the administrator of the Akadami. He has been recently relieved from A.G.R. Department whereas there is a ban on the appointment of retired officers to Lalit Kala Akadami. The same work is being done by the Culture Department also. These are some of the reasons why he is not fit to become the administrator of the said Akadami. I have an apprehension whether the administrator would be removed and elections will be held there within one year.

According to reliable sources it has been reported that the Vigilance Committee of the Culture Department has hushed up cases against corrupt officials on whom there was charges of misappropriation of funds. This has been done in spite of the fact that Lalit Kala Akadami had given these charges against these officials in writing along with sufficient factual evidence. We fail to understand how the Culture Department makes tall claims about transparency in administration whereas the cases are being hushed up. I demand that the report of the Vigilance Committee should be placed on the Table of the House.

The fourth submission is that the Akadami gives grant to 93 Institutions. This time also grant was given to those Institutions but instead of making payment to these Institutions photo machine and other four equipments are being purchased which is a clear case of misappropriation of funds by the Administration whereas several computers are already lying unused in the Lalit Kala Akadami. You are its owner you can go there and see yourself. The very corrupt photo officer of Lalit Kala Akadami, Shri Paramjeet Singh who was dismissed from service for purchasing certain items from a fictitious firm is being re-instated soon by its Administrator and Joint Secretary, Shri Ashok Vajpayee based on the report of Shri D. Sengupta, Deputy Secretary Administration, Department of Culture. Therefore, my submission is either a new Panel of Chairman may be constituted by calling a general body meeting of elected and nominated members or democratic system may be protected in the Akadami by conducting elections immediately through some recognised body based on the suggestions given by Justice Khosla committee or P.N. Haksar Committee so that corrupt artists may not get an opportunity to enter the Akadami through the back door. This report has been published in three National dailies viz. Navbharat Times, Rashtriya Sahara and The Times of India.

Therefore, my submission is that the Lalit Kala Akadami is an institution of repute and has a big name. Lot of discussions take place about this Institution in the Ministry of Human Resource Development. It is therefore, requested that you should do some thing concrete to run this Institution properly which is in doldrums. You yourself has admitted that corruption is rampant and administrative inefficiency is there then why don't you stamp out such an inefficient



[Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava]

administration. Elections should be conducted there properly and the Akadami should function. The employees who have served this Akadami previously are today wandering from pillar to post. Had Shri Jena ji permitted me in the morning, Chairman ji, I would have definitely exposed the functioning of Lalit Kala Akadami which would have shaken you also. I just want to submit this only since time is not there because of rush of work. That is why I don't want to speak more. But Minister Sir whatever I have said about this Akadami that it should be rejuvenated within an year, should be kept in mind. I am very grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES (Nalanda)  
Chairman Sir, whatever has been said by Shri Ram Naik about the Ordinance I agree with that and I would like to thank the Hon'ble Minister for bringing the matter of Lalit Kala Akadami to a decisive stage through the Ordinance. We are struggling since 1995 for this. I am calling it a struggle because one of my friends, Shri Madhav Rao Scindia who was the Minister of Human Resource Development than had told me outside this House that I am the Minister of this Department and this is a small Institution of my department but I could not do anything for this. Then I asked him that when this loot is going on here and so many corrupt and worthless people are working in this Institution who are not only misappropriating but looting the Government funds sanctioned through this House and you are saying that the Government cannot do anything and you people cannot do anything. Then I wrote a letter to him giving all the proofs which were collected through various sources. Some proofs were collected from outside and some through audit report of the Ministry and through other sources. Some proofs were concrete proofs. Therefore, I would like to ask from the hon'ble Minister as to what action has been taken against those officials who looted this Institution. Those officials are still working in that organisation. Will they continue there inspite of all this looting. Though I thank you and I am grateful that you intend to streamline the functioning of Lalit Kala Akadami. But will you not make enquiries against all those corrupt officials who proved that they are corrupt and who proved that we are also involved with them? If you could not enquire all these things and if you are not in a position to give a proper reply then such things would go on. So I request you to kindly look into all these things so that such things are not repeated and such group of officials may not swallow this institution. This should not happen. Chairman Sir, it is really surprising that Parliament cannot do anything. Ministry of Human Resource Development cannot do anything and if I say

so even president cannot do any thing in this matter. What is this? This group of corrupt officials would go on like this and the situation has come to such a pass. Hon'ble Minister Sir, I am reminding of 5 Aug. 1996 when Mr. Madhav Rao Scindia while replying my letter said:

[English]

"I am enclosing herewith the detailed comments of the Department of Culture for your kind perusal and necessary action".

