

465 **Statutory Resolution PHALGUNA 28, 1913 (SAKA) and Indian Red Cross 466**
Re. Disapproval of Indian Red Cross Society (Amendment) Ordinance
Society (Amendment) Bill

"That Clause -I that Enacting formula and the long title stand part of the Bill".

The motion was adopted.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the long title were added to the Bill.

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI K. VIJAYA BHASKARA REDDY): I beg to move:

"That the Bill be passed":

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill be passed."

The motion was adopted.

15.58 hrs

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE: DISAPPROVAL OF THE INDIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE, AND INDIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY (AMENDMENT) BILL

MR. CHAIRMAN : Shri Lokanath Choudhury, not present. Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura): I beg to move:

" That this House disapproves of the Indian Red Cross Society (Amendment) Ordinance, 1992 (Ordinate No. 3 of 1992) promulgated by the President on the 23rd January, 1992".

Madam Chairman, it is my proud privilege to move the resolution when you are in the Chair and for your sake, I shall try to be as brief as possible. I move the statutory resolution because we disapprove of the

idea of Ordinance *raj*. But I also oppose the Indian Red Cross Society (Amendment) Bill, 1992 because of its contents. This Bill is an attempt to turn the Indian Red Cross Society into a department of the Health Ministry at the Centre and total abolition of the autonomy of the Indian Red Cross Society.

[RAO RAM SINGH *in the Chair*]

16.00hrs.

In the Statement of Objects and Reasons, it is stated that this Bill is necessary because of the internal wranglings of the Indian Red Cross Society for which they could not discharge their statutory responsibilities. In my opinion, this is a poor argument. Tell me please which organisation today does not suffer from internal wranglings as well as corruption. But must one throw the baby with the bath water? Sir, I am happy that you have occupied the Chair... (Interruptions)... Sir, Indian Red Cross Society used to be guided by their own rules, including the rules for electing their Chairman since its inception. But during the tenure of late Shrimati Gandhi, a provision was made that the President of India would appoint the Chairman of the Indian Red Cross Society and that is how the then Health Minister was appointed as Chairman. Thus began the erosion of autonomy of the Indian Red Cross Society. But this Bill puts the final nails in the coffin of autonomy with ominous consequences. This Bill provides for supercession of the managing body and other standing committees of the Indian Red Cross Society by the Chairman.

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR): It should be 'by the President'.

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: But it should be read 'by the Chairman'. It is a fact that I have got great respect for the President. Sir, who does not know that the President acts and has to act on the advice of the Government? Now, which is that Government? It is the Central Government. Which is that Department? It is the Health Depart-

[Smt. Geeta Mukherjee]

ment. So, the Chairperson naturally will be the head of the Health Department.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): Who is in charge of that Department? He is Mr. Fotedar.

SHRIMATIGEETAMUKHERJEE: Yes. It is the Department under Mr. Fotedar. By chance, if Mr. Fotedar goes and somebody else comes, then also that very bureaucracy will crown that person who has come. Therefore, read actually 'Chairman' in the place of 'President' here in this context.... (Interruptions).. This Bill also provides for the appointment of the Secretary General and the Treasurer with previous approval of the President. With due respect to the office of the President, what I said just now applies for this post as well. Therefore, the entire appointment will be subject to the approval of the Government, that is, Health Ministry. Since I do not want to repeat the refrain, take that refrain as granted.

Clause 4 (D) directly gives the Chairman the right 'to reappropriate' on the advice of the Treasurer, the budgetary allocations from one major head to another. Remembering that the Treasurer is also an appointee of the Government, it is clear that even the right to redeploy the budgetary allocations made by the managing board is being taken away by the Ministry.

Another power is being taken by the Chairman, that is, the power of disciplinary proceedings against the officers of and above the rank of Deputy Secretary of the Society. Obviously, the Chairman can use this stick to cow down all these officers so that no one dares to object to the Government's decisions on the disbursement of funds or any other thing. There are many other things like that.

Among many other provisions of this Bill, there is one very objectionable provision again, that is, it actually reduces the number of representatives of the States in the board.

Earlier there was a provision for 22 members. Now, as per the new provision, there will be only 12 from the State Branches. We have Red Cross Societies in every State also and they have also contributed for the fund to a large extent in the beginning. Now, even the State Red Cross Societies are to be taken over by the Central Board. Now, there are even cases where wages for five months are not paid. In my view, reducing the number of State representatives is again another kind of erosion in the autonomy of the Societies. All these things are intended to make the Indian Red Cross Society an appendage of the Health Ministry. It goes without saying that this will also mean partisan political interference, because the actions will depend on the sweet will of the political party which will be at the Centre at that time. It may be you or somebody else, but it will be the same.

Now I want to know from the Minister one thing. What can be the consequences of this Act? Indian Red Cross Society is an affiliate of International Committee of the Red Cross Society. This international organisation stipulates that all its affiliates have to be neutral, independent and impartial. Even in cases where they receive money from the Governments, these rules are not relaxed.

This international body has its office here. They are also watching the kind of things that we are going to bring through this Bill. When this Bill is translated into an Act, I am afraid, the Indian Red Cross Society may even run the risk of disaffiliation from the International Red Cross Body.

Then there is the World Federation of Red Cross Societies as well. Indian Red Cross Society is their affiliate too. The World Federation has a stipulation in their rules that if any national society changes its constitution, the Federation's prior consent is needed. This Bill will violate that stipulation also. By eroding the autonomy of the Indian Red Cross society, by making it into an appendage of the Central Government and by violating the stipulation of the world bod-

ies and eroding the autonomy of our own federal structure, this Bill will put us in the danger of losing international financial support. This international support is very important. When do we need help from International Red Cross Society? We need the help only when there is some calamity, whether it be natural disaster or external aggression or something else. In each of these cases, we need international support. Now that they are introducing all these difficult things, we will be deprived of a very big source of help when we need it. The International Red Cross is neither an IMF or a World Bank. Let that be understood very well.

Sir, these are my points of objection which need special consideration. I also want to ask one more pointed question. Did the Government consult the representatives of the Indian Medical Association before formulating this Bill? That is after all a body which is neither partisan nor petty. Everyone is represented there. This body should have been consulted. But I do not think you have consulted them. Therefore, because of all the reasons that I have stated, I not only move my Statutory Resolution but I also oppose the Bill.

MR. CHAIRMAN : The Minister may now move the consideration motion.

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIM.L.FOTEDAR): I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Red Cross Society Act, 1920, be taken into consideration."

Sir, I am happy that Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee has raised some points. I would try to reply them one-by-one, and will be producing documentary evidence for that as to whether the impression that has been created is correct or not. I will dispel those impressions during my concluding remarks.

Ho. Members are aware that on account of internal wranglings the Indian Red Cross Society has not been able to dis-

charge the statutory responsibilities like holding of Annual General Meeting, passing of Annual Accounts and approval of the Budget. The Indian Red Cross Society Act, which was enacted in 1920, has proved to be a little out of date and the present amendments are aimed at removing certain inadequacies and loopholes. The Act does not, for example, contain any provision for the appointment of the President, I repeat once again, The Act does not for example, contain any provision for the appointment of the President of the Society,

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE: I did not say that.

SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR: I am just telling you what the Bill seeks to envisage.

The Act does not contain any provision for the appointment of the President of the Society, for the composition of the managing body or the appointment of a Chief Executive and Treasurer. The entire management structure of the Society under the existing Act has been left to be decided by rules framed by the managing body itself.

The working of the Indian Red Cross Society has come in for sharp criticism from several quarters in the recent past and the affairs of the Society were being conducted in a manner prejudicial to the carrying out the objectives of the Society referred to in the Act. The Society was also unable to appoint a regular Chief Executive because of several litigations.

The Bill which is now before the House contains provisions relating to the appointment of the President of the society, composition of the managing body and appointment of Secretary General and Treasurer in the Act itself. The Bill also seeks to provide that the managing body existing immediately before the promulgation of the Ordinance dated 23rd January, 1992 shall cease to exist and a new managing body shall be reconstituted within a period of six months from the date of the Ordinance. The Bill seeks to empower the President of the

[Sh. M.L. Fotedar]

Society to supersede the managing body in the event of a gross failure on its part in the management of the affairs of the Society or where the managing body acts in a manner which is prejudicial to carrying out the objectives of the Society.

I would like to allay any apprehension in the minds of the hon'ble Members that the Bill seeks to alter the voluntary nature of the organisation. Ever since its inception, the Head of the State has always been the President of the Society, except for a brief period of two years. The President of the Society has been given powers in the present Bill only in respect of :-

- (i) appointment of the Chief Executive on the recommendations of the managing body;
- (ii) according approval before institution of disciplinary proceedings instituted by the managing body against the Chief Executive; and
- (iii) powers to supersede the managing body in exceptional cases.

