

SHRI HARIN PATHAK (Ahmedabad) : It is not a debate. That was a debate. It was not done at the time of voting. The debate was over. . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I said that the debate was adjourned at the third reading stage. Shri Harin Pathak, do you know what is the third reading stage? Do you think that the Speaker does not know what is the third reading stage? What is this? Unnecessarily, you are wasting the time.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please listen to me. Shri Mahajan, I am not going to take a hasty decision on this because whatever we decide, there will be a precedent. I have just seen one precedent. The House will now adjourn for Lunch to meet again at...

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN (Mumbai-North East) : No, Sir. I have an objection. You cannot adjourn the House. You cannot open the lobbies . . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I will take it up again after Lunch.

(Interruptions)

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : You cannot postpone the voting. . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You come back after Lunch. I have adjourned the House. The House will meet at 2.40 p.m.

13.39 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned for Lunch till Forty Minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.*

14.43 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at Forty Three Minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.*

[MR. SPEAKER in the chair]

**INSURANCE REGULATORY AUTHORITY  
BILL - Contd.**

MR. SPEAKER : Well, the House has now to take up Amendment No. 13 moved by Shri Shivraj Singh and later on Amendment No. 14 by Justice Guman Mal Lodha.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN (Mumbai-North East) : They are the same Amendments.

MR. SPEAKER : Yes, of course, I said, they are the same Amendments.

[Translation]

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH (Vidisha) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I move my amendment.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : You have already moved it. It is only a question of putting it to vote.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : Sir, I have had some exchange of views with hon. Members who wish to press the point that only Indian companies should be allowed into the insurance business. I have consulted my colleagues and I have also consulted the hon. Prime Minister. I have proposed it to the hon. Leader of the Opposition and I propose to the whole House that we may add the following amendment to clause 13. I do not think it necessary to read clause 13. Clause 13 is one which speaks about the powers to regulate. The proposed language is:

"Provided that the authority may grant a certificate of registration..." (Interruptions)

SHRI SUNDER LAL PATWA (Chhindwara) : Sir, I am on a point of order.

MR. SPEAKER : Let him finish first.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : It is only a proposal. I am not moving a formal Amendment. The proposed language is:

"Provided that the authority may grant a certificate of registration to carry on insurance business only to an Indian company."

I suppose that this captures the sense of the House. This captures, according to me, the best possible consensus that can be arrived at.

I propose that we add this amendment:

"That the Authority may grant a certificate of registration to carry on insurance business only to Indian companies."

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly) : We are opposed to this.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : We are opposed to this.

SHRI PRAMOTES MUKHERJEE (Berhampore) (WB) : We are against any kind of privatisation.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : We are opposed to opening up the insurance sector not only to foreign companies but also to Indian private companies. We are totally against privatisation.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL : We are totally against privatisation of the insurance industry.

SHRI PRAMOTHES MUKHERJEE : The insurance industry cannot be handed over to the private sector.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ (South Delhi): Mr. Speaker. Sir, our amendment is on the condition that only Indian participation be allowed in this sector. If the Minister agrees then what is the problem in accepting the language of our amendment.

[English]

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): Sir, I seek a clarification from the hon. Minister of Finance. He has made a proposal. His proposal is that licences may be given only to Indian companies. May I seek a clarification from the Minister of Finance? Is it not the position in regard to the insurance industry as was prevailing during the pre-nationalisation period? The Indian private companies were very much in the insurance industry. There was mismanagement and there was defalcation. There were agitations all over the country and so the nationalisation of the insurance industry was done. Now, let me be clarified on this. The hon. Minister of Finance, by this proposal, wants to denationalise the LIC and the GIC and hand them over to the TATAs, the Birlas and all the others who are interested in entering the insurance industry. Therefore, I want to make it clear that this proposal is not acceptable to us.

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : We are going back to the pre-1956 position now. . .(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You have made your point.

SRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : What was the position prior to nationalisation? We have had the experience. We are going back to the pre-1956 position. We cannot accept that. We cannot support that.

SHRI AJAY MUKHOPADHYAY (Krishnagar) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I also want to seek a clarification.

MR. SPEAKER : I will come to you later. Now, let us be cool and discuss

[Translation]

SHRI SUNDER LAL PATWA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through the proposed amendment in amendment No.13 the hon'ble Minister, as I have understood it, wants to include word 'Indian Companies'. It means that after inclusion of the said

word foreigners, multi national companies, capitalists will not enter this category by getting their companies registered. If you wishes to allow only Indian companies, then why have you objection in accepting negative amendment proposed by hon'ble Members? There may be some intention or double thinking in it or I do not want to say that there may be some bad intention. When you are not able to stop entries of multi national companies by mere writting 'Hindustani companies, hence I request to adopt the amendment into to. I want nothing but only this. . .(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Let us get the views of other Parties also. You have made enough of your points.

JUSTICE GUMAN MAL LODHA (Pali) : Hon. Speaker, Sir, you were on the point of voting but you adjourned the House in order to have something. There was no agreement. There was a division. Let there be division and voting. We are pressing our amendment. Why should they have an objection in acception a very innocuous amendment? They want to put it in another form so that either jointly or by collaboration or by entering into some sort of an arrangement the foreign companies can come here. We have already experienced the private companies; forty-six of them, including the TATAs want to start their business again.

I want to make a request to you. Already, on account of what has happened in the House, the image has gone down. People are asking, 'What has happened? When the voting was going on and when everything was being done, why have you come out?' Do not allow the image of the House to go down. Kindly attend to it.. .(Interruptions)

You have been doing it so far. . .(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES (Nalanda) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is clear from the proceedings of the last one and a half hour that hon'ble Minister is very clever but inspite of that he has revealed his intentions to the House. Now we want to attach Indian companies with it. One amendment was there but now it has been left out. Now to insult them he is saying that he is ready to include the word 'Indian Companies' He wants to do it to please them. To insult them, but he is revealing here that his intentions are to bring foreign companies in India without mentioning the names of foreign companies.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not agree with the hon'ble Minister's statement that we will do it when time will come. Since you have called the name of Indian Companies and since you are prepared to call the names of Indian Companies, then as it is said.

[English]

Out of the jaws of defeat you snatch the victory. This is what you are trying to aim at, Mr. Finance Minister. You will be able to, then tell the world that this was not there, but I have got it done.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker Sir, I want to say that any foreign company may purchase shares in India without any restriction. They may buy shares in Mumbai or Delhi as they wish without any restriction. They are allowed to buy shares. They too know it and we too know it, but they think the members sitting in the House have forgot the matter that the foreign financial companies, foreign investors can purchase shares of Indian companies from Indian market. Share market, will be registered in Mumbai market, then whether foreign companies will not purchase it? What is the use of memorandum of understanding? Whether these memorandum of understanding have been signed without the knowledge of government of India.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to know from the hon'ble Minister through you whether in the negotiations with international monetary fund, or W-T.O. or bilateral talks with American Government or in other negotiations which are going on for the last one year, they had raised question regarding insurance or not? Whether all representatives of the Government of America who came here have not asked about the opening of Insurance sector? When are you allowing us? Whether they have not raised these issues? This matter is not secret. These are public matters. You will find at least 10 such examples by reading the economic bulletins, to which are supplied to some Members of Parliament by the United State services or any American information agency working here or any agency.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please conclude. You have made your point.

[Translation]

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not ready to accept our country as a sorrogate of America. In India this House can not be dictated by any foreign power. Our's is sovereign House. This House will take decision keeping in view the interest of country and any such door whether it is front door or back door will not allow to come with these policies.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : We are on a procedural matter. We are not on merit.