Necessary action by me! (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

What were his comments—his comments were that when such eminent persons like Mulkh Raj Anand, D.P. Raichaudhry, Mehendi Nawaj etc. adorned the office of the Chairman looting was natural because they used to travel by second class and used to claim A.C. class fare and it was not once but dozens of times. Therefore that group of officials had concentrated the whole functioning of this office in their hands. A big man associated with this institution is now residing in NOIDA but he has always claimed fare for attending meetings from Gorakhpur to Delhi though he resides in NOIDA. He has got his house, office and everything in NOIDA. It is also one of the methods of being dishonest.

When I invited the attention of the Government towards the family monopoly (nepotism), the Minister replied as under:

[English]

In the first ever national photographic exhibition held in March, 1995 the awardees were relatives of Jury members and relatives of the officials.

[Translation]

These are the comments of the Government, I am telling the comments of your Ministry.

[English]

"Three out of the five award winners of the first ever national photographic exhibition were close relatives/family members of the Jury, akadami officials. The details are as follows :

Mrs. Chitragada Sharma—Wife of Shri O.P Sharma,  
Jury

Shri Anil Kumar Sharma—Son of Vice Chairman Shri  
Anand Dev

Shri Bhupesh Chandra Little—Son of Shri P.C. Little  
Member of the Jury.

[Translation]

Amongst them Anand Dev was the chief of all these misdeeds and Anil Kumar Sharma is his son. That means it was all within the family. This is one of the example which I gave to you regarding photographic exhibition. Besides, there are so many scandles about which I don't want to say anything because I don't want to waste the time of the House because of the paucity of time. But it is not understood

as to why you did not take any action despite all these facts and information available with you, because this information is from the note of the Ministry. You could not do anything. Even President has no powers to show the place deserved by him. But you could have approached the police because you had all the proofs. Lot of bungling was there, money being looted, fake vouchers were being given and different methods were being used to loot the money. This is what has been mentioned in the Audit report. Had there been anything from our side I would have read for you.

You told about a few things about 4000 books etc. but here lakhs of rupees are involved. It is not a matter of a book. Bungling was there even in the matter of water tanker. It is not known whether the water tanker used to bring the water or not but the payment was made. All these things have been mentioned in the Audit report. I am not saying something of my own.

So many things have happened in so many departments if I tell you but don't know why the officials of your department did not inform the police when you had proof of these lapses, you had all the reports in your own Ministry. Why did not the officials report the matter to the police? What they were getting? Who pressurised them not to inform the police? What was their responsibility? What for these officers meant? What were the terms and conditions of their service? Whose responsibility it is to monitor the functioning of the Department?

Chairman Sir, therefore I expect the hon. Minister to take this matter seriously. When he has taken those matters in his own hands and when he is going to streamline the functioning of this Akadami, prior to that he must find out the causes of all these lapses and take necessary action to streamline the functioning. I must say one thing that of course we cannot have full debate on this issue but you have budgetary provisions in this Bill for three years and then for two years which I would request that do not drag it for years and complete this work within the next one year. Whatever steps are necessary to be taken to handover this Institution in the right hands, you must take those steps. I don't want to say anything more. While concluding and thanking you I would request that all those guilty persons should be brought before the court if need be. If the whole thing is needed to be brought before the House, it should be brought. I conclude with these words.

[English]

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (Kottayam) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I welcome this piece of legislation because I am also one of the signatories alongwith Shri George Fernandes in pointing out the troubles and other irregularities which are taking place in Lalit Kala Akadami. The Minister himself has agreed that a lot of irregularities are taking place in this Lalit Kala Akadami which was set up 40 years back with a noble idea and objective of promoting our cultural heritage as well as artists.

