

LOK SABHA DEBATES
(Part I—Questions and Answers)

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LOK SABHA

Monday, 6th August, 1956

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Dr. Salazar's Speech

*722. **Shri Shree Narayan Das:** Will the Prime Minister be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any authentic copy of the speech of Dr. Salazar delivered at the opening session of the Fourth Conference of Portugal's National Union in May, last; and

(b) if so, the steps taken to counter-act or refute the false allegations made against India?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of External Affairs (Shri Sadath Ali Khan): (a) No. Government of India have, however, seen reports of Dr. Salazar's speech in the Press.

(b) The allegations made by Dr. Salazar were refuted publicly by the Prime Minister in a speech made by him at Bombay on the 4th June, 1956.

Shri Shree Narayan Das: May I know whether there are indications available that there has been some change in the attitude of the Government of Portugal with regard to Goa?

Shri Sadath Ali Khan: We are not aware of any such change in that Government's attitude.

Shri Shree Narayan Das: May I know whether during his recent foreign tour the Prime Minister was able to find whether the minds of Catholics all over the world have been disabused of the feeling that India is against them?

Shri Sadath Ali Khan: I do not think that the Prime Minister probed into the minds of the Catholics during his tour.

Dr. Lanka Sundaram: Is it a fact that the Government of India have circulated to our Embassies abroad a number of leaflets or books setting out the real story on Goa, and if so, whether copies of those will be laid on the Table of the House?

Shri Sadath Ali Khan: Yes, we have supplied factual material to Indian Missions abroad to counter the baseless propaganda of Portugal.

Shri D. C. Sharma: Is it not a fact that the policy of repression by Portugal in Goa has been intensified after the speech? If so, can it be attributed directly to that speech?

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs and Finance (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): There has apparently been an intensification of that policy of repression. Whether that is connected with the speech or not, I cannot say.

Shri T. S. A. Chettiar: May I know whether Government have taken steps to broadcast the opinion of the Pope that this is not a Catholic question but is merely a political question?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: In the course of various publications, we have given enough importance to this matter.

Dr. Lanka Sundaram: The second part of my question was not answered. I asked whether the material supplied to Missions abroad about the factual position in Goa would be placed on the Table of the House.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Yes. Such material as has been circulated in a public way would be placed on the Table of the House.

Zinc Smelting Plant

*723. **Shri Balwant Sinha Mehta:** Will the Minister of Commerce and Industry be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 1448 on the 14th April, 1956 and state:

(a) whether any plans have been formulated for setting up a zinc smelting plant in the country; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

The Minister of Heavy Industries (Shri M. M. Shah): (a) No. Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Shri Balwant Sinha Mehta: May I know whether Government are contemplating setting up this industry at some port, outside Rajasthan which is the only source of the mineral concerned, superseding the recommendations of the Committee appointed by Government?

Shri M. M. Shah: No, Sir.

Radio-Activity

*724. **Shri Gidwani:** Will the **Prime Minister** be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many of the common vegetables as well as milk, ghee and rice have been found to be radio-active by a team of scientists at the Calcutta University College of Science; and

(b) if so, the effect of these on the human system?

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs and Finance (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): (a) and (b). According to the report received from the Calcutta University, presence of small amounts of radio-activity in vegetables, grass, milk, etc., available in the neighbourhood of Calcutta has been reported. The nature of the radio activity has, however, not been studied. The levels of radio-activity measured in fall outs at present are not dangerous.

Shri Gidwani: Although the scientists differ as to the degree of harm done to mankind from the increased radio activity in the atmosphere as a result of nuclear test explosions, are they agreed that there is potential harm done not only to the present generation but also to future generations, particularly in their genetic effects due to entry into, and absorption in the body of radio active substances contained in the fall out of test explosions?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: The hon. Member has referred to radio activity. I take it he is really referring to nuclear explosions, because radio activity is present in a hundred things including every X-ray photograph that might be taken. So far as nuclear explosions are concerned, everybody agrees that there is an element of danger. As to the measure of it, some people differ, but the probability is that the danger is more serious than is usually imagined. Therefore, it was desirable not to gamble with the whole future of humanity by continuing these nuclear explosions.

Shri Gidwani: Is it a fact that the British Medical Research Council has reported that strontium, the most serious component of radio active substances, has been found in the carcasses of sheep in wells as the result of eating plants which had been radio active? If so, is there not a danger of strontium being accumulated in the bones of human bodies and thereby resulting in the causation of cancer and other diseases?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I must bring to the notice of the hon. Member that he usually reads out long statements when putting questions. Questions ought to be brief and concise, and the answer also must come in that form.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: If I may, I would refer not only the hon. Member but perhaps others to the book that we have recently issued on nuclear explosions, which is in the Library of the House.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: There was a Press report a few weeks ago that a professor of radio therapy at the Calcutta Medical College was collecting relevant data and would represent the issue at the International Congress of Radiology to be held at Mexico City from July 21 to 31. May I know what has happened, particularly in view of the statement made at Calcutta by Professor Haldane that the protective elements against radio activity by way of rains and strong construction of houses are absent, to a large extent, in Indian conditions?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I do not quite know. He asked, what has happened to the protective elements. Our view is that these are dangerous and they should be stopped. We have put this before the Disarmament Commission strongly. We have taken the trouble to issue a book which, I believe, is the first attempt at putting all the available material together—I do not think any other country has put it together in that way. We are continuing this, so far as we can, everywhere. I do not quite know about what he said about a professor and the Congress. Probably he is going there, but I cannot say definitely.

Shri Renu Chakravartty: May I know if it has been brought to the notice of Government that Professor Haldane stated that the danger in India was five times as great as in England due to the fall-out of nuclear explosions, and that as yet in India we have had no quantitative data as to the amount that would be dangerous? May I also know whether Government are considering setting up a team of scientists who will be gathering these quantitative data?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I read this morning in the newspapers about a report of what Professor Haldane has stated. Probably the hon. Member refers to that. If we can profit by any suggestions of his, we shall do so.

Shri Kamath: Does the Prime Minister recollect that in the last session of this House, he said answering a question that our scientists had discovered increased radio activity in the Bombay air, and if so, may I ask whether there have been reports from Bombay that vegetables, grass, milk, ghee etc. there too have been affected in the same way as in Calcutta?