[Translation]

SHRI NITISH KUMAR (Barh) : Sir, procedural and constitutional, both have intermingled.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I think we are on a procedural matter. It is a limited question.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar) : When various political parties are giving their views on the Bill, I feel that I should say what my party's views are on the Bill. When the hon. Minister of Finance approached us, we said we will support the Bill. At that time we were told that there may be some ammendments. He said that on behalf of the Government he would talk to the hon. Members and that they would not insist on their ammendments, except, of course, Shri Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee. We said, 'All right. So far as the Congress Party is concerned, we will support the Bill'.

Now, it has come to a position where a major decision has to be changed. In the Bill there are ammendments by the BJP. The BJP at one stage said that they were not against private participation. But they said that the private companies should be within the country and not from outside. They said that multinational companies should not come.

By and large, there is nothing wrong; and it looks like quite reasonable. But today, at this moment, for me to take a decision to support this ammendment is not possible. For that reason, I was telling Shri Chidambaram to take some time on this. But Shri Chandra Shekhar and others are here. Today we have a peculiar position. All the leaders of my party are on their way to Calcutta.

It is for the House to consider this and not for us. Either it should be deferred or if voting is there for this particular ammendment, I have to. . . (Interruptions) Let me finish. You can say 'yes' or 'no', I do not mind; but let me make my position clear.

On this particular ammendment, if they insist on it, I have to abstain from voting. I will not be able to do it today. If Shri Chidambaram's ammendment is accepted, I will support that ammendment. I think, it is a reasonable ammendment with which he has come up with. Generally, he will not do it, but he has moved.

MR. SPEAKER : No. He has not moved. He is asking the permission of the House to move it.

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV : I will ask Shri Vajpayee also; let us see that; if Shri Chidambaram's ammendment can be accepted with some change, that will be better.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR (Balua) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, whatever happened in the House for the last two-three hours has not only brought down the dignity of the House but it has also raised a new issue before the country as to whether the foreign powers can run the Parliament of India arbitrarily? For the last six years, we have been watching the miserable state of the country on the policy issues but we have seen the miserable state of this House today only. I think if the Government had defeated at the time of division in the House it would not have fallen. But what Shri George Fernandes has said appears to be correct that attempts are being made to appease some people and I am sorry to say that despite knowing all these things the people from different sections of the House are ready to be part of it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not want to be harsh. If we go through the figures the capital which have been given to the foreigners by the Government and the way our industries have been taken over by them that would be a matter of shame for any sovereign country. I would like to submit, we should not undermine our dignity. There should be some dignity in the House either we accept or reject any motion and I would like to submit that whatever happened in this House for the last two and a half hours it is against the dignity of the House.

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI (Shahabad) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have listened the discussion held on this issue and the speech delivered today by our hon. Finance Minister. You can check the record he has repeatedly said that Insurance would remain in public sector.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I do not know why he is repeating it.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SHATRUGHAN PRASAD SINGH (Balua) (Bihar) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is no need of delivering a speech on this issue. . . (Interruptions) You please held division. . . (Interruptions)

SHRI ILIYAS AZMI : The Finance Minister had moved an amendment and if his intention is clear than what is his objection to accept the amendment moved by a colleague of BJP? I think his intention is not clear and his views are vague.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I think we have discussed enough. Now, I will put the amendment to the vote of the House. There is no way out for this.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : Sir, I have heard with great respect, the viewpoints of various sections of the House. I do share that some apprehensions have been raised which this Government does not want to push forward. We are very keen that the general consensus of the House should be respected and we will respect it.

May I suggest that for the time being we do not move further; we stop as it is. . . (Interruptions) We will come back after discussion with all of them. . . (Interruptions) We will not even move this Bill. . . (Interruptions) We can come back to you. . . (Interruptions) Let me finish. . . (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Let the Prime Minister finish his speech.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Let the Prime Minister finish his speech. Why are you so impatient?

(Interruptions)

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : I will suggest to the hon. Members that we do not move the Bill.