Unfortunately, for so many years, this organisation has not been managed well and its functioning has attracted a

lot of criticism from different quarters, not only from the Parliament but also from outside. A lot of articles were written in this regard. Some very renowned artists of our country had submitted their proposals and had accused the organisation. They raised the issue of malpractices and fraudulent activities which are taking place in the Lalit Kala Akadami.

This is an apex cultural body which was set up to promote visual arts, paintings, graphics, sculptures etc. This was set up by a Resolution passed by the Parliament. So, the Parliament and the Government of India must express their concern on the functioning of the institution. It is very unfortunate to say that the genuine artists were ignored and not given any opportunity in the functioning of Lalit Kala Akadami.

18.47 hrs.

[SHRI P.M. SAYEED *in the Chair*]

We are in favour of giving full autonomy not only to Lalit Kala Akadami but also to other institutions which were set up with the noble objective. We are in favour of giving them complete autonomy even though these institutions are funded by the Government of India. If these institutions do not function in a proper way, it is the duty of the Government to intervene and set the things right. But it does not mean that the Government's intervention should continue. This is only for a limited period and limited purpose. I think that the hon. Minister will take care of this aspect. I would also say that giving the whole administration to the bureaucracy will also not help. We have had enough experience in the past. Definitely, due to malpractices and financial irregularities, the Government is now taking over Lalit Kala Akadami. But it should be for a short period and be entrusted back to genuine artists who can definitely reflect our cultural heritage as well as the modern art. So, my request to the hon. Minister is that the period of its taking over by the Government should be specifically mentioned and set the things right.

Of course, Shri P.N. Haksar had made 33 suggestions in his report regarding restructuring of General Council, Executive Board, electoral rolls etc. The Government had accepted only 23 out of 31 suggestions put forward by Shri P.N. Haksar. I do not want to go into all the 31 suggestions, but there are certain suggestions which are very important for making this organisation more vibrant and effective. The Government should agree with this. The Government should specifically take care of the exhibitions which are conducted abroad. There are a lot of complaints regarding international exhibitions. The genuine artists were not allowed to participate and their sculptures and paintings were not shown. This has been the experience in the past. So, the highest standards should be maintained in the international exhibitions.

So, special care should be taken towards this particular aspect. Otherwise, our cultural heritage will be criticised

[Shri Ramesh Chennithala]

abroad and we will not be able to reflect the real art and culture of our country there.

Sir, as far as the programme of purchasing the works from the contemporary artists is concerned, this has attracted a lot of criticism and there is a big controversy about this programme. There are a lot of allegations of favouritism and the purchases were of no real merit. I do not know whether the Government has accepted the suggestion of Shri P.N. Haksar in this regard. I think the Government should take care of this aspect and accept the proposal put forward by Shri P.N. Haksar to set right the things in this respect.

Sir, I do not want to take much time of the House. This organisation has been working for 40 years now and the number of artists have increased. So, when the Government takes over this organisation it should ensure that the activities of the Lalit Kala Akadami should be expanded which is very necessary, in view of the increase in the number of artists.

Sir, the Lalit Kala Akadami is collaborating with Max Muller Bhawan, Japanese Foundation, British Council etc. We can contribute a lot towards promoting our cultural heritage by collaborating with these well-known institutions. I think the Government should take care of this aspect also. Then, autonomous character of this organisation should be maintained. The Government should plug the loopholes to prevent corruption in this organisation and transparency should be brought in the entire functioning of this organisation. Then only we can infuse confidence among the artists and make this organisation more effective.

SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN (Barpeta) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support this Bill. I welcome this piece of legislation because the entire functioning of the Lalit Kala Akadami was getting rotten. This Bill is a good measure because sometimes, to save the patient we have to go in for a surgical operation also. The Lalit Kala Akadami was meant to promote our cultural heritage, encourage the artists and various other related activities such as paintings etc. Though this organisation was set up with the lofty ideals, it is seen that these ideals are nullified due to the growth of a coterie in this organisation and because of this, this organisation is not able to fulfill these ideals of promoting our culture and encouraging the young artists of our country.