There are certain reserve powers vested in the Head of the State for preserving and safeguarding the continued and effective functioning of the institution in times of stress and stagnation due to internal difficulties. The new provisions do not affect the voluntary nature of the society. The affairs of the Society are to be completely managed by the managing body as before. Further, the composition of the managing body provides that out of 18 members, only 6 will be nominated and the remaining 12 will be elected. This will ensure the democratic nature of the Society. The intention of the Government is to keep the voluntary and autonomous nature of the Society intact.

The Bill seeks to replace an Ordinance promulgated by the President on 23 January, 1992 for saving the Society from the

chaotic state of affairs to which it had sunk due to internal wranglings.

As the Members are aware Red Cross Societies all over the world perform humanitarian and other relief work in times of war and natural calamities. As a matter of practice all National Red Cross Societies have invariably been headed by the head of the State himself. This adds to the prestige and effectiveness of the organisation. The Indian Red Cross Society has also from its very inception followed this pattern. The Indian Red Cross Society Act, 1920 provides for full autonomy in the management of the affairs of the Society. The basic scheme of the Act is not proposed to be affected by the present amendments. It is intended to provide only a corrective mechanism by which any failure on the part of the managing body to perform its duties and functions due to internal discord, is corrected in time. Even under the existing rules framed by the managing body of the Indian Red Cross Society under Section 5 of the Indian Red Cross Society Act, 1920 the President of India is the President of the Society. By virtue of his being the President of the Society, it was incumbent upon him to see that the Society functions in an effective manner and discharges its responsibilities under the Act satisfactorily. Since the rules framed by the managing committee as they presently stand do not provide for a corrective mechanism, in exceptional circumstances of the type which obtained in the Society, it has now become necessary to incorporate the necessary provisions in the Act itself so that prompt and effective steps could be taken to put the affairs of the Society back on its rails having regard to the unhappy state of the Society's affairs in the recent past arising out of litigations and entire discord.

It is a well-established principle that the powers of supersession of an institution should always vest with an outside authority. The very fact that this power is being conferred on a person no less than the Head of the State himself would go to show that the independence and autonomy of the Society will not be trifled with, with any ulterior pur-

poses or in a malafide manner. The exercise of the power would be resorted to only in exceptional cases and in a most judicious manner.

I am sure the Bill will receive support from all the Members of the House. Now, I commend the Bill for the consideration and approval of the hon'able House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motions moved:

"That this House disapproves of the Indian Red Cross Society (Amendment) Ordinance 1992 ordinance No.3 of 1992 promulgated by the president on the 23rd January, 1992".

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Red Cross Society Act, 1920 be taken into consideration".

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Certain Amendments to the Motion have been received for consideration. Amendment No.1 Shri Girdhari Lal Bhargava. Are you moving?

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA (Jaipur): I beg to move:

"That this Bill be circulated to elicit opinion thereon by 25th June 1992 (1)"

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Rasa Singh Rawat. He is not here.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): May I seek a clarification? The hon. Minister will agree that it is really a new Bill. Altogether, the composition of Indian Red Cross Society is being altered and the number of representatives in the Managing Committee is being reduced. The President

is being given very wide power. Sir, nowhere in the Bill it is said that the President will act in his own discretion. Therefore, the Constitution is very clear. He has to act on the Ministerial advice. He is bound to.

The power of supersession, the power of appointment of Secretary-General, everything is now provided. This is a matter where we can agree that within a very short time, this matter should be looked into; and let it be sent to the Select Committee; within a week, a Report can be given - seven days. Still there is time. We shall cooperate fully with the Government in this, I am assured. Everybody knows that this is a very important Organisation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Bill has already been moved.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE:

Therefore, I earnestly request that this is not for the sake of preventing the passage of the Bill altogether. I am saying that within a week, a Report can be given. We shall cooperate with the Government because this is a body where politics should not be brought in; no partisan consideration should be given. As you know in the Select Committee, we are able to give full attention to this matter; clause-by-clause consideration can be held; and within a very limited period, a Report can be given. We do not want that the Ordinance should lapse under Article 123. But, within a given time, we can give a Report.

MR. CHAIRMAN: As far as the House and the Chair is concerned, the Bill has already been moved. Would the hon. Minister like to say anything on it?

SHRI RAM KAPSE (Thane): There is no reason why it cannot be sent to the Select Committee. We are prepared to work time bound.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is upto the Government and the House to decide.

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES (Muzaffarpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I support the proposal that Shri Somnath Chatterjee has made. The hon. Minister in his statement has termed the work of this society as a

[English]

"sordid state of affairs"

[Translation]

Even I cannot use a harsher terms than this in regard to the work of the Indian Red Cross Society. As a matter of fact, the Government was managing the affairs of the society. It hardly matters what powers did the President of India or the Chairman of the Society enjoy or whether they have been able to exercise these power, but the fact remains that the affairs of the society have been sordid. Today, the Ministry of Health has brought forward an amendment to the Red Cross Society Act. The Ministry had certain powers in this respect. In spite of that the functioning of the society could not be streamlined. Now while bringing forward an amendment, the hon. Minister has very correctly narrated the state of affairs in the society. In his own words:-

[English]

"The Indian Red Cross Society's affairs were in a sordid state of affairs".

[Translation]

The amendments to be made in the Act will be fundamental in character. That is why I would like to request the hon. Minister to accept the proposal made by Shri Somnath Chatterjee. He has not asked for a long time, say one month or two.

[English]

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Come to the point. You are making a speech.

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: I want to say this much that in his proposal, Shri Somnathji has suggested that it should be a timebound work. The Joint Select Committee could be asked to submit its report to the House within a week and the hon. Minister should have no objection to it.

[English]

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE (Vijayawada): The hon. Minister has briefly put forward why the Government has come forward with this Bill. There are serious apprehensions that the provisions of this Bill are going to violate the understanding of the International Red Cross Society and the Resolution of the UN, which may lead to such a situation where we may not receive assistance from the International Red Cross Society, which ultimately is our basic objective to help the people in distress, needy people, to rehabilitate the poor people. so, I support what Mr. Somnath Chatterjee has said.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Those apprehensions are quite unjustified that we will stop receiving aid from the International Red Cross Society.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE: So, in view of this, I fully agree with the suggestion made by Mr. Somnath Chatterjee that if this Bill is referred to the Select Committee, we shall fully cooperate with the Government; and a Report can be given within a week or ten days.

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): Rose.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are backing whatever Mr. Somnath Chatterji has said.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: I have got a copy of the Indian Red Cross Society Act of 1920. This Ordinance....

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am sorry, this is not an appropriate time.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: I want to make out a point also as a matter of point of order. My point of order is whether an amendment be introduced in contravention of the Original Act itself.

Sir, here is the original Act. This original Act has got certain basic principles. Now this amending Bill is contrary to the basic principle underlying this original Act. Therefore, I think it should not have been produced. Anyway, I can share the concern of the Government and other members of the House that the state of affairs in the Indian Red Cross Society is sordid. We are not interested in perpetuating that sordid state of affairs. But for that there are other methods also. Shri Somnath Chatterjee already mentioned something about the alternative way to get rid of the situation and also for a democratic law to regulate the affairs of the Red Cross Society.

SHRI RAM KAPSE (Thane): Mr. Chairman, I support Shri Somnath Chatterjee's proposal for sending this Bill to the select committee with a time-bound programme of one week. We will stick to it. But it is really necessary because it is going to change almost the entire Act and let there be no apprehension in the minds of the public that the Bill wants to bring Red Cross Society under the purview of the department. So, I support the suggestion.

SHRI A. CHARLES (Trivandrum): The Bill has been circulated as per the rules. As the Bill has now been presented, the discussion has started and under what rule are they now proceeding with this suggestion for referring it to a select committee? This is not fair. If the House decides we can do it.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Under the rule of supremacy of Parliament.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no doubt that the House is supreme. Whatever the House decides will be done. But would the hon. Minister like to say something?

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: There should be no more interruptions. You can speak on the Bill.

SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR: I am making a new history in the Indian Red Cross Society — just listen to me — and it would be a red letter day in this, because by this measure I am trying to abolish a zameindari system that had developed in the Indian Red Cross Society. I am referring to George Fernandes on one point. I am just telling you. You know it, I will show the documents. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please do not interrupt. I think the Minister did not interrupt when you gentlemen were speaking and I would expect you also not to interrupt.

SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR: I do not want to put anything on record in the House because those persons will not have the opportunity to defend themselves. I will take the opportunity to show the documents to the Opposition leaders what has persuaded or compelled the Government to bring such a legislation. There are two things which are of utmost importance.

One is whether the voluntary character of the organisation is being taken away in any way. According to this Bill in no way are we taking away the voluntary character of the Society. That is one point.