15.00 hrs.

We keep the Bill back. We discuss amongst ourselves and in a modified form after the consensus is evolved - we will come back. . . (Interruptions)

SOME HON. MEMBERS : No.

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE (Dum Dum) : For two or three days or even four days, we have repeatedly approached the Minister of Finance. We have approached the Prime Minister also precisely for a discussion on our amendment so that even before placing all this before the House, we can try to see each other's point of view. That was turned down. We are happy that even at this late stage, the Prime Minister is prepared to consider that. We are happy on that. . . (Interruptions) for the last four days, we have tried it. . . (Interruptions)

[Translations]

SHRI RAM NAGINA MISHRA (Pudrauna) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am on a point of order. The question of withdrawing the motion does not arise when process of division has already been started. Please give ruling in this regard. . . (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Enough, enough. Now, please listen to me. The procedure is very clear.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I have said before the lunchbreak that there is a precedent when a Bill even at a third reading stage was postponed. For that, the mover of the Bill has to move a Motion. If there is a consensus, it is all right. Otherwise, even for the postponement, I will have to put it to the vote of the House. I am very clear about it. Therefore, if you want to move a Motion for postponement, you can move it. But I will have to put even that Motion to the vote of the House.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I do not think that there is any consensus.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Sir, I do not want to do anything without a certain consensus in the House. I am not talking about unanimity. The point is that we got stuck on clause 13 with two very sharp positions. I am not scoring a point or anything on that. One amendment has been defeated. They are entitled to press that point again. After all, it is a democracy and a system. They can press their point even after that amendment is defeated.

Then, there is another amendment which is of a more restrictive nature. According to me, there is a wider support for that amendment. Therefore, after consulting everybody, I have proposed that perhaps there is a way out having regard to very many factors including the way LIC and GIC are functioning. GIC is functioning in 35 countries. LIC is functioning in five countries. Having regard to all that, I said and I repeat it that there is no proposal to allow a foreign company or a multinational. But there is a proposal to modestly open the health insurance business to Indian companies. Therefore, I proposed the amendment. I am not moving it formally because I cannot do it without your permission. I have proposed an amendment.

At that stage, the Prime Minister interceded to say that he would like Shri Vajpayee and others to respond. All right, are we moving towards a meeting ground? I recognise your point of view. But on this, can we have a meeting ground?

SOME HON. MEMBERS : No, no.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I am aware of your point. Even on this, there is no meeting ground. What the Prime Minister has proposed is: on this - the formulation which I have given and the formulation which you have - is there a meeting ground? Can we talk about it? So, the Prime Minister says, "Would you consider deferring this matter until we talk about it?" I would appeal to Shri Vajpayee to respond to this. We can have a meeting ground. We will involve them also. We will involve the Congress. They want some time to look at it. The Congress really wants some time to look at it. So, let us involve everybody. We can have a formulation which takes care of the

apprehensions. You may say that Shri Jaswant Singh repeatedly said about some apprehension. I am trying to allay it. Let us see whether there is a way to allay your apprehension. I think Sections 13 and 26 are there. We will allay it even better. Let us try to meet. If there can be an agreement on that, we can defer the debate. Otherwise, I think, the appeal of the Prime Minister should be responded to by the Leader of the Opposition.

*[Translation]*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am connected with the Parliament since 1957 in one way or the other. But, the situation that has arisen today has never been there. The reason is that the Government do not form its definite opinion before introducing the Bill and it also do not assess as to whose support it would get and whose support it would not get. When the Government lands in trouble, then it starts working under pressure at every stage, it goes on following order of other parties.