Sir, my colleagues have already elaborated as to how the entire Akadami is being mismanaged. Though it is funded by the Central Government, the funds are misutilised and there is a lot of nepotism in this organisation. Due to this reason, the young artists are getting alienated. So, instead of encouraging the young artists to promote our cultural heritage, this organisation is discouraging the new artists. Through this piece of legislation, I think, the

Government is trying to make this organisation more vibrant and effective.

At the same time, I want to say that these organisations should have more autonomy. The autonomy should not be curtailed. The services of the celebrities should be obtained to develop art activities. It will also encourage the young artists. A lot of damage to the books and other things in already there. There is a lot of corruption also. But this is to be taken care of so that in coming years these things could be prevented. There should have been some confidence-building activities to encourage the young artists. Their confidence should be built up which would create a healthy atmosphere in the Akadami. At the same time, it is necessary that the services of the learned fellows and the celebrities in this field should be availed of. I think there should be some arrangement to have more exhibitions inside and outside the country so that young artists are encouraged. I am not going to speak more about this but I think the autonomy of this institution has to be maintained. The period of take over by the Government should not be a long one. It should be as short as possible. Its functioning autonomy should be maintained. I hope the Government will take steps against the corrupt persons. There is a coterie which indulge in corrupt practices by misuse of authority. I think the Government would take steps to check this.

With these words, I thank the hon. Minister for bringing this Bill and I support this Bill.

Sir, I also thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak.

[Translation]

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI (Kota) : Mr. Chairman, is rather good that this Bill was first introduced in Rajya Sabha and the condition of three years sought to be made in the Bill had to be cut down to one year on the insistence of Shri K.R. Malkani. I would like to point out that the Government is dispensing with the elected representatives. It was after a great deal of difficulty that elections were held in this institution and that too not in an ordinary manner, five hundred artists from all over the country, who had participated in the shows at the international level, were given voting rights in order to hold the elections. After the elections, the elected committee proposed three names for the office of Chairman. Unfortunately, all the three names forwarded to the President have not been cleared till date. They are pending clearance for two years. When the name of Shri R.N. Mirdha came up, it was cleared in the very first instance. He is not a party man, but an artist and as such it was not a party man but an artist who got the opportunity to hold the office. The Minister should have gone up to the President and see to it that a Chairman was appointed to take care of those artists, but even that much was not done in the case of Lalit Kala Akadami.

I would like to ask him who has committed all those offences as charged by Shri George Fernandes? Whether it were the elected representatives who committed them? No, in fact they were not in a position to do so. It were the administrators who were hankering after the office. When an artist entered upon that office, the administrators were hell bent on making him unsuccessful, therefore, the introduction of the Bill through him (the Minister) here is the result of their conspiracy.

19.00 hrs.

There is the Haksar Committee report which should have come up before the HRD Committee. When the latter Committee discussed about the Haksar Committee, it was not even properly briefed, it was misled, leading us into a situation in which we are dissolving the committee comprising of the elected representatives.

I would request them not to do what they have done. Now I would like to ask why the embezzlers are not getting punishment? They should have been punished, but they are not being punished. Out of the two persons empanelled for the office of Chairman under the law, the one who possesses at least some knowledge of the Lalit Kala Akadami deserves to be the Chairman as per the norms, but instead they have picked up someone from Accounts and made him Chairman. He has no knowledge whatsoever of Lalit Kala Akadami. This is going to result in bringing the entire activities of the Akadami to a standstill for one year. Therefore, I would request them to select a better Chairman for this Committee. There are charges against the two persons appointed by the Chairman as Secretary and Dy. Secretary.

They should have been suspended, Shri George Fernandes has levelled charges against them, but instead of this such persons have been made Secretary and Dy. Secretary respectively. They should now be sent back home, the embezzlers responsible for ruining Lalit Kala Akadami should be dispensed with and the elected representatives should be allowed to take over again within three months. This is what I request for. Otherwise a fine institution will become lifeless. The institution which flourished under the leadership of Shri Ram Niwas Mirdha is going to the dogs today.

[English]

SHRI SURESH PRABHU (Rajapur) : Sir, I am not going to repeat any of the points that have been mentioned. I want to say two things. One is, as the President of the Konkan Kala Akadami as well as the Vice-President of All-India Marathi Stage Federation, I know the difficulties that the Artists really face in getting any help, recognition and even, for that matter, to know that such an organisation

exists outside the Lalit Kala Akadami. I have experienced it personally. My request is that in this one year period that you want to use, please try to make sure that you differentiate between the Artists and the people who claim to be Artists and try to be leaders in the name of Artists. That is one thing which you may please try to do.

