

**Ceylonese of Indian Descent**

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 Shri Tangamani:  
 Shri D. C. Sharma:  
 Shri Narasimhan:  
 Shri Subbiah Ambalam:  
 Shri Muthukrishnan:  
 Shri Sambandam:

Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received reports about the happenings in the five Districts of Northern and Eastern Provinces of Ceylon affecting a large number of Tamil-speaking people;

(b) if so, the nature of the dispute;

(c) whether it affects the Ceylonese of Indian descent;

(d) how far the Tamil-speaking Indian nationals are affected by the agitation; and

(e) what steps, if any, have been taken by our Government in the matter?

**The Deputy Minister of External Affairs (Shrimati Lakshmi Menon):**

(a) to (e). The Government of India have received reports on the language agitation and Satyagrah in the northern and eastern Provinces of Ceylon. It would not be appropriate for the Government of India to discuss the nature of the dispute, which is an internal affair for the Ceylon Government to handle. The majority of persons of recent Indian origin in Ceylon are Tamil speaking, but the Government of India can naturally only be concerned about those among them who are Indian nationals in law. We have expressed our concern regarding the safety of our nationals and we have received an assurance from the Government of Ceylon that they are fully alive to their responsibility in safeguarding foreign nationals and has taken all steps to ensure the protection of foreign nationals.

**Shri Tangamani:** May I know whether the different opposition parties in

Madras State have made a special appeal to the Government of India to see that these special grievances of the Tamil-speaking people, whether they are Ceylonese nationals or are of Indian descent or Indian nationals, are settled and they are looked after, because of the position which our Government has in the international situation and also in relation to the Ceylon Government since the Ceylon Government have also taken certain progressive measures along with our Government in foreign affairs?

**The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru):** We are fully aware of the deep feelings more especially in the Madras State on some of these developments in Ceylon. But we do not think that any official step that we might take will be helpful at all in such matters. May be, friendly contacts and others may be helpful.

**Shri Ranga:** Have the Government made any effort to study the demands that are being made by the Ceylonese of Tamil descent for local autonomy subject to federal overall control by the Sinhalese Government and whether the Government tried to get into touch with the leaders of this movement in order to be able to understand the national as well as the international significance of their demands and their needs?

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** The suggestion that the hon. Member has made seems to me entirely improper, absolutely improper; to get into touch with the leaders of opposition and agitational parties in another country—which, I submit, would be an extraordinary thing from many points of view, national or international law or practice. Where one wants to help, it is through friendly contacts unofficially and that way, and not in the way suggested by the hon. Member.

**Shri Ranga:** I am prepared to amend my question on the lines suggested by my hon. friend the hon. Prime Minister. But then, have any representations been made or contacts been established by those people who

are affected, with our High Commission in Ceylon and whether our High Commission have taken any trouble to acquaint themselves with the attitude and the demands of those people?

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** It is the business of the High Commission to find out what is happening in that country to which they are accredited and to report to us on any situation that arises. That of course is always done and is done. We receive fairly lengthy reports. But again, when the hon. Member asks me if the High Commission goes and develops contacts with those people, he is treading on rather dangerous ground.

**Shri Ranga:** I have already amended my question. There is nothing for my hon. friend to give a second exhortation. What is the job of High Commission if they are not prepared to keep themselves in touch with what is happening in Ceylon and advise the Government here in regard to the developments there? What are they supposed to do if they do not keep their eyes open?

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Prime Minister has answered in full. Lengthy reports are being received from time to time from the High Commission regarding the situation in that place. Beyond that, the hon. Prime Minister feels that it would not be proper for either the High Commission or himself to interfere.

**Shri Ramanathan Chettiar:** While appreciating the difficulties of the Government of India, may I know whether the Prime Minister will write to the Prime Minister of Ceylon in a friendly way and bring these things to the notice of the Prime Minister there?

**Mr. Speaker:** It is a suggestion for action. Can there be any doubt about it?

**Shri Narasimban:** Since the last few days there is a complete black-out of news excepting rumours, as to what is going on there. Will it be possible to get correct information so that our

people and the public may know about these things?

