

12.30 hrs.

**MOTION RE: EXTENSION OF TIME FOR  
PRESENTATION OF REPORT OF THE  
JOINT COMMITTEE TO ENQUIRE INTO  
BOFORS CONTRACT**

*[English]*

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND (Chikkodi): I beg to move:

"That this House do further extend upto the last working day of April, 1988, the time for presentation of the report of the Joint Committee to enquire into Bofors Contract."

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Three Members from CPI(M) have given notices to oppose this. Any one of them can oppose instead of all the three.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat): It is a right of the individual.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY (Katwa): All of us would like to speak.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: All right. Shri Suresh Kurup.

SHRI SURESH KURUP (Kottayam): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, this is the second time when the Chairman of this Joint Committee is coming before this House for an extension. On the previous occasion, when he came before this House, the Members had expressed their apprehension that the Committee was going to seekendless extensions. That apprehension has come true. The reasons for extension given in the statement are flimsy. The Chairman of the Joint Committee should explain to this House the pace at which this Committee has been working. Then, the proceedings of the Committee have been appearing in the press every day. The Chairman has not denied the correctness of the same. There is no secrecy in this Committee. Everything is coming in the press and nothing has come before the House.

There are some strange co-incidences happening. It may be a co-incidence only. The Prime Minister goes to Sweden and immediately after his visit, the enquiry by the Prosecutor of Sweden is dropped regarding the Bofors gun deal. I am not casting any aspersions; it may be a co-incidence. But this co-incidence is happening regarding this enquiry and the whole contract only.

All this creates suspicion in the minds of the people.

The Chairman of the Joint Committee says that some more witnesses are there to be examined. I would like the Chairman to inform the House who are the other witnesses the Committee would like to examine. All these things are part of a massive cover-up operation and people of our country know that the real culprits are going to be exonerated.

The actual functioning of the Committee is a waste of public money.

So, I oppose the move for extension of the term of this Committee.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY (Katwa): Sir, this Committee has brought a bad name not for itself, but for the whole of Parliament because it goes in the name of a Parliamentary Committee. It had a specific job, but it had not done that. Utter humiliation heaped on this Committee and thereby on the Parliament also was seen when the officials from Bofors visited our country. At that time what should have been done was that the officials of the Government should not have met them. They should have been directly sent to the Committee because the Government, its Ministers and Members of the ruling party were accused in this case. But after a long dialogue with the high officials of Bofors, they were sent to the Committee and to the Committee they had not revealed anything. With temerity those officials said that they had given three names to the Government officials. What is the use of this Committee. We expected that if anybody had any qualms of conscience, he would

resign from this Committee. This Committee has reduced itself to an appendage of the Government. It is not serving any useful purpose. Many things are coming in the press and no contradiction has been made by the Chairman. The Committee has still not taken up the main task of investigating who has received the kickbacks. It is now bothering about technicalities, the quality of the gun and all that.

That is not the main thing. It may be a good gun. Anyway that is not their job. They are not doing their real job. Instead of clearing any doubt, the way the whole thing is being conducted, it is creating more suspicion. Sir, so far the main person has not been examined. The Prime Minister has not been called by the Committee and even if he is called one knows what kind of question will be put to him. We know the people who are there in the Committee. So, for the sake of fairness, if a proper committee is not there with proper power, we demand that no extension be given to this committee. It should be dismantled forthwith. People in our country are very intelligent. They can understand why the money was given and what connection does it have with the high people in power. Everybody understands all these things. Therefore, I would strongly appeal to stop this cover-up operation immediately.

SHRI AMAL DATTA (Diamond Harbour): Sir, when this committee was constituted we suggested certain terms of reference for the Committee which were not agreed to by the Government and hence the Opposition found itself constrained not to be included in the Committee. The Committee when constituted, it appeared to us and in fact to the whole country--there were a lot of comments--that this is entirely a white washing operation and those comments are now being proved true. It is taking an inordinately long time to find out something which has been already found long time ago. In fact recently a newspaper Report said that the Committee has got the name of the three companies who received the money from the Bofors. This is a very funny thing because these names were published in the Hindu more than six

months ago and in fact before the Committee was constituted.