Earlier, our party has said that we are against entry of foreign companies in the field of insurance but the Indian companies should get opportunities there. This fact was not accepted earlier but now it has been accepted. The Finance Minister has just now mentioned that only Indian companies would be given opportunities in this field and an amendment in this regard is yet to come. It is a good thing and we like it. But there is a need to clear the doubts that have cropped up in our minds. In the morning, I had given a suggestion to adjourn the discussion for a while and the only purpose behind it was that the Government should ponder over the amendment by us. Can the Government ponder over it? What are the difficulties in it? The Finance Minister has just now mentioned about the difficulties and actually this should have come up first in the House and moreover, these difficulties does not look convincing.

The Government say that the Indian Insurance Companies are functioning well in abroad with the help of Indians settled there and also earning well there. These companies are working for the welfare of these people and if we publish in the newspapers here that entry of the foreign companies into our country is being banned then the Indians who are settled there may face the difficulties. I think, this logic is somewhat rationale. But, we must also admit that if we let even a small loophole, it would result in influx of foreign companies at large scale.

If Chandra Shekharji is making allegations, then what are the reasons behind it? Why a doubt has been cropping up in his mind that the country is compromising with its sovereignty. We have to keep in mind what my friend George Fernandes is saying imbued with patriotism.

[Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee]

Since, the Finance Minister has now said and the Prime Minister has also sought time, so I think that the House would not have any objection in allotting time. But, when you come up with a Bill, you should keep it in mind that the Bill should be such that it should clear all our doubts. . .

[English]

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Sir, I only wish to respond to one point. I have continually consulted the leaders of the Parties separately and I wish to point out that this Bill was referred to the Standing Committee and 44 out of 45 Members of the Committee have reported this Bill for adoption with five amendments. . . (Interruptions)

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Once again this is a distortion. . . (Interruptions)

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Sir, all I would like to point out is, here is the report of the Standing Committee. Even after that - I am not going by this report alone. I have continually consulted leaders of Parties and now recognising the force of what you say, I am proposing this. . . (Interruptions) I accept what you say. . . (Interruptions) I only want to say that we want time. . . (Interruptions)

SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV (Silchar) : You kindly withdraw the Bill as told by the Prime Minister. . . (Interruptions) You should withdraw the Bill. . . (Interruptions)

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : Sir, I am grateful to the Leader of the Opposition because he has seen my submission in the correct manner. I can assure you that there is no intention on our part - on the part of the Government - to do something behind this House. We will not do that. Whatever policies are made will be made in the open and with the consent, knowledge and approval of the House. Therefore, when we defer this, please take it in that spirit. We have seen the spirit of the House and we will respect it. . . (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ (South Delhi) : No deferment. The Government should withdraw the Bill. . . (Interruptions)

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN : It should be withdrawn . . . (Interruptions)

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI (Allahabad) : It should be withdrawn . . . (Interruptions)

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA (Bankura) : If the Government wants to achieve a consensus on this, let the Bill be withdrawn by them. A fresh Bill can be brought when there is a consensus. . . (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : Let the Bill be withdrawn. . . (Interruptions)

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJEE : Let the Bill be withdrawn. . . (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ : The Government should withdraw this Bill. . . (Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : On this issue, a consensus is required. When there is no consensus on the Bill, it should be withdrawn. . . (Interruptions)

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI : Sir, let the Minister withdraw the Bill. . . (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I think this matter is very clear. There are two-three proposals now. I am very clear that everything has to be done with the consent of the House today. If it is seeking leave for moving a new amendment, it has to be with the leave of the House. If it is a motion for deferment of the Bill, it has to be again by a proper motion and it has to be with the consent of the House. If necessary, it has to be by voting. Withdrawal also has to be with the consent of the House. The Government has to make up its mind and take one of the three courses just now. Otherwise, I will have to put the amendments to vote.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : There is a consensus for withdrawal.

SHRI RUPCHAND PAL (Hooghly) : Let the Minister withdraw the Bill.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : If the Government decides to withdraw the Bill, there will be no opposition.