The second point is, which is very important, how can we bring up the budding Artists? That is very important. I was going through the first Resolution which was moved in Parliament and this was the real objective for which this organisation was set up.

The third point is that the Minister has already assured that he does not want to use the provisions in the Act to extend it beyond five years. If that is the case, why do you not drop it? Why do you not say that one year is the period for which this will be in existence? My earnest request is that you may please go outside the corridors of Lalit Kala Akadami and try to bring up the Artists closer to the Akadami.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : Sir, I am extremely thankful to the hon. Members and, in fact, all of them have supported the action of the Government. The important points that have come out of the debate are, firstly, what is the action being taken against the people who are guilty for the offences committed and who are the culprits. Hon. Member Shri George Fernandes and others have asked this question. I am prepared to assure you that on the basis of the report, appropriate action against all those people who are found guilty, some way or the other, will be taken and that too as early as possible.... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

VAIDYA DAU DAYAL JOSHI : He has rather given posts to those embezzlers of whom Shri George was talking. ... (Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN : Please do not disturb now. Please do not disturb like this.

... (Interruptions)\*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Nothing will go on record. This is not the way. You will have to hear the Minister.

... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You please control your Members. You just cannot stand up and say anything as you like. You cannot do that and please do not do that.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : Another suggestion that has been made is that as early as possible the recommendation of the Haksar Committee and the suggestions of the hon.

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\*Not Recorded.

[Shri S.R. Bommai]

Members should be implemented, and also the Akadami structure and its selection procedures should be amended.

I assure them that it will be a democratic set up. It should be headed and managed by the artists only. Though it is a cent per cent Government-funded institution, yet the laudable object of establishing it is to encourage the budding artists and the present artists. With that view, suitable amendments would be made in the constitution of the Akadami.

Another question was asked : How long will it take? I re-assure you that I would like to complete all these things within a year, if possible but not more than a year. But I cannot give a date today. However, I would like to do it as early as possible.... (*Interruptions*)

The Administrator is a retired Dy. Comptroller and Auditor General of India. I am appointing a retired officer. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Why do you not become the Administrator?

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : Then, it will become a mess. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Why? ... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : I do not have the time. I do not possess the artistic attitude....(*Interruptions*)

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : You have vast experience in leading the Janata Dal. Can you not manage it? ...(*Interruptions*) If you can manage the affairs of Janata Dal for five years, you can easily manage the affairs of the Lalit Kala Akadami. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : The hon. Minister may confine to those points raised in the debate and finish as quickly as possible.

... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : If my friend is ready, I will consider his name. Apart from that, I have already said that the Government is considering to appoint an Advisory Committee and artists will also be there.

With these assurances, I appeal to everybody to withdraw his amendment and unanimously pass the Bill and help me in updating this institution.

I appeal to Shri Ram Naik to withdraw the Statutory Resolution.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM NAIK : Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am not going to make a lengthy speech. The Minister has assured of

many things, I welcome them. I thank him for assuring that he will take action, make it a democratic set up, will not take more than a year in reconstruction. But he has not answered one question. If he says yes regarding it then I am willing to withdraw. I had asked for publishing the Haksar Committee report, the Administrative Committee Report and thereafter the Action Taken Reports on both, if the Minister is prepared to do this much, I too am willing to withdraw it.

[*English*]

SHRI SURESH PRABHU : Tell something about the Advisory Committee also.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : About that, I have already assured you. So far as the Haksar Committee Report is concerned, it is supplied to all the Members of Parliament. It has been published. When it is supplied to the hon. Members, it is not a secret document. It has already been published. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAM NAIK : I suppose you will not treat it as a confidential report.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : It is not a confidential report.

SHRI RAM NAIK : It is a confidential report. That is what I am saying.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : Earlier, it was confidential. Since it has been distributed to every Member, it ceases to be a confidential report.

SHRI RAM NAIK : What about the administrative report?