The Committee was constituted and it went into taking evidence from all kinds of people who cannot really enlighten beyond what was already known and what was already published in the Press. Committee never followed up what is already known to the people. Only recently it says that it has found the name of the three companies. These are such companies about which nobody know who are their owners. Had they been doing a real enquiry, they should have immediately started the work with these names and would have tried to find out who are the people behind these companies. This work which was to be done much earlier has started now, six months after the Committee has been appointed. This is a very strange type of situation. Now, what people believe and we also do, that this Committee will go on taking extensions like this and ultimately just before the elections are announced, it will come up with a white-washed report saying that nobody is to be found guilty, at least nobody in India is to be found guilty. Some company whose ownership is not known, will be held responsible. They have been paid some Rs. 200 crores more as remuneration. For what purpose, one does not know. I never heard of people receiving money for actual work done and which they are entitled to receive surreptitiously through such companies whose ownership is not known and cannot be known under the laws of the country in which they are registered. The Government wants to maintain this kind of position through the instrumentality of the Committee. This is what is objectionable. The Parliament is now being made a scapegoat and through Parliament the Government is getting itself white washed. Sir, we very strongly protest against the extension of time.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat): Sir, the short point of the term of reference of this Committee, the point to which the Government attaches great importance and to which the entire country attaches great importance, was to try to find out the recipients of the kickbacks. The fact of the kickback is established not by us but by the

[Shri Indrajit Gupta]

Audit Commission of the Sweden. So, the explanation which is being given here in this note justifying the extension of time does not throw the slightest light or an indication of any optimism that they will be able to find out the source. Other things they can do. They can convert this into a bunch of artillery experts and can see as to how the gun fires in the mountain or in the desert and all that. I would not go by their opinion on that. But as far as finding out who has taken the money is concerned, there are only four or five possible sources. He should tell us whether any of them is within the competence of his Committee to find out that.

Firstly, the people who have taken the money naturally are not going to come and confess.

Secondly, it is the Bofors' company itself which pays the money. They are not going to say who they paid the money too. They have only given the names of the three companies which are registered abroad. We do not know whether any Indian or any non-resident Indian or anybody else is connected with those companies. I do not know whether this Committee has even tried to find that out.

Thirdly, there is Mr. Win Chadha. He may know it because he was operating in this country as a sort of permanent representative or agent of this company. But Mr. Win Chadha is beyond the reach of this Committee perhaps beyond the reach of our Government also. We are trying unsuccessfully to get him back here. But certainly Mr. Shankaranand is not able to get hold of Win Chadha, I am sure, to testify anything before this Committee.

Lastly, there is the Audit Committee itself of Sweden which knows who has taken the money. But in their Report, they have said clearly that "on grounds of confidentiality we are not going to reveal the identity of the recipients."

So beyond this, there is no source. Six months have passed. The Public Prosecutor

of Sweden Mr. Ringberg--according to Press Reports--had taken it upon himself to conduct some independent investigation. But after sometime, he also had said that there is no use doing this because nothing is going to come to light. So I am closing my investigation. As Mr. Kurup said, it was perhaps the coincidence that Mr. Ringberg gave up the task very soon after the Prime Minister visited Sweden. Now the only reason for which this Committee can be given extension is that they may be thinking of having a joy ride to Sweden which is quite useless. What will they find out there? Nothing. This Committee will be exposed to more ridicule, I should say ... the Committee or Sub-Committee of the Indian Parliament or whatever it is. If all this expenditure is incurred to send them to Sweden, they will go around and not find anything is quite obvious which the Public Prosecutor cannot find, the Audit Commissioner refuses to divulge, the Bofors' company refuses to divulge. So nothing can be found out and I think.....

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI K.C. PANT): May I ask him a question? When the Terms of Reference were being framed, Members opposite were so insistent that the Committee should be allowed to go to Sweden. My friend knows that very well.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: It is because of our insistence that you are now thinking of sending them to Sweden. There were authorities.

SHRI K.C. PANT: They are all more concerned with the provisions. That is what I have said.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: When the Terms of Reference were being framed at that time there were certain authorities in Sweden who--it was not wrong for us to think--might be available for giving us some information. But in the last six months it is being shown that those authorities are also either not willing to co-operate or they themselves have said that there is no possibility of getting at the truth. After all this money is being spent out of the Consolidated Fund--the expenditure of this Com-

mittee. And if we have the slightest assurance or any kind of optimism that they are on the track of the culprits and they will be able to find out something, that would be a different matter. But it seems to me, that has never been the intention of this Committee as constituted. They are not able to do anything. I am not prepared to ask the tax payers of this country to finance a trip to Sweden by them at this stage when it is already known that nothing will be forthcoming. Therefore, we strongly object to all this. The whole thing is a kind of red herring being drawn across the trail. And the people of this country have got no confidence whatsoever in the capacity of this Committee to do this job. Therefore, on all these grounds I am strongly opposed to Mr. Shankaranand's Motion. I think no permission should be given for extending this. They have collected the evidence of nine non-official witnesses and four official witnesses. Thirteen witnesses have been examined by them. According to this note, there are some top military officials--two people from Bofors, and some high officials of the Defence Ministry, and so on, have been examined. So, whatever evidence they have collected, let them make it in the form of a report and come to the conclusion that nothing further is available or possible; and inform the House, and not prolong this agony, by spending more money out of the Consolidated Fund.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): Without any elements of cynicism, when this Committee was formed, headed by Mr. Shankaranand, I had the feeling that the only work that will be left to Mr. Shankaranand will be to come repeatedly before this House, seeking the extension of time for the Committee. It was not a cynical attitude. I knew what was the situation; I knew the members very well also, and I felt this would happen. And as per my expectation, for the second time they have come here, and they will come for yet another occasion. They will not be able to find anything.

Here, a reference was made to the terms of reference. In fact, if we are today opposed to the extension of the term of this Committee, remember that our atti-

tude emanates right from our basic approach to the formation of this Committee. We did not say that we would not join this Committee at all. I want to recall and to go on record that we had suggested: 'Forget everything else: the composition of the Committee, who heads it how many seats are given to the Opposition--of course, we had given suggestions, but we are prepared to give all that.' But we gave four rock bottom, minimum suggestions. If they had been accepted, probably this Committee would not have been in the soup as it is today.

Number one: Because the Prime Minister had repeatedly said that it had been our decision since 1980 not to have any middlemen in these types of deals--Defence deal or other deals--our first term of reference was : 'Give to the Committee the power to examine all the decision related to Defence purchases, procurement and storage right from 1980.' Number two: We had also suggested that if we are dealing with the particular aspect of Bofors, it is not that we are interested in one particular scandal, or the other. We are concerned about the security of the country--the Defence expenditure--and, therefore, we wanted that not only this particular Bofors scandal on the kickbacks, but even the corruption that is involved in the West German submarine deal, should also be included. And, incidentally, the former Defence Minister, the former Finance Minister and now only a Member of Parliament has said: 'Actually, as far as the submarine deal is concerned, I have noted the concerned name on the file; and if the Minister is not prepared to come forward with it, I will do it.' So, there are a number of complications. We wanted that issue also to be included.

Lastly, there may be some foreign nationals, not necessarily connected with Bofors, but those who are in the know of the culprits, because the conspiracy has been hatched in collusion with some friends outside and, therefore, let this Committee be given an inherent power, not leaving it to the Speaker, the power to summon any foreign national to this country to appear before the Committee, and to

[Prof. Madhu Dandavate]

record the evidence given by that witness. All these three propositions were rejected; and that is the reason why we did not function in the Committee.

While the investigations are going on, I would like to draw the attention of the Committee and its Chairman that two things are already before us. Number one: the National Audit Bureau has already submitted a report, in which they have said: "We are holding back the names"--as Mr. Indrajit Gupta has said--"on grounds of confidentiality, because the banks from which we have obtained the information, to them we have given an assurance that we will not reveal the names." And, therefore, those gaps were already there. Really, the work of this Committee is to fill in the gaps of the Swedish Audit Bureau's report. That is a major task.

Secondly as far as the Chief Public Prosecutor of Stockholm is concerned, he has already admitted two things. The payment has been made. He has quantified Rs. 64 crores. Further three companies have been named; further, it has been alleged that since no authorities of the Government of India--that statement came at the time when the Prime Minister had also gone there--he said that since no authorities are prepared to cooperate with us in finding out the names and giving up the information, no useful purpose will be served further. But, *prima facie*, about payment being made, quantity of the payment made, the name of the company, everything has been mentioned. When the concerned authorities came here, they said that they had already met the Defence Minister and they had given some information which they could pass on to the Committee. I go by the paper reports. We are told through the newspaper that while he was prepared to give some names, the Chairman was reported to have said that he would not accept the names orally; he will not accept them at all. Now, this is the manner in which this Committee has been functioning. I do not want to cast aspersion on the individual members of the Committee and

especially the Chairman. He is a learned and hon. Member of this House. We do not want to cast aspersion on any one of them individually. Only I want to tell them that the road to hell is paved with best intentions. Your intentions are very fine to see that their cleanness is restored in the country of the scandals have been dug out, skeletons are dug out. But what are the concrete measures. Your Committee, which is powerless in its terms of reference, when such a powerless Committee functions just beyond their ability--Mr. Chairman, I am not talking about personal ability but institutional ability; I am not casting aspersion on him, but I am saying that the very nature of the terms of reference are such that even when the best of the intentions are there, you will not be able to find out the truth; and when this Committee is not going to dig out the truth and find out facts, what is the use of having this Committee for a long time? No doubt enough status has been given to this Committee. Shankaranandji is no more in the Cabinet, but he is in the unique position of having a Cabinet status without Cabinet responsibility. It is a very very interesting development. So, he has all the powers; he has all the status. But with all the status since terms of reference which we wanted to build up are not there, what will be the work of the Committee in arriving at the truth? Since we are convinced that this is not the Committee with limited powers and terms of reference that can actually dig out facts and truth, we are totally opposed to giving extension to this Committee. The best thing that they can do is they may drag it on till the Parliament is dissolved and that is likely to happen; I will not be surprised. Probably, the Committee will go along with Parliament; that means the term will be over. I think, they will, again and again, under some pretext or other, come before this House and see that there should be further extension. But we do not want to make a mockery out of such an Institution.

In this Parliament, various Committees have certain status, tradition and dignity. We do not want that the dignity of the Institution if the Committee of the Parliament is destroyed; and that is the reason why to

protect your reputation, Mr. Chairman, and also to protect the reputation of the Committee and of the Institution of the Parliamentary Committees, I would suggest that let this Committee be wound up and let no extension be given at all.

DR. DATTA SAMANT (Bombay South Central): We think with reasonable suspicion that the people of higher ranks and the biggest politicians are involved. Perhaps the whole country and the average man of this country is knowing about it. I am really surprised the way in which this Committee was appointed. Already six months have passed. It is not a question of individual it is a question of sanctity and integrity of the country. It is a question whether the corruption at the highest level is involved or not.

If you have gone through all these details, then you should have observed that in the last six months, it created a reasonable suspicion. I do not want to say anything against anybody. Our Ministers have gone in August last year to Sweden. Then our Prime Minister was in Sweden from 21st and 22nd January this year. At a Press Conference he was repeatedly asked about Bofors. But he did not say a single word except saying that a Parliamentary Committee was appointed. Even the Prime Minister of Sweden had come to his rescue at the Press Conference then, saying that the meeting was about nuclear weapons but not about Bofors guns. Such type of behaviour even by people at high places shows that they are trying to avoid the whole situation and it is causing suspicion in the minds of the people of this country. The average man is likely to believe that people of high ranks are involved in such type scandals.

The functionaries of Bofors and others, all of them say that they all very nice people, that they are all honest people. But these things are done by the Bofors company; it is a bad company. It only shows that they are trying to avoid the big issued. All the Swedish people say that they are very nice people and that their relations with India are very good, but the Bofors may be a bad company, and they may have

given the money. This type of attitude is creating suspicion. Even the Swedish people are coming to the Government's rescue. It is really going to prove that some people, some high ranking people are involved.

I do not want to take more time. The Audit Bureau have come out with the names. Three companies are involved. I have read the names in the newspapers. One in Svenska, the second is A and E Services, and I do not know the third name. It is the duty of our Government to find out who are the Indian people linked with these companies. What is the link? I think the Government knows, the people who are involved in these companies. It is a question of Rs. 65 crores.

Instead of finding out these links, honourable Shri Shankaranandji and the members are showing in the Press, TV and through the radio details about the range or firing of the gun, just mislead us. It is very difficult. I am putting this in this House, because the average illiterate man of this country is very intelligent. Without taking the *prima facie* case, they are delaying. It is difficult for Win Chadha to come, he is getting certificates though he is hale and hearty.

I think all this corroborates that instead of trying to find out the facts, the Committee is misleading and creating such type of conditions just to delay. They think that delaying is the best thing because the people will forget. But the Indian people will not forget.

Some hon. Members have said that the Government is afraid that because there is something troubling their minds, something may come out. They are afraid that the people may get annoyed.