Secondly, so far as the supersession is concerned — I will reply one by one — it is based on the experience that we had during the last one and a half years. I will show the documents. I do not want to place these documents on record. It is based on that experience that we are giving power to the President of India. When we say the President — you just listen to me; I have respect for the legal knowledge Shri Somnath Chatterjee has, he is a jurist — the President of India the President of I.R.C.S. here has not to act not he advice of the Council of Ministers. Here he acts on his own. He need not act on the advice of the Chairman or anybody. I want to make that clear. (Interruptions)

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister is that Clause incorporated somewhere here?

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: No, Sir....(Interruptions)

SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR: I am just saying that the President acts... (Interruptions)

MR CHAIRMAN: Normally the President is bound to act according to the advice given by the Council of Ministers.

(Interruptions)

SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR: So far as the Constitution of India is concerned, the President is bound by the advice tendered to him by the Council of Ministers.... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: How is it different in this case?

SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR: In this case, he is the *ex officio* President of the Society. He is not functioning as the President. We are making him the *ex officio* President... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is a subtle difference. He is acting as the President of the Red Cross Society.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: There is a well established legal proposition given by the Supreme Court; seven Judges have said this. I cannot have the presumptuousness to teach him law.(Interruptions)

SHRI M. L. FOTEDAR: Secondly under the rules it is provided how the President of India is made as the President of the Red Cross Society. We are changing that provision in the Act. The difference is it is provided under the rules. We are incorporating that in the Act. In the same way, we are making him *ex-officio* President of the India Red Cross Society. The President of India when he becomes the President, he repre-

sents the nation and he does not represent any political party. The President of India *ex officio* becomes the President of the Indian Red Cross Society... (Interruptions).

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: If it is based on this interpretation of the Constitution, we thoroughly disagree. (Interruptions)

SHRI M. L. FOTEDAR: Thirdly, this Ordinance is going to expire on 3rd April and it has to be passed within six weeks from the date of issue of the Ordinance. I can show the documents to the hon. Members. You can see the documents. And after full discussion and full debate, the House can pass this Bill... (Interruptions)

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY (Katwa): You have time upto 5th April. You can send this Bill to the Select Committee and ask to submit its report within seven days after examination... (Interruptions)

SHRI M. L. FOTEDAR: The difficulty is that Rajya Sabha will be adjourning on the 30th of this month... (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House will now take up the general discussion on the Bill. Dr. Laxminarayan Pandey.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: We do not want the *status quo ante*. We do not want to go back to the old position. That is not our intention. The Minister has probably misunderstood us. We want certain changes, which should be more acceptable to us. And if there are doubts, those can be removed. I have made it very clear that none of us is trying to go back to the old position. We do not want that the old Committee should come back. That is not our intention... (Interruptions)

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV (Azamgarh): Mr. Chairman, Sir, you have yourself mentioned a point. The question that you have asked the Minister by way of a clarification that in what way the President

will be different here as the President.

It is not here that in his individual capacity, he will be the President of the Society. As the President of India, he will be the President of the Society. And I think, Sir, when you asked the Minister whether he is making that provision in the Bill .. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The apprehension of the hon. Members is that according to that Clause, the President can dismiss the General Body, The Government will advise the President of India, as the President of India, to dismiss the General Body. The President of India will be acting as the President of the Society, as far as I can see and as the President of the Society, he is not bound by the advice given by the Council of Ministers.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think, there would be nothing better than to say that the Rashtrapathi will be *ex-officio* President of the Society. You will have to agree with this.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA (An Daman & Nicobar Islands): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to point that since this is a matter of Red Cross Society and it is affiliated with the International Red Cross Society, I think, due caution and care should be taken while taking this matter into consideration. Sir, you know yourself, being an ex-service man, in times of war and other times, we need a lot support from the Red Cross who can really help the country. That is why we should not go on the bureaucratic advice. Bureaucracy will all the time try to give some kind of advice which will suit them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How do you assume that any body is going on bureaucratic advice?

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA: That is why we think this matter should have a proper examination because it is not ques-

tion of President. We all have best regards for the President. That is not the question. The question is whether outside we give a message that everything is becoming governmental and it is not a voluntary organisation. This is the point that we have to think... (Interruptions).

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think we have spent enough time on this. Now Dr. Laxminarayan Pandeya.

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA (Mandsaur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is a very important Bill on which we are going to hold a discussion. As the hon. Members have pointed out, the hon. Minister of Health must have taken note that it does not appear that even after the passing of this Bill the Ordinance in respect of the Indian Red Cross Society would lapse because of the manner and reasons for which it was issued. The Bill which has been brought forward after the ordinance provides for the same old managing committee which was not managed properly and due to charges of mismanagement on it the President had to take over the functions of the entire society. If the same old committee is revived and until new decisions are taken and a new committee is not appointed for next six months, the same old committee works, then the objections raised in this connection would hold good. There will be no justification to continue with the mismanagement for which the Government took this step. There is also no use in it.

I would like to know the reasons that prompted the Ministry of Health to issue this ordinance and to appoint a Secretary General and a Joint Secretary. Did not the Ministry have enough powers to make such appointments without issuing the Ordinance? I would like to remind that earlier also the Health Ministry had made such appointments and the matter had gone to the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court had given the ruling that this appointment was not valid. Was the verdict of the Supreme Court not kept in view? Again, the Health Ministry has appointed two officials..

[English]

SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR: No, perhaps the information is wrong. Some-body had gone to the court. The court had given an absolute order that some Security-General who was appointed against the rules, should not be allowed to function. That order was confirmed. Perhaps the information that has been given to the hon. Member is wrong.

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA: Did the Supreme Court order like that?

SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR: They had ordered that the Secretary-General who was appointed by the previous Chairman should not function.

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA: Whether he was appointed by the previous Government or by this Government, Government is Government.

[Translation]

Because the society did not have a sitting, there was no competent authority to convene its meeting. It was not certain as to who should convene meetings. All the powers were vested in the managing body. The state of affairs of the managing body was such that nobody wanted to work. In the circumstances, there was no other go than to bring forward this legislation. With the issuance of such an Ordinance, it seems that amendments have been made in various rules of the society and sections of the Act, thus affecting the basic structure of the Red Cross. It is a society which has an international image and is of international importance. If the amendment does not help maintain the importance of the society, there is no use of bringing forward such an amendment.

The organisation was founded in 1920 and in such a long time there arose no need to bring forward any special amendment. The society functioned smoothly. But, in the last five to seven years, as far as I know, the

to take its care. People who were looking after it thought it to be their personal property and they were trying to swindle away its assets. I would like to thank the hon. Minister for protecting it. He stopped the assets from going into their hands. This organisation works at the time of war, renders help to the injured, helps the ill and those affected with leprosy, and struck by earthquakes and floods, not only inside the country but also all the world over. It has unlimited powers to spend money. The funds which kept coming have been grossly misutilized. Culprits are moving scotfree. There appears to be no provision in the Bill that the wrong doers would be punished after this amendment. Will the people be punished who misutilized these funds, who tried to convert it into their personal property and use various provisions of the society for their personal ends, even though there was no such special provision? All the powers are vested in the managing committee. It would convene meetings and make appointment then the old committee will be revived. Two appointments were made. How were they made? The Secretary General and a Joint Secretary have been appointed. What was the need? (*Interruptions*)

[English]

SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR: I may say that immediately after the Bill is passed, a regular Secretary General will be appointed under this Act. We cannot appoint now because the case is pending in the Court.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: By whom the appointment will be made?

SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR: By the President, on the recommendations of... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: Will the President select the names? We all know this. Are we children here? (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Minister, you

(Interruptions)

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA: I want to know who has ordered the appointment of the Secretary General for the St. John's Ambulance Association. Has your Ministry made the appointment or not? Where are the rules for it either in this Bill or in the previous Act? There is no provision at all.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Pandeya, kindly wind up now.

[Translation]

DR. LAKSHMINARAYAN PANDEYA: I was making a request that this should remain as an international organisation. The work that it is doing is all right and the shortcomings noticed in it should be removed. The request which was made by hon. Members should be accepted by the Government. The ordinance has been issued in a haste. There was not enough time for the hon. Members so that they could give their amendments for the Bill. But, even now there is time that those issues which have been pointed out by the hon. Members should be referred to the Joint Select Committee and the Committee should present its report within a week or ten days. You should agree to this and get a comprehensive Bill. All that we want to do is for the benefit of the Government. We are supporting you and not opposing. It is a laudable step on the part of the Government to bring forward such a Bill. It would become more useful with the implementation of our suggestions. With these words I conclude.