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** I do not know if there is anything very unusual happening. If news reaches us I shall report to the House. We can hardly function as a kind of news agency in this matter.

**Shri Hem Barua:** In view of the fact that the Tamillians are practically Ceylonese citizens, may I know whether the Prime Minister will offer or has already offered his good offices in his personal capacity towards an amicable settlement of the problem?

**Mr. Speaker:** He wants to know whether there is any approach.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** How can I answer this question?

**Mr. Speaker:** He wants to know whether there has been an attempt at amicable settlement because they are all of our extraction.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** It should be remembered that the Tamil population of North and East Ceylon have been there for broadly 600, 700 or 800 years. They are as much Ceylonese as anybody else—the Sinhalese people. Except, of course, cultural, they have no contacts with India. Therefore, it becomes a question of some group of Ceylonese people coming into conflict, if you like, or being at variance with another group; it is an entirely internal question. We are interested, for a variety of reasons, especially people in the South, and that is a different matter. We are interested also because Ceylon is a friendly country, and where possible, we wish to help and take steps without any kind of interference. These are not things which I can discuss here, as to what is possible to do and what is not possible.

**Shri Sampath:** May I know whether the Government have received any information regarding the Stateless persons of Indian origin and even Indian nationals settled in Ceylon having been involved in the agitation and, if so, what is the position?

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** There was some talk of a general strike in the estates, but the strike I think was called off. A few persons who did not get notice perhaps of the calling off, indulged in it. But they soon returned to work. They are naturally interested in this, but attempts were made by the leaders of the estate labourers not to get them entangled in this as far as possible.

**Shri Narasimhan:** Has the Government considered that what is happening in Ceylon, particularly about the Stateless persons, is against what are known as human rights and, if so, whether the Government contemplate any step in this regard at forums other than at India-Ceylon level, such as the United Nations or the Commonwealth?

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** No, Sir. We do not contemplate doing that kind of thing. We do not think it is at all right for us. We deal with the Ceylon Government directly and try to settle them however long it may take. I do not think it will be quite right to bring in the question of human rights in regard to estate labour. Their non-recognition or their non-registration as citizens of Ceylon can hardly be called an infringement of human rights. It is undesirable; it is otherwise being protested against.

**Shri Tangamani:** Recently, news appeared in the papers that the ferry service between Dhanushkodi and Talaimannar which is the link between the South and Ceylon has been discontinued. I would like to know if there is any information whether it has been discontinued and whether the normal channel of communication will be restored.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** My information is that it was discontinued for two days only. This was related to the question of illicit immigrants.

#### Indian Embassy in Congo

1943. **Shri Ram Krishan Gupta:** Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state:

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the recent news item which appeared on the front page of the 'Hindustan Times', New Delhi dated the 16th April, 1961 that the Indian Embassy may be expelled from Congo following a recent sharp attack on the Indian Envoy by Mr. Albert Delvaux, Resident Minister in Belgium and one time acting Prime Minister;

(b) whether the facts have been ascertained;

(c) if not, how far this news is correct; and

(d) action taken in the matter?

**The Deputy Minister of External Affairs (Shrimati Lakshmi Menon):**

(a) to (d). Government have seen the news item in question. The Indian Mission in Leopoldville, which took the matter up with the authorities there, was informed that the views reportedly expressed by Mr. Albert Delvaux did not represent the official views of the Government. There is, thus, no basis for the inference that the Indian Mission in the Congo might be closed down by the Congolese authorities.

**Shri Ram Krishan Gupta:** In view of the serious situation in the Congo, may I know what security measures are being adopted there?

**The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru):** Sometimes reference is made by hon. Members to security measures. Security for whom? There is certainly a considerable lack of security in the Congo for the people of the Congo, because they are often in conflict with each other. If the question is about security for the Indian army, I do not want other security forces to look after our army; it can look after itself.

#### Large Scale Pak. Infiltration into Assam

1944. **Shri P. C. Borooah:** Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state: