

the Central Government, for which there is no proposal at present.

(b) to (d) Question does not arise,

12.00 hrs.

QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE AGAINST SHRI S.B. CHAVAN, THE FORMER MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND SHRI ARUN NEHRU, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL SECURITY.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : On 13th February, 1986, I had received identical notices of question of privilege given by Sarvashri V. Sobhanadiceswara Rao and S.M. Bhattam against the then Minister of Home Affairs, Shri S.B. Chavan, for allegedly defaming some members of Parliament by insinuating that they had some association or links with the alleged spy Ram Swaroop, in the charge-sheet filed by the police in the Court under the Official Secrets Act. They had also stated that a wide publicity was given in the Press to the names of Members of Parliament mentioned in the charge-sheet as was evident from the news reports published in the *Times of India* dated 28th January, 1986, and other national dailies of 29th January, 1986. The Members further pointed out that according to the impugned news report, "Ram Swaroop mentioned to the police the names of some opposition leaders and Members of Parliament stating that they were 'sympathetic to him at one stage or the other'." It is well known that in public life Members of Parliament come in touch with many people on various occasions. To say that they were 'sympathetic' to Ram Swaroop, is, in members' words "a motivated and mischievous effort to malign them and to lower the dignity of Parliament".

Shri M. Raghuma Reddy gave an identical notice on 19th February, 1986.

I appreciated the strong feelings of the members whose names had figured in newspaper reports in connection with the espionage case and, therefore, when on 25th February, 1986, Shri V.S. Rao sought to

raise the matter in the House, I observed, "If the name of any Member from this House has been mentioned, I will allow him (to make personal explanations)".

On 5th March, S/Shri K.P. Singh Deo, D.P. Jadeja and Arvind Netam were afforded a special opportunity to make personal explanations in the House clarifying their position in the matter. They stated, *inter alia*, that their names had been mentioned in the charge-sheet neither as accused nor as witnesses. A similar statement was made by Shri Chandulal Chandrakar on 11th March, 1986,

On 13th March, 1986 Prof. Madhu Dandavate gave a notice of question of privilege against the Minister of State in the Department of Internal Security, Shri Arun Nehru, for allegedly mentioning the names of Sarvashri K.P. Singh Deo, D.P. Jadeja, Arvind Netam and Chandulal Chandrakar in the charge-sheet filed against Ram Swaroop for his alleged espionage activities. Prof. Dandavate contended that though the names of the said members were associated neither as witnesses nor as accused in the espionage case, "the manner in which their names were mentioned in the charge-sheet .....has sought to tarnish patriotic image of these members."

Another honourable member, Shri Jitendra Prasada, also wrote to me on 31st January, 1986, drawing my attention to a report appearing in the *Statesman* dated 29th January 1986 which falsely mentioned his name among those figuring in the charge-sheet filed by the Police in the Ram Swaroop case. The report claimed that the charge-sheet had mentioned his name as "the Chairman of the Indo-Federal Republic of Germany Parliamentary Body." His denial in this regard was published by the paper in its issue of 1st February, 1986. Shri Jitendra Prasada has again written to me on 9th March, 1986, saying that the *Illustrated Weekly* in its issue of 2nd March, 1986, had carried an interview with the said Ram Swaroop in which he was quoted as saying that he (Shri Jitendra Prasada) also was a Convenor of the Indo-German Parliamentary Group. Shri Jitendra Prasada has pointed out that it is impossible for any Member to keep track of all such news items and to issue contradictions in respect of each of them. Shri Jitendra

Prasada has, however, enclosed a copy of the letter which he has sent to the Editor of the *Illustrated Weekly* denying that he had ever been Convenor of the said Indo-German Parliamentary Group or that he had ever attended any of its meetings. I regret very much that such reports should keep on appearing in the press even after they have been contradicted. I hope the press will be more cautious in this respect in future so that the names of Members of Parliament are not unnecessarily dragged into controversial matters.

It is well established that in order to constitute a breach of privilege any libel or charge against a member of Parliament must concern his character or conduct in his capacity as a member of this House and must be "based on matters arising in the actual transaction of the business of the House". Moreover, I understand that the only accused persons in the case are Shri Ram Swaroop Sabharwal and Shri Javed Siddiqui and no charges have been laid against any other person. I am, therefore, of the opinion that the mere mention of names of members in the charge-sheet does not involve any breach of privilege or contempt of the House either on the part of the then Minister of Home Affairs or the Minister of State in the Department of Internal Security. Accordingly, I withhold my consent of the raising of the matter in the House under rule 222.

I must, however, add what I told the House on 5th March, 1986, and I reiterate that I am one with all the members of the House in upholding the honour, respect and dignity of the House and its members. As public men, Members of Parliament have got to meet a large number of people either individually or at public functions. It is obviously impossible for them to check the antecedents of every individual or organisation that they come into contact with. To impute motives or *mala fides* to any such casual meeting, without sufficient proof, is reprehensible. What is still more reprehensible is to give publicity to unfounded allegations. In the interest of clean public life, it is necessary that such tendencies are firmly curbed. As upholders of public causes, the Press are our best ally and we cherish their freedom as much as we are zealous of our own rights as Members of this august House. I have, there-

fore, every hope that the Press would function with caution and full sense of responsibility in such matters so that the prestige and dignity of this House and its Members as also of the Press itself are maintained.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : What about the author of these charges ?

MR. SPEAKER : I have given everything in it.

With these words of caution and in the context of the fact that the Members concerned have already fully clarified their position on the floor of the House by way of personal explanation statements, I feel the matter should be treated as closed.

(Interruptions)

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : We have nothing to do with this matter,

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur) : I hope this ruling does not mean a charge-sheet against the Press.

MR. SPEAKER : No ; the Press is a part of us.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN (Badagara) : Have you called for any explanation from them ?

SHRI SURESH KURUP (Kottayam) : Sir, I wish to draw your attention to a very important matter : Two Kuwaiti nationals.....

MR. SPEAKER : I am looking into the matter. I have already asked.....I am looking into the matter,

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN : The same thing I want to repeat. It is a very serious matter.

SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY (Nalgonda) : I have given notice for omitting the names.

MR. SPEAKER : Nothing can be said about it. But I have said everything. I wanted to say about the Members.....

**SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE :** I gave a Calling Attention notice regarding the driving out of Nepalese from Meghalaya...

**MR. SPEAKER :** I have already got things moving. I will let you know. You come to me.

**SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE :** We have got it. I do not know whether you have seen it.

**MR. SPEAKER :** We will see.

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE :** What about the Maharashtra Governor ?

**MR. SPEAKER :** I am considering.

**PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE :** He will be dismissed otherwise. *(Interruptions)*

**SHRI M. RAGHUMA REDDY :** What about the Maharashtra Governor ?

**MR. SPEAKER :** I have already said it. We shall see to it.

*(Interruptions)*

**MR. SPEAKER :** What is it now ?

**SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH (Uluberia) :** The jute industry in West Bengal and Bihar is facing a crisis, because of synthetic granules. *(Interruptions)*

**MR. SPEAKER :** The Ministry of Agriculture is coming up for discussion.

**SHRI HANNAN MOLLAH :** It does not concern Agriculture Ministry.

*(Interruptions)*

**MR. SPEAKER :** We shall see. If you are not satisfied, we shall see. There is no difficulty. I am not averse to their interests. We shall see what best can be done.

**SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE :** It is a straight demand, Polyester is substituted for jute. *(Interruptions)*

**SHRI AMAL DATTA (Diamond Harbour) :** Whatever we want to raise, you never allow. *(Interruptions)*

**MR. SPEAKER :** I will allow one by one. We are taking up one subject after another. We shall come to that also. Now Papers Laid.

12.08 hrs.

#### PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

*[English]*

Detailed Demands for Grants of the Ministry of External Affairs for 1986-87.

**THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI B. R. BHAGAT) :** I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of External Affairs for 1986-87.

*[Placed in Library, See No. L T—2270/86]*

Detailed Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for 1986-87.

**THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI CHANDRA SHEKHAR SINGH) :** I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Detailed Demands for Grants (Hindi and English versions) of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas for 1986-87.

*[Placed in Library, See No. LT. 2271/86]*

Review on the working of and Annual Report of Rehabilitation Plantations Ltd., Punalur for 1984-85 and statement for delay in laying these papers.

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL SECURITY (SHRI ARUN NEHRU) :** I beg to lay on the Table.

(1) A copy each of the following papers (Hindi and English versions under sub-section (1) of section 619A of the Companies Act, 1956.

(i) Review by the Government on the working of the Rehabilitation Plantations Limited, Punalur, for the year 1984-85.

(ii) Annual Report of the Rehabilitation Plantations Limited, Punalur, for the year 1984-85 along with Audited Accounts and the comments of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon.

(2) A statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for delay in laying the papers mentioned at (1) above.

*[Placed in Library, See No. LT-2272/86]*