[English]

DR. VASANT NIWRUTTI PAWAR (Nasik): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to take part in this debate for the amendment to the Indian Red Cross Societies Act, 1920. I would like to congratulate our hon. Minister Shri M.L. Fotedar for bringing this amendment.

puted and charitable organisation. There are three principles for the society - improvement of health, prevention of diseases and mitigation of sufferings. It is a voluntary organisation. One Swiss gentleman, Mr. Henry Dunant had founded this organisation on 8th May, 1864.

The Red Cross has a pivotal role to play in the welfare of the people both in war and peace. The humanitarian task is gigantic indeed and needs to be strengthened by men, money and materials. In our country there are about 640 branches all over India. And the Indian Red Cross Society receives international grants to do the charitable work. The work done in the past is very much lucrative. In the time of peace, the Red Cross Society is functioning on the line of medical welfare activities, blood banks and blood donations to conduct the anganwadies as well as the orphanages, to manage the ambulances, and it gives a healing touch to the community.

In 1970s the Indian Red Cross was appreciated by John Lennon in his song of peace, "Imagine" in which he wrote:

"Imagine all the people living for today; imagine there is no country, it is not hard to do so, Nothing to kill or die for and no religion too, Imagine all the people living life in peace."

This is the importance of Indian Red Cross. In the conditions of war we know in both the World Wars as well as in Sri Lanka and Bhopal gas tragedy, the Indian Red Cross has done a good and marvellous job. But in recent past they were not able to do their duties properly because of corruption, mismanagement and egoism. The work of the Indian Red Cross came to a standstill because the officers were not working to the proper tune and as the Minister has said, this is a Bill...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Dr. Pawar, it is commendable that you have done research on this subject but the point is that the time

tee far this Amendment is only one hour and therefore, I will only give five minutes to this. You kindly come to the Amendment.

DR. VASANT NIWRUTTIPAWAR: Yes. He has made an Amendment that the two terms of the office bearers are finalised. I would like to add that one term is two years; so "two terms or four years, whichever is less", so that an officer will not be there for a longer time or a member of the Managing body will not be there for a longer time. In the managing body. I suggest that you can take two Members from this august House and one Member from the Rajya Sabha to work on the managing body of the Indian Red Cross Society.

Sir, in this Amendment there is no provision to control the State branches. There is no power being given to control, to supervise or to supersede if any State branch is not doing proper work because at many places there are many litigations, they cannot call a *General Body Meeting*, they cannot put the Budget, they cannot make the audit of the Accounts. So, I request if we can control the State branches of the Indian Red Cross Society so that they will be doing a good job. In recent past, the Punjab Red Cross has been awarded a first prize. That is a good example for us, and I appreciate the Minister for bringing this Amendment and making this Indian Red Cross Society a Society again accountable to the public for the health of the Indian people. Thank you, Sir.

DR. RAM CHANDRA DOME (Birbhum): Mr. Chairman, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to take part in this debate. At the very outset, I rise to oppose this draconian Bill. By this amendment, the Government is going to curb the autonomy of a charitable and internationally reputed institution. The credibility and the performances of that society are well known to everybody.

Sir, in the beginning I want to recall the founder father of Red Cross Movement Sir, Henry Dunant, a Swiss businessman. In

1863, four Geneves citizens taking up Dunant's ideas joint him in establishing a committee later to become the international Committee of the Red Cross which forthwith convened an international conference in Geneva. The conference consisted of experts from 16 countries laid the foundations of the Red Cross. Afterwards the Geneva Convention was held in 1864 and an agreement was signed by 12 nations for the amelioration of the conditions of the wounded armies in the battle fields. Now, that society comprises of 131 national societies and more than 220 million supporters.

They have stipulated some guiding principles. To guide the Red Cross movement all over the world, the international conference of the Red Cross adopted the following seven principles in its 20th Conference. These are - humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence - voluntray service, unity and universality. Among these, three components are very important. They are - impartiality, neutrality and independence and they are going to be curbed by this Bill.

Sir, in our country, the Indian Red Cross Society came into being in 1920 by an enactment in this Parliament. The Indian Red Cross having 600 branches and a membership of one crore all over the country is doing several philanthropic, relief and rehabilitation works. It is also building public awareness and scientific awareness leading to health consciousness throughout the country. Some commendable jobs done by them deserve to be mentioned here. I mention one of the daring deeds of the Indian Red Cross Society and that is the relief operation in Sri. Lanks. This will go down in history as its proud achievement of working in difficult situation. A commendable job was done during 1947 in relief, repatriation and rehabilitation work for mass exodus of refugees. Then, again it repeated its work in 1962, 1965 and 1971 conflicts and also on many other occasions. More recently, a lot of relief work was done by them in war-ravaged Iraq due to devastation to humanity caused by the US-led imperialist multi-national forces. Here, I must also point out the sorry state of

affairs on the health front prevailing now in our country.

We are signatory party to the Alma Ata Declaration, namely Health for All by 2,000 A.D. Here are the sufferings of our children and mothers. We know our children continue to die avoidable deaths in India. Of the 21 million children born every year approximately, one-third is born underweight and one-seventh dies before attaining the age of five and three million die each year due to conditions which are preventable only by giving proper nutrition and immunisation. There is actually high incidence of diseases due to malnutrition and lack of safe drinking water and not having proper health habits, which in turn is due to mass illiteracy in our country.

Sir, in this context, we are to think of the performance and activities of charitable institutions like Red Cross Society which is doing a commendable job and carrying out relief work in the field of health. We are fully convinced that by this Amendment Bill, the Government is going to bring the Indian Red Cross Society under its control by making the President of the Society under the Act, with powers to supersede the Managing Body, and virtually acting as Executive head of the Organisation.

Its effect will be anti-national. Recognition of the Indian Red Cross Society by the International Red Cross will run the risk of being called in question and even may be lost. The needy people will suffer from avoidable sufferings.

The Geneva Convention Act 6 of 1960 passed by the Indian Parliament and also other statutes of the International Red Cross Society and also various other Geneva Conventions are going to be violated. It is a clear attempt by the combine of political and bureaucratic bosses resorting to a well-planned programme to control or virtually take over such institutions.

Ample provisions are made by this Amendment Bill for direct intervention by the

Government, namely giving power to the President, to supersede on the ground of some plea or the other. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are given executive authority. The Bill is curbing representation from the State Branches from 22 members to 12 only.

Sir, the civilised Indians, civilised people cannot even think of burning our house just to get rid of rats. I do not disagree with the Minister that there are some wrangling, internal wranglings. But these wrangling cannot justify changing the whole system, curbing the internal functioning of the society which is not justified.

In 1986, the then Minister of State for Health, Kumari Saroj Khaparde in her reply in the Rajya Sabha told "The Indian Red Cross Society and its Managing Body are competent authorities to manage the affairs of the Indian Red Cross Society". It is a recorded statement. Even then, this Government is going to amend this Act with a *mala-fide* intention.

I think, this is very much contrary to the present policy of this Government where the Government is going to privatise everything. Here the Government is going to nationalise one institution which is neither a private one nor a Governmental institution but a charitable institution.

17.00 hrs.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That should make you happy. Why are you objecting to that?

DR. RAM CHANDRA DOME: That is why I am pointing out that there is a *mala fide* intention on the part of the Government to curb the autonomy of this institution.

That is why, I rise to oppose this Bill.

I suggest that Government should refer this Bill to a Select Committee for examination and indepth study and then come with a time bound programme.

[Dr. Ram Chandra Dome]

We are opposing the manner in which the Government is coming with haste. That is why we are opposing this Bill.

Again I thank you for giving me the time

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR (Mayiladuturai): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Bill but I do so with an extremely heavy heart. I do so with a heavy heart because the functions of the Red Cross are functions of great mercy, great humanitarianism, love and affection. We have been compelled to bring this Bill before this House only because the management structure of the Indian Red Cross Society created through the Indian Red Cross Act of 1920 equated the Indian Red Cross not with humanitarianism but with corruption, not with mercy but with shenanigans, and not with kindness but with nepotism.

It is only because the existing management structure under the 1920 Act was incapable, - I quote here the Minister Shri M.L. Fotedar:-

"was incapable of preventing or correcting gross mismanagement, and because it was incapable of preventing the management from taking actions which were contrary to the purposes for which the Society itself had been created, that we have been faced with the obligation of trying to conceive of some alternative way of running the affairs of the Indian Red Cross Society."

I do not think anyone is attempting through this Bill to change the international Charter on the basis of which Red Cross Societies have been created all around the world. We know that the Charter provides that these Bodies shall be impartial, that they shall be neutral. We know that it is essential for the functioning of these Societies that, in their day to day work and short of gross mismanagement, they function as voluntary organisations.

This is being done not because of the considerations that have been brought to our attention by our friends who are very fond of the colour red and perhaps who have forgotten that the Red Cross is not connected with the Communist Party of India but with something which is more humanitarian.