SHRI I.K. GUJRAL : I am again grateful to the Leader of the Opposition. I respect his words. We withdraw the Bill.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I beg to move for leave to withdraw the Bill to provide for the establishment of an Authority to protect the interests of holders of insurance policies and to regulate, promote and ensure orderly growth of the insurance industry and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

MR. SPEAKER : The question is:

"That leave be granted to withdraw the Bill to provide for the establishment of an Authority to protect the interests of holders of insurance policies and to regulate, promote and ensure orderly growth of the

insurance industry and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto."

*The motion was adopted.*

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : I withdraw the Bill.

MR. SPEAKER : The Bill is withdrawn.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : It is a victory for the people of India.

15.13 hrs.

#### DISCUSSION UNDER RULE 193

##### Re: Heavy Loss of Lives and Property Due to Natural Calamities - *Contd.*

MR. SPEAKER : Now further discussion on the heavy loss of lives and property due to natural calamities. Shri Uddhab Burman to speak.

hrs. 15.14

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Hon. Members, please take your seats. Do not stand in the aisles.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN (Barpeta) : Last time I talked about the ecological changes in the area. Erosion is one of the important and damaging things. Along with the floods, erosion, not only in the Brahmaputra River but also in its tributaries, has eaten up the cultivable land in the State. Cultivable land is on the decrease. This is creating problem in our State every year. I should necessarily request the Central Government to come forward with the implementation of the Master Plan already prepared by the Brahmaputra Board. . . *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER : Please maintain silence.

SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN : Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, there are already drought and floods in different parts of the country. There is flood in Kerala and Gujarat. Midnapur district of West Bengal is also being flooded. Gujarat is practically under the damaging impact of floods. But, what is seen is that the Government is not taking up proper natural disaster management measures. They are completely and practically neglected.

It is said that in the Eighth Five Year Plan, an amount of Rs. 9.00 crore is allocated for Natural Damage Management Programme. But it is seen that an amount of Rs. 2.69 crore has been spent for disaster management. This practically reflected the lethargic

attitude of the Central Government. The objective of the disaster management is to create awareness among the people regarding natural calamities. But the same is completely neglected by the Central Government and other State Governments.

I request that while we are observing the International Decade of Natural Disaster Reduction, the Central Government should come forward to see that the people are educated. Let them be aware of the disaster potentialities of a certain natural calamities.

Assam is in a seismic zone where earthquakes are very much frequent. Fear is there in the minds of the people of Assam because of the impact of earlier earthquake. Shri Negi, a famous geo-physicist maintained that every 100 years there will be a revisit of earthquake. There was an earthquake in Assam in 1897. Proper attention should be given to Assam and the North-Eastern Region to see that the people are educated. I would, naturally, ask the Government to see that preventive measures are taken against the potential danger of earthquake in this area and to see that people are educated regarding the danger of probable earthquakes in this area.

I had already mentioned this in the beginning of my speech. I have said that natural disasters like flood, erosion, earthquake, etc. have been creating a havoc not only for the present but they are also creating problems for future development. They are causing damage to the crops, infrastructure etc.

What is seen in Assam is frequent floods, frequent erosions. It is typical of this region. There is a lurking fear among the people, particularly cultivators, because whatever they produce is washed out in the floods. If we do not take preventive flood control measures and also prevent erosion, we will continue to suffer practically A sense of passivity and frustration prevails.

There is already a lot of discontentment among the people of Assam and of the Northeast because of the neglect of this region during the last five decades. This discontentment is unfortunately utilised by the extremist forces and they are creating a lot of problems. In the Fiftieth Year of our freedom, when the entire country and the House is celebrating, we should think of the price that we are paying for the neglect of this region in our economy and development in the control of flood and erosion. We have paid a lot of price for the neglect in the last 50 years. In the Fiftieth Anniversary of Independence, I think, the Central Government should be more sensitive to the feelings of the people throughout the country, particularly the Northeast. I am glad that the Prime Minister of our country has taken some interest in the Northeast and declared a sum of Rs. 6100 crore for the development of Northeast. He has also promised Rs. 500 crore for the