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : It has been distributed. If you want, I will send the report. Every Member will get it.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Mr. Minister, just answer about the administrative report.

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : About the administrative report, I will consider whether it is to be published or not. But the action taken will be reported to this House.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Has the hon. Member leave of the House to withdraw this Statutory Resolution?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : Yes.

*The Resolution was, by leave, withdrawn.*

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is :

"That the Bill to provide for the taking over of the management of the Lalit Kala Akadami for a limited period in the public interest and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, as passed by Rajya Sabha, be taken into consideration."

*The motion was adopted.*



MR. CHAIRMAN : The House shall now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is:

"That clauses 2 to 16 stand part of the Bill."

*The motion was adopted.*

*Clauses 2 to 16 were added to the Bill.*

MR. CHAIRMAN : The question is:

"That clause 1, the Enacting Formula, the Preamble and the Long Title stand part of the Bill".

*The motion was adopted.*

*Clause 1, the Enacting Formula, the Preamble and the Long Title were added to the Bill.*

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

*The motion was adopted.*

SHRI RAM NAIK : How nicely we have cooperated!

SHRI S.R. BOMMAI : Thank you very much.

19.12 hrs.

#### GENERAL BUDGET 1997-98

Demands for Grants on Account (General), 1997-98

Demands for Supplementary Grants—General, 1996-97

and

Demands for Excess Grants—General, 1994-95—Contd.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Now, we shall take up item nos. 22 to 25 together.

Shri Sanat Mehta—not present.

Dr. Girija Vyas

... (Interruptions)

[Translation]

DR. GIRIJA VYAS (Udaipur) : Mr. Chairman, Sir, today the Budget for 1997-98 has been presented. ... (Interruptions)

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is a mockery of the Budget. Discussion is taking place after 7 p.m. on such an important Budget.

MR. CHAIRMAN : It has been so decided in the BAC and we are discussing it accordingly.

SHRI NITISH KUMAR : The discussion is going on in the darkness of night.

MR. CHAIRMAN : One has to do work in the night.

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : Mr. Chairman, Sir, General Budget 1997-98 has been introduced in the House bringing all guesses, estimates and conjectures to a halt. The Finance Minister faced many problems in this Budget and he, while very deftly resolving them properly, kept intact the sentiments of the various constituents of the United Front Government. I would also like to thank the hon. Finance Minister for furthering the policies of the Congress adopted five years ago and the economics of Shri Manmohan Singh.

Hon'ble Mr. Chairman, the GDP growth rate has grown from one per cent to seven per cent during the last five years. Inflation has decreased. External accounts, both current and capital have registered an increase. However, we have not been able to fulfil the 'Garibi hatao' slogan. The object, however, still remains as before.

The employees class has been pleased by providing relief in income tax, the trading class has been satisfied by giving concession in import duty and the investors by the announcement of a number of facilities. Thus *prima facie* this Budget would be called as 'a Budget pleasing all'. Even in some of the newspapers it has been hailed as a wonder Budget while in others a question mark has been put before it as to how the Budget deficit is proposed to be made up. The day the Minister presented the Budget, India reverberated with a new echo and we are marching again with the policies formulated five years ago. The special features of the Budget are as follows.

SHRI RAM NAIK : However, Mr. Manmohan Singh refuses to agree.

DR. GIRIJA VYAS : The special features are—the new scheme for voluntary disclosure of black money, more autonomy to the public sector establishments; introduction of capital board index bonds; permission for making forward deals in cotton and jute. Foreign Exchange Regulation Bill to be presented in the latter half of this year, oil exploration and industrial parks also to be brought within the ambit of Income Tax Act's clause 80 i (a); raising the rate of contribution in the provident fund by both employers and employees from 8.33 per cent to 10 per cent with effect from March 1, 1997 additional capital of Rs. 500 crores for the new NABARD to facilitate investments by foreign investment institutions and non-resident Indians, removing domestic forward trading in cotton and jute, more loans to small scale industries, relaxation in guidelines for enterprises' capital funds, measures for improvements in capital markets, double allocations for technology development fund, estimate of an expenditure of Rs. 2,32,176 crore for 1997-98, record budget of Rs. 7858 for the plan, attempt to link up the