This Bill has not come in order to transgress upon the character, nature or functions of the Indian Red Cross Society but to deal with a contingency where gross mismanagement and action contrary to the purposes of the Society has taken place and the existing management under the existing Act has not been able to take corrective action.

It would have been reasonable for this Bill to have been referred to Select Committee even at this extremely late stage for further consideration of the matter, if we had heard a single constructive suggestion from the Opposition as to what alternative mechanism, alternative to the one proposed by us could, even in concept, have been brought forward. (Interruptions).

Now I heard you. Please listen to me. I listened with rapt attention to Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee. I also listened with rapt attention to the numerous interruptions of Mr. Somnath Chatterjee because he is used to the idea that he can get pop whenever he wishes to speak here. We have heard the interventions of the Members who come from the other end of the spectrum even though these two ends of the spectrum tend opportunistically to get together whenever it suits their convenience. But whether it is from the saffron-Right or from the red-Left, we have not, during the course of this debate, heard a single constructive suggestion from the other side as to what alternative mechanism could be put in place. Instead, we have nightmares coloured in red, perhaps, because these are Red Cross matters. What are the suggestions, that have been put forward by the Government.

Sir, there is a proposal that a provision in the existing rules under the Act, be con-

verted into a provision of the Act which is that the President of India, qua the President of India, becomes also the President of the Red Cross Society. This would be a cause for considerable alarm if it was either not in accordance with past Indian practice or if it were to in accordance with international practice. But we know that every single Head of State, in every Republic or Monarchy, where the Head of State has to act on the advice of the Council of Ministers, is the President of the Red Cross Society in their respective States. It has been so in India. It has been so all around the world. I am unable to understand why the translation of a convention and a provision under the rule into the Act should be the cause for any alarm on the other side.

Secondly, it seems to me that Opposition has a rather limited concept of what a President does. It is true that the President is, in the ultimate analysis, bound by the advice and counsel of the Council of Ministers. Nevertheless, our party, at any rate, takes the greatest care. I hope their parties will never get the opportunity of having one of their candidates elected to that post. But our Party takes the greatest care to ensure that it is only men of immense eminence, intellectual eminence, moral eminence who become the President of India. Our Party respects the President of India. There is a process of informal consultation that takes place between the President and the Council of Ministers. Also there is a constitutional provision for the President to make clear to the Government and to the country, his disapproval of a piece of advice, or a piece of legislation tendered by the Government if he thinks that there is gross misuse of Governmental powers in doing so. The President of India is not the puppet that Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee attempted to portray him to be. I believe that if we can trust a person to become the President of India, and then say, *ex officio* that he is going to be responsible for the affairs of the Red Cross Society, that gentleman or lady of high eminence is not likely to join even a misdirected Minister of Health in converting the Indian Red Cross into an instrument of partisanship. There-

fore, the nightmare itself is completely unreal.

Next, we come to the question of the Managing Body where Shrimati Geeta Mukherjee attempted to portray this as a great matter of principle of relations between the Centre and the States. What is the Government attempting to do through this Bill? We have a management structure today under the 1920 Act where all the States of India, or most of the States of India and certainly that one State of India which is so mistaken as to vote for the Communist Party regularly, is represented on the Board.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Kindly wind up.

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: May I have a minute to wind up? It is they who took so much of our time (*Interruptions*)

SHRI SHRIKANTA JENA (*Cuttack*): Please allow him to speak. He did not have a chance to speak on the President's Address. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR: I am trying to wind up if you cease intervening.

I come to my point now. The Management Board which had a West Bengal representative on it failed to prevent the Indian Red Cross from indulging in gross mismanagement and acting contrary to the purposes of the Society. Now, we are proposing that in the Management Board, 12 out of the 18 Members be elected and democracy be brought into the Management. And all that is being suggested is that the most eminent Indians, of the lot, the President of India, nominate the Secretary-General instead of a nominated management body nominating the Secretary-General. Therefore, the fear that has been expressed by our red friends and our saffron friends is completely unreal. There is a black nightmare, quite unnecessarily being created.

I strongly commend this Bill that has been presented by the Government.

SHRI RAM KAPSE (Thane): Sir, previously when I spoke, I supported the suggestion for sending it to the Select Committee. Even now, I would like to say that this may please be sent to the Select Committee at least for a week. We, on behalf of the opposition assure you that within a week we will do our job and ultimately the Ordinance will not lapse.

Now I speak about the Bill. I oppose this Bill. I agree with the Minister that the affairs of the Red Cross were in a sordid affair. They were sordid. But at the same time, the cure should not be worse than the disease. Here whatever you are trying to do is worse than the disease. The Red Cross Society is an international organisation. If you seek to have powers to the President of India who is an *ex-officio* President to supersede the Managing Body, should we accept it? The Managing Body cannot be superseded even in extreme cases. The Managing Body represents 12 voluntary people from different States. How can you supersede it?

Secondly, is there any constitution of any society where the Managing Body shall with the previous approval of the President, appoint a Secretary-General and a treasurer of the Society? According to rules, the President is the *ex-officio* President of the Society... I can understand that he can be the *ex-officio* President. Why do you require the previous sanction of the President even when the Managing Body wants to elect the Secretary-General? It is not necessary. It is not necessary even for the Treasurer. Let them elect the persons of their choice. What for is the Managing Body there?

In clause 4 (d), it is mentioned that the Chairman, that is the Health Minister, will work as the Chairman and he will have the right to re-appropriate the accounts on the advice of the Treasurer of the Society, who is again appointed. Why is the previous sanction of the President necessary for him to reappropriate the budgetary allocations from one major head to another major head of account, on the advice of the Treasurer? The Managing Committee has the right to

prepare the budget. If there is some need for reallocation, they will do it. You are taking away all the powers of the Managing Committee and trying to control the Red Cross Society which is a branch of the International Society. Therefore, I think, the cure is worse than the disease and I would not like to support this Bill. I agree with you that there is some need to have a Bill. But not like this. (Interruptions) I have said whatever I wanted to say. I will not repeat that again. So, for the reasons which I have put forward, again I would request you to please send this Bill to a Joint Select Committee with a time-bound programme; let us have some changes in the Bill and that will help the Red Cross Society in general.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now Shri Ramesh Chennithala, to speak. Please make it brief.

(Interruptions)

SHRI A. CHARLES (Trivandrum): Sir, my name is there and I have not spoken. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yourself and Shri Manoranjan have already spoken.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA (Andaman & Nicobar Islands): I have not spoken in the entire Session.

SHRI A. CHARLES: Sir, I too have not spoken.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let Shri Ramesh Chennithala speak for five minutes.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (Kottayam): Mr Chairman Sir, the Red Cross Society is an international organization. The work which is being done by this Red Cross Society is a very commendable one and is welcomed by all sections of this House and by the whole world.

The humanitarian and relief work that is being carried out by the Red Cross Society is something which is really great. Recently, I visited the earthquake affected areas in

Uttar Pradesh and I myself personally saw the amount of work which they have done. And wherever there are natural calamities, wherever there are other problems, the Red Cross people are effectively working there.

What compelled this Government to bring this amendment? That is the most important thing. As far as my knowledge goes Shri Ajit Bhowmick, the former Secretary-General of the Red Cross Society retired on 31.1.1990. And after that, lot of problems arised in the Red Cross Society. There were internal wrangles that were going on and subsequently, there were lot of suggestions from the President of India. Actually speaking there was a tussle between the Acting-Chairman and members of the management Committee. I do not want to go innot those details.

The managerial problems created confusion and chaos in the proper functioning of the organization. And the matter was taken to the court. Subsequently, a Writ Petition was filed in the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court restricted the appointed Secretary-General from discharging his functions. These internal wrangles compelled the Government to amend the Red Cross Society Act of 1920.

In this Act, it was mentioned that six members will be nominated and other members will be elected and that the voluntary nature will continue; the independent nature of the Society will continue; the autonomous character of the Society will continue. The Government is compelled to bring this amendment to avoid the internal wrangles and the managerial problems, so that the Society can work smoothly and properly. This amendment is not affecting the basic character of the Indian Red Cross Society. This is only a corrective measure; this is only to make the functioning of the Society more effective.

The President of India is acting more judiciously and that was mentioned by the Minister here. He will act judiciously. This type of internal wrangles should be avoided

and by a new managerial system, the Society can function more effectively.

I do to want to take much of the time of the House. I am supporting the amendment.

[Translation]

SHRI PIUS TIRKEY (Alipurdwars): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to oppose the Bill.

I would like to say that as has been stated in the proposal, it should be referred to the select committee for one week. We all are prepared to pass it. The hon. President is being dragged into the affairs of this society. When the affairs of the society will be discussed in the House, the hon. President will also be made a subject of criticism in the House. I do not want that he should be dragged int its affairs.

Secondly, the hon. President has been assigned a number of work. He is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. Apart from this, there are a number of institutions which are headed by the President. For instance, he is the Chairperson of Advasi Welfare Board. But till date neither any report of the Board has come nor has he been able to do something for the welfare of the Advasis. We have never criticised him. But, if he is involved in every affair of the State, we will criticise him also some day. That is why a 7 days' time has been asked to go into all these problems. The hon. Minister should accept this proposal.

They show this attitude which is quite different before the presentation of Red Cross Society (Amendment) Bill. But once they are given the powers, you can well imagine what would be their attitude.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, you may also direct him to accept the proposal and agree to refer the matter to the Joint Select Committee.

[English]

SHRI A. CHARLES: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am very thankful to you for giving me th

[Sh. A. Charles]

[English]

valuable time. I want to highlight one point. The main objection raised by the opposition is that the President of India does not act independently; he acts only on the advice of the Council of Ministers. There has been a lot of discussion about the power and authority of the Indian President. If a comparative study is made between the King of England, the President of America and the President of India, it is said that the King of England — now the Queen — reigns, but she does not govern; the President of America governs, but he does not reign; but when it comes to the President of India neither he governs nor he reigns. But this is not true.

Our President does have authority. In the 8th Lok Sabha this House with a two-thirds majority passed the Indian Postal Bill. That was not asserted to by the President. It was the Congress Government with the backing of more than 400 Members of this House which passed the Bill. But the then President refused to give his assent to the Bill.

In the last Lok Sabha also MPs' Salary, Allowance and Pension Bill was unanimously passed in the anxiety of the minority Government. Everybody wanted pension. But that was not assented to by the President. I am told that in the last two days it has been sent back again.

The hon. Member Shri George Fernandes is here; I stand corrected if he refutes. When he was in the Council of Ministers, the information given to us was that Shri V.P. Singh in his last days of Prime Ministership advised the President to dissolve the Lok Sabha, but the President in his wisdom refused it. (*Interruptions*)

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES (Muzaffarpur): There was no such proposal (*Interruptions*)

SHRI A. CHARLES: I stand corrected.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Charles, let us stick to the Red Cross Society Bill.

SHRI A. CHARLES: What I am trying to prove is that the President of India exercises his authority independently by virtue of the great office given to him. We do not want to disturb the voluntary nature of this great organisation. But when Shrimati Geeta Ji asked, which organisation is not involved in the internal wranglings — I am sad that it comes from Shrimati Geeta Ji — we know, that the fact there are wranglings in the organisation does not justify the internal wranglings of this organisation.

So, I strongly support the Bill. There is no constitutional problem; the President is acting independently. Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chakta, you will take only tow minutes.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Sir, I want to speak.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have already spoken.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: No, Sir. I have not spoken. I spoke just on apoint of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Have you only inter-vened? Did you not speak? Okay, now Shri Bhakta.

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA (Andaman & Nicobar Islands): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am not against this Statute; I am not against the Bill or the ordinance.

But, there is only one point which comes to my mind which is this. Presently, the Red Cross Society is a very very prestigious organisation and it has got the international recognition. Indian Red Cross Society has got the admiration all over the world. That is why, in whatever we do here, we must take

enough caution so that there is not a message goes to the world that in India, voluntary organization is being grabbed by the Government. That is one point.

The second point is this: Twenty two members were enjoying in the past and that has been reduced to twelve. We can increase the facilities; but we cannot reduce the facilities. That is another point.

The third point is this: Six members will be nominated by the President of India. Here, I would like to suggest that these nominations must be from the persons of eminence and not from the officials or bureaucrats. In that case, neutrality will be there. What we want to say in the present circumstances is that, it perhaps will be able to give the message that this is purely a voluntary organisation and this will work with full neutrality, self-governing and on an autonomous basis. This is all I want to say.

MR CHAIRMAN: Shri Chitta Basu. But, only for two minutes.

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): I will bless than that.

Sir, I suppose the Bill on the ground. Let us understand the effect of the Bill. It brings the Indian Red Cross Society under the direct control of the Government of India. So, it is nothing but a process of bureaucratization when the trend is de-bureaucratization. It will expose the Indian Red Cross Society to the possibility of being de-recognised by the International Red Cross Organisation.

Thirdly, the inflow of the international aid for the suffering-humanity in our country is likely to be choked, after the enactment of this Bill.

Lastly, there is a possibility of the violation of the Geneva Convention Act 6 of 1960.

So, these are the four basic objections of me, to oppose this Bill. Why I say about bureaucratization? You shall not give me time and therefore I shall not explain it. But,

I only want you to look at section 4 (a) of the Bill. Please look at Section 4 (b) of the Bill and 4 (c) of the Bill. Please also look at Section 4 (d) of the Bill. I have got no time to explain. What is the power and function of the Chairman to be nominated by the President? In this case, I do not accept that position that President acts individually in his discretion in this case. President is President. President is the creature of the Constitution of the country. I cannot accept interpretation being given either by Mr. Fotedar or by Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar. It is the Constitution which says specifically that president acts as per the advice of the Council of Ministers.

So far as 4-D is concerned — powers or functions of the Chairman to be nominated by the President — the Chairman is authorised to re-write the budget made by the board of management. He can cancel the budgetary allocation. He can make reallocation. He can dispense with all the budget allocation made by the board of management. Such are the draconian powers which have been given to those nominated members of the board of management. Therefore, in one word, it is 'bureaucratization'. What does this bureaucratization mean? It is the Health Ministry. The Health Ministry will advise the President to nominate the Chairman. The Chairman will not according to the advice of the Health Ministry, preferably, most probably, presumably by the Joint Secretary of the Health Ministry. How can this thing be tolerated?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: I come to the last point. You should also understand. Let us use what does the Geneva Convention Act 6 of 1960 say. It requires that each National Red Cross Society is to be autonomous, is to be self-governing, is to be impartial, is to be neutral and is to be independent.

According to the composition that the Bill says, is it autonomous? Is it self-governing? It is governed by the Joint Secretary of the Health Ministry. Is it impar-

[Sh. Chitta Basu]

(Interruptions)

tial? Is it neutral? Is it independent? This is what we learn from the Geneva Convention Act 6 of 1960 adopted by this Parliament. Do you want that the Parliament give its consent to Mr. Fernandes to reject what we have accepted earlier by Geneva Convention Act 6 of 1960? (Interruptions)

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Since Geneva Convention has been reported here, should we rule this whole proceeding out of order? (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Basu.

(Interruptions)

SHRI CHITTA BASU: The International Red Cross has as adopted model statutes for universal application by all national red cross societies.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please wind up, Mr. Basu.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: I have got the model statutes. This Bill is in direct conflict with the model statutes recommended by the International Red Cross Society. How can we expect that the Indian Red Cross Society by violating the model statutes will be enjoying the recognition.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Chitta Basu, please wind up.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: It is the most significant contribution to this debate so far.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think the points have been well taken.

(Interruptions)

SHRI CHITTA BASU: It is not badly spoken also. He might be well taking. But I am not badly speaking also. I am not angry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nobody can every say that there is anything badly spoken. You raised some very valid points.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: As I have mentioned earlier, if that is so, the provisions are not in conformity with the modern statute, particularly in relation to the appointment and election of the President of the Society, the constitution of the managing body, appointment of Treasurer and Secretary General, powers and functions of the Chairman and powers of the President. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Basu, I thought you said that the last point was the Geneva Convention.

SHRI CHITTA BASU: Therefore, I conclude by saying that you are running the risk of being de-recognised by the International Red Cross Society and it will not add to the prestige of being Indian Red Cross Society. So far as corruption is concerned, the less said the better. I think this Department or the entire Government is stepped in corruption and you got many methods to curb corruption. You might have appointed a commission of inquiry under the Commission of Inquiry Act, you might have referred the matter to the CBI, you might have taken it to the court for punishment. There are enough laws to curb corruption in any organisation. But this is a draconian measure which prejudices the interest of the Indian Red Cross Society. It also brings down the image of India in the international community. Once again, I oppose this Bill.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Sir, before you call me to speak, I would like to raise a point of order under Article 253 of the Constitution.

MR. CHAIRMAN: How did you come to the conclusion that you will be called to speak next?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Sir, I had sought your permission to speak and I

do not want you to overrule me then. My point of order is that Article 253 of the Constitution of India says.

"Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of this Chapter, Parliament has power to make any law for the whole or any part of the territory of India for implementing any treaty, agreement or convention with any other country or countries or any decision made at any international conference, association or other body.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my submission is that there is Geneva Convention and prior to me Shri Chitta Basu has already spoken about it. He did an important job of presenting every details about the Geneva Convention before this House. Sir, the Government has already given its approval to this convention; and whatever conventions are approved in the International Conference of Nations, are recognised by our Parliament. In spite of that convention, to bring such a law before this House is a challenging the spirit of the convention and is nullifying it. It is outside the legislative competence of this House. Whatever legislation you want to enact, you can do under this convention. If there are any lacunae in that law, those are needed to be rectified. If it has been misused by the officers there, you have the right to reform it. But you have no right to bring any legislation, which is outside the purview of the convention. We will earn infamy not only in our own country, but we will also be defamed on the international level with the addition of this sentence. Had Shri Chitta Basu not reminded us of this convention, whatever we would have said, would not have been considered. We did not demand too much. We only demanded that.....

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS
AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COM-
PANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN

KUMARAMANGALAM): What is your point of order?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: I am explaining my Point of Order to the hon. Speaker. We want a ruling of the Speaker on this.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I thought your point of order had later converted into your speech.

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: I have to speak on this Bill also. But you are well-conversant in these matters. You know all the Rules of the House in a better way.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: The time allotted for this debate was one hour. It had to conclude at 5 PM and we have already short 5 minutes. Therefore, I would request you to bear with me and conclude your point of order.

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I believe that this Bill is trying to distract us from the responsibilities of this House. We will be defamed in the country and the World as well and India shall have fact infamy on every forum of the world also.....(Interruptions)..... You may give your ruling under Article 253 to save from infamy and also issue a directive to the hon. Minister to withdraw this Bill.

[English]

SHRI RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA (Amritsar): This Parliament is a supreme body. We cannot subject our sovereignty to any other organisation.

SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM: I must say that I do admire the tactics and strategy being adopted by my hon. friend on the other side. It is a neat way

[Sh. Rangarajan Kumar Amanglam]

[Translation]

of ensuring that the time of the House is eventually spent so that the inevitability of having this Bill voted does not arise. I am sure he does himself realise that nothing in Article 253, in any event, has anything to say that the Parliament shall make every law as per international conventions and agreements. But however, that is not the issue here at all. In fact, the present Bill does not, in any way, violate the Geneva Convention. We had a good look at it and the Government had gone through section by section, *vis-a-vis* clause by clause. We are convinced that in no way does it violate the Geneva Convention. The very premise on which he has started his point of order does not last and in any event, Article 253 does not make it binding. This is only for purpose of academic clarification.

Nothing more than it can be said about this that we welcome your sentiments in bringing forward this Bill for the purpose of resolving the problems of corruption and sordid State of affairs. We do not agree to your style of functioning. So I requested the Minister *wid* standing here, and I sat beside him for the first time in my life. We are supporting this Bill. It is good that you are intending to take a historic step, and you are progressing ahead in this direction. You have got the whip, so if all of you speak in favour of it..... (*Interruptions*) I would only say that we don't want a single moment beyond 5-7 days time. The matter may be sent to a Select Committee just after 5 days..... (*Interruptions*)

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: But the period of ordinance expires on the 6th of April.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY (Katwa): Sir, he has enough time.

MR. CHAIRMAN: But then the charge will be, why have you brought it at the eleventh hour; why did not they think of bringing it earlier. I think the Government has brought this amending Bill well in time.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI GEORGE FERNADES (Muzaffarpur): Sir, let there be a resolution that there there will not be any extention of time given to the Select Committee beyond 7 days. Let there be a resolution of the House on this.

SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM: Sir, I have never heard of this system. This is a very new system at least in Lok Sabha it has come into being that we are suggesting a Joint Select Committee across the floor. There is no attempt of bringing any amendment. They have not even read it on their part. Is, Shri George Fernandes..... (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The points raised by Shri Chitta Basu regarding the Geneva Convention are very important. But I do not think that the Bill presented by the Minister in any way leads us to believe that there is any violation of the Geneva Convention. The point of order raised by Shri George Fernandes pertains to violation of international agreements. I do not think that any international law or international agreement stands violated by this amendment proposed by the hon. Minister.

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNADES (Muzaffarpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I do not want to take much time..... (*Interruptions*)..... First of all I would support the sordid State of affairs while introducing this law here. Further, I would say that the function of the Red Cross for the last few years can be described in a colourful language.

[English]

You can as well call it a cesspool of corruption.

SHRI SAIFFUDIN CHOUDHURY: Sir, there is a motion to elicit public opinion. We are not pressing for that. We are only asking for a Select Committee, that too for five days only.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am in no position to give a ruling on any of these matters. The point that you have raised is in front of the House and the House is supreme. It is not within the purview of either the Chairman or the Speaker to give any ruling.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNADES: The matter related to the Indian Red Cross Society which really is a noble deed, should not be taken on partisan basis, because all of us are interested in it. Nobody can deny this nor does anybody object to it. How will the corruption which will be created due to this Bill, be removed. So far there has been enough dishonesty in it. I urge upon the Minister of Health that some level action may be taken against all those officers who are involved in it, under the Indian Penal Code, and they should be arrested. An hon. Member has mentioned the names of some employees whose terms of office have expired. You should take stern action with strong determination against the people involved in this corruption and they must invariably be punished. In stead of removing the lacunae of this Bill, the Government is taking over the Red Cross Society, and we strongly oppose this step. The Government should set up a separate department under Joint Secretary for this purpose. So that it may look after the work of this institution and top priority should be given to the humanitarian view in its functioning. No step has yet been taken to curb the prevailing corruptions in this internationally reputed institution.

The President of India is being greatly immolated due to this Bill. It is causing grave injustice.....

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I greatly appreciate that point and I request the hon. Minister to assure the House that the autonomous and voluntary nature of the Indian Red Cross Society will not be in anyway infringed.

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNADES: How is it possible? this Bill is totally against your wishes. The President of India would be the President of the Red Cross Society. You have said ex-officio President.

[English]

"President of India shall be the President of Society."

The President of India being the President of Society means that the Government of India shall be the President of Society; the Home Ministry and the Health Ministry together will be the President of the Society.

[Translation]

It is very clear, there cannot by any difference of opinion in the matter. Consequently, it is an instal to the President. On the one hand you say about the president that.

[English]

"Notwithstanding anything contained in Section 3, the Managing Body shall consist of the following Members:

- (a) Chairman to be nominated by the President (means by the Government)
- (b) Six Members to be nominated by the President for such term as it may deem fit.
- (c) Twelve persons to be elected by the State Branch Committees."

[*Translation*]

Now there is a scope that the State Branch Committees will send 12 people in the Managing Body. But there is also a scope of removing those 12 persons and the nomination would be on the choice of the President. If these 12 Members do not sitend their support to them and if these 12 Members try to assert their autonomy, then I would like to submit that.

[*English*]

"If at any time, the President is of the opinion that there has been a gross failure in the management of the affairs of the Society by the managing body or that the managing committee is acting in a manner which is prejudicial to carrying out the objectives of the Society, the President may by ordering in writing supersede the managing body for such periods etc."

SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR
(Nayiladuturai): What is wrong with that?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Please understand. You are such an erudite man why do not you understand this simple thing my dear friend?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think you are being uncharitable, If you are suggesting that the President of India in his capacity as the President of the Society will dismiss or supersede on the advice of the Government.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: That is the point.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I think a scope has been left in the legislation for overlooking, H.E. the President of India. I would like to submit that it could be done in two ways. If such a task is ought to be accomplished by

the President, then he will earn a bad name on different account too, because it is proposed that the President will himself appoint Chairman and six Members. And if the pressure is mounted on the President to dismiss these persons then a scope has been left in it to doubly defame him. Mr. Chairman, Sir, that's why it is difficult to approve it. Therefore, it has been proposed at two places to put the reigns of society in the hands of one person. The President can hand over society in the hands of one person.

[*English*]

"Indian Red Cross Society is sought to be handed over in the hands of one person."

[*Translation*]

It is not clear whether a Joint Secretary, would be a political personality or anybody else. An official of society occupied the office of the General Secretary for 20 years and during the tenure looted the society and also circumvented the legal process, whether it be IPC or any other law. Many parties came to power and even formed the Government and then lost power during all these years, but that official never changed. He has tried to suppress facts. Therefore, I would like to submit to you and the hon. Minister that this august House wants the Indian Red cross Society to function on proper lines. The whole House is prepared to support the Government on this score. But if our feelings and sentiments are sought to be overlooked then just 2-3 options will be left before us.

The President will have to be informed that we do not support this legislation. The veteran leader and my colleague Shri Chitta Basu, has rightly emphasised the need to highlight the goings on in the society every forum. Thirdly, the people of India are worried about the unsavoury things going on in the Indian Red Cross Society over a period of time and the manner in which these were sought to be husband up during the last one year. Through the discussion on this law we would like to put on record everything and also organise the people of this country. We

will be compelled to resort to these things and it is for the Government to see how to avoid it. We are not opposing this legislation in principle only but in practical also, to register or protest. The hon. Minister can appoint Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar as the Chairman or anybody else, but these should get approved in the House. A resolution should be passed and:

[English]

Not one minute more extension than seven days is being given to this Committee.

[Translation]

It is request that nothing should be done which would be a slur on the image of the country.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am confident that if you support us on this score, it will be a great service to the nation.

[English]

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: Is he not considering the efforts made by all of us? Are you not accepting our points?

SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR: I will be very brief.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no time left.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I whole heartedly welcome and appreciate the submission of Shri George Fernandes who said that for the first time he is sitting close to me. I felt a mixture of sorts. I felt his warmth and was also frightened. Oh God, had he been in my party then there would have been no need for him to make a speech. I would like to inform Shri George Fernandes that his feedback about Indian Red Cross Society is very good. I do not want to repeat all those things. And to remove those short-

comings and other things it is quite necessary to get this Bill passed.

[English]

This is an Ordinance promulgated by the President; and it has to be passed within six months from the date the Parliament is convened.

Some points have been raised that whether the provisions in this Bill in no way contravene the provisions of the Geneva Convention. I say with all the authority at my command and on the basis of my study of the law and the opinions given to me that this contention is misplaced and mischievous; in no way, does this Bill contravene the provisions of the Geneva Convention or any International Convention pertaining to the Indian International Red Cross Society.

The second thing that has been raised is whether autonomous character or the voluntary character of the Indian Red Cross Society is being in any way undermined. I can assure the House with full responsibility that it is not only a question of undermining the autonomy, undermining the voluntary character; in no way, even the autonomy is being diminished or voluntary character is being reduced; it will remain as it is.

Certain things which were in the rules, those rules we have brought in the Act; certain things which were being done either under the rules or against the rules, I have brought them here. It has not been destroyed; it has been reformed and it has been strengthened under the law.

A point has been raised that there were 29 people and now only 18 members will be there; six will be nominated and 12 will be elected by the State Committee. I must tell the hon. Members that I have examined the relevant provisions of the International Red Cross Organisation and they say, what is voluntary character, autonomous character; it does not stipulate the size on the comparison of the managing body.

[Sh. M.L. Fotedar]

It reads as follows:

"In most cases, however, solution is available with the Indian Red Cross Society and the Red Cross League, etc. if the Government is having something less than half of the votes."

In this way, we are not having even six. We have taken note of the suggestion of Mr. Manoranjan Bhakta what we should do; we are giving dual membership to those people who will be elected by the Body in the State.

The second thing is that this is a bit revolutionary step; I am democratising it. In the present Act, no term of any elected member is specified; no term is fixed; for all time to come, he can be a member, we have specifically mentioned that any member who gets elected will be only for two years; and if necessary, it can be extended for two years. So, what I said is that this Bill leads to abolition of zamindari system; what had taken in the past that we are going to do. What the hon. Member has said is that the *President will act on his own or on the act of advise. All of you have read the Constitution of India. The President acts only on the advice of the Council of Ministers; he never gives any notice to the Council of Ministers.*

18.00 hrs.

Here, the President acts in his personal capacity as the President of the Indian Red Cross Society. In that case, before he supersedes this organisation he has to give a notice. Under the Constitution he has to give a notice. Under the Constitution he has not to give a notice; he accepts the advice. Here, he has to give a notice to cause why this managing body should not be superseded, and so on. Here, we have mentioned it.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: The Council of Ministers will give him the advice to give the notice.

SHRI M.L. FOTEDAR: Just listen to me. I will explain that. That point also, will explain. It is not that the Council of Ministers does not come in. The Council of Ministers can give any advice. The President of India i.e. President of IRCS has to preside over the General Body meeting every year. The Managing Body has to be presided over by the Chairman. Whenever anything comes to the notice of the President, he has a right to intervene. With these words, I will request that the Bill may be taken into consideration.

SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM: Mr. Chairman, I request that the sitting of the House may be extended by ten minutes so as to complete the voting process; and if necessary we may take a vote on it. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The timing of the House has got to be extended (*Interruptions*)

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV (Azamgarh: The Minister is enlightening us. (*Interruptions*))

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: On Monday we can take it up.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOUDHURY: We will take it up on Monday. (*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

SHRI GIRDHARILAL BHARGAVA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, tomorrow is Holi and we celebrate this festival. The House should be adjourned at 6.00 P.M. today and no more extension of time should be allowed.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: The Scheduled time for adjournment of sitting of the day is 6.00 P.M. and it is already 6.00 P.M. now. We have been sitting since 11.00 A.M. in the morning. (*Interruptions*) Now there is no option left. (*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: The sitting of the House has to be extended. By what time is sitting of the House to be extended?

SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMAN-
GALAM: One hour.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the House that the sitting of the House be extended by one hour.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMAN-
GALAM: This is the first time that voting has been interrupted on the ground of adjournment. This has never happened. Please do not say that.

[Translation]

DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEYA (Mandsaur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, today in the morning when the House assembled for the day, it was decided that in under no circumstances the sitting of the day will be extended beyond 6.00 P.M. viz. the scheduled time of dispersal and to transact all the outstanding business and to make up for the lost time the House will daily sit for 2 hours extra beyond 6.00 P.M. after 23 March, but not today.

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: We have no objection to the sitting of the House being extended by half an hour on regular basis after 23rd March. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Nothing could be arrived at by making noise in this manner. Shri Bhagava please sit down.

[English]

SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMAN-
GALAM: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am a little constrained. I think it is necessary for me to go on record. For the first time, Dr. Laxminarayan Pandeya is fully correct. (Interruptions)

↓ ↓

MR. CHAIRMAN: You kindly listen.

[Translation]

SHRI GIRDHARILAL BHARGAVA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, for two days continuously the House has been sitting late. We must be considerate towards the employees, especially the women employees. What is the reason for not announcing holiday on the occasion of festival like Holi on the one hand and not adjourning the House at 6.00 P.M.? It is not clear why the House is not being adjourned at 6.00 P.M. today? If your so desire the session could be extended upto Diwali, but today is Holi and the House must adjourn at 6.00 P.M. we fail to understand as, to why this is not being done?

[English]

SHRI RAM KAPSE: Mr. Chairman,.....

SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMAN-
GALAM: Would you allow me to speak or shall I sit down?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Kapse, please sit down.

SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMAN-
GALAM: This is not fair. I have never heard this happening. Dr. Laxminarayan Pandeya has rightfully said that in the BAC meeting it was decided that at six O'Clock we will adjourn. (Interruptions) Would you let me say something? You would also agree with me that never has this attempt been made, in this manner, going on speaking and raising irrelevant issue to waste the time of the House. I am sorry. I want to go on record. (Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN: I tried to accommodate every section of the House.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA (Cuttack): Sir,

we spoke only after getting your permission.....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Normally I should have finished the debate on this Bill by 5 o'clock and had the voting at 5 o'clock. The hon. Members were very keen on this and I also thought that the Indian Red Cross Society is a body of utmost importance. And, therefore, I in my discretion, allowed the debate to go beyond the time. It is incumbent upon me to see that the debate comes to a fruitful conclusion. And, therefore, with the consent of the House, I extend the time by one hour more.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SRIKANTA JENA: Sir, this is a wrong precedent you are making.....(*Interruptions*) Sir, this is against the wishes of the speaker.....(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: When I am on my legs, please sit down. If a few gentlemen oppose my ruling, then I cannot help.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, the House will take up Supplementary List of Business. Shri Shantaram Potdukhe will present a statement showing the Supplementary Demands for Grants in respect of the Budget (General) for 1991-92.

18.06 hrs.

[*English*]

SUPPLEMENTARY DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (GENERAL), 1991-92

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SHANTARAM POTDUKHE): Sir, I beg to present a statement (Hindi and English versions) showing the Supplementary Demands for Grants in respect of the Budget (General) for

1991-92. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-1574A/92]

18.07 hrs.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM: With your permission, Sir, I rise to announce that Government Business during the week commencing 23rd March, 1992 will consist of:

1. General Discussion on the General Budget for 1992-93.
2. Submission to the Vote of the House Demands for Grants on Account (General) for 1992-93
3. Discussion and Voting on the Supplementary Demands for Grants (General) for 1991-92.
4. Consideration of any item of Government Business carried over from today's Order Paper.
5. Discussion and Voting on the Demands for Grants under the control of the Ministry of External Affairs.

18.08 hrs.

[*English*]

STATUTORY RESOLUTION RE : DISAPPROVAL OF THE INDIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE,

Cond.

AND

INDIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY (AMENDMENT) BILL - *Cond.*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now the House will continue with the discussion on the Indian