I therefore, totally oppose giving extension to this Committee. On the contrary, let us scrap the Committee. If you are not willing to do that let us not spend the money of the poor people of this country, and instead of making a farce let us wind up the Committee. I am accusing in this

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house that definitely some people of high ranks and politicians are involved. That is the only conclusion that can be drawn after all that has been going on and hearing about the Committee's work in the last six months.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have received six more notices after 10 o'clock but now it is lunch time. I think we can adjourn for lunch and re-assemble at 2 p.m.

13.00 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha adjourned for Lunch till  
Fourteen of the clock.*

14.06 hrs.

*The Lok Sabha re-assembled after lunch at -  
Six minutes past Fourteen of the Clock*

[English]

MOTION RE. EXTENSION OF TIME FOR  
PRESENTATION OF REPORT OF THE  
JOINT COMMITTEE TO ENQUIRE INTO  
BOFORS CONTRACT--Contd.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Dinesh Goswami. Please be brief.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI (Guwahati): Mr. Deputy-Speaker Sir, I come here to oppose this motion for extension. In fact when this Committee was formed with the terms of reference in spite of our objections, we pointed out that it would be a bypassing exercise. When Mr. Shankaranand was taken from the Water Resources Ministry to head this Committee, we knew that it will meet with watery grave, that is what virtually happened. He has come second time for extension.

Initially, Sir, on this side of the House when we strongly said that payment has been made by Bofors to middlemen, it was denied by the Government. The Swedish Audit Report blacked out the names of the recipients. But the names of the recipients have by now come in papers, I do not know, that has come to the Committee,

that is something to which we only get through the newspaper reports. The three names have come. They are, Svenska; Moresco; and A and E Services. I feel it is now the duty of the Government to find out through its machinery as to how and why these payments were made, because payments were made, as it has appeared in newspapers, for example to A and E Services after the Government made it clear that no middlemen will be allowed to be engaged for no services being rendered by this Company to Bofors, so far as the gun deal is concerned. But unfortunately, the Government takes a very peculiar position. When the Government is confronted with such questions, the Government escapes by saying that the matter is entirely with the jurisdiction of the Parliamentary Committee. But when the Bofors delegation came here and submitted the names to the Government, the Government did not take up the position that the names should not be given to us because the matter is under adjudication by the Committee, you should go and tell the Committee all the details. The Government accepts the names and passes them on to the Committee. Whenever it is inconvenient to the Government, the Government shifts its responsibility to the Committee and decides not to discharge its own obligations. We knew at that particular point of time that it will be beyond the Committee, really on the terms of reference as it was to come to the truth.

In fact, I have got another complaint. I think, the Government is not taking this Committee seriously, is apparent from the fact that while the Committee was doing its half work, two members of the Committee were inducted into the Cabinet and thereby they will have to go out of the Committee. If the Government is serious regarding the Committee, I feel that the members of the Committee ought not to have been taken out of the Committee. This also shows the casual attitude of the Government to the whole Committee.

Now, in the grounds for extension, the Chairman has said that the examination of the witnesses are not yet over. But unfortunately if this Committee is really to make a pretence of some job, it is necessary to

examine some persons like the Prime Minister. The hon. Prime Minister said that he had a definite assurance from Mr. Olof Palme. We do not have any contemporary document regarding this assurance. We do not have today Mr. Olof Palme, who unfortunately was assassinated. Therefore, the Prime Minister's statement must go before the Committee. I think it is in the fitness of things that the Committee ought to examine also the former Defence Ministers also to find out the real position.

Now in the list of witnesses that has been furnished regarding the Committee, we find that neither the Prime Minister nor the former Defence Minister has been examined. There is no indication whatsoever as to what this Committee proposes to do to find out from the three recipients regarding the details because I believe, that the three recipients are outside the purview of this Committee. And if these three recipients are outside the purview of this Committee, then however an honest attempt is made by this Committee, the Committee cannot succeed. There the Government is the only authority as the Government has got certain agencies as its command which may make an attempt. If it fails it can come before the House and say that it did make an honest attempt but because of the laws of those countries it is not possible to get the details. But the Government, at the present moment, is silent about this. These are the grounds on which we opposed the extension knowing fully well that extension after extension may be granted, but ultimately the result of this Committee will be totally nil. Therefore, while supporting the other arguments which have been advanced by my friends already which I do not want to repeat, I strongly oppose the extension of this Committee and I feel that whatever the Committee has done that should be placed before the House. Let us go through it. There is no need for giving further extension to this Committee.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO (Parvathipuram): I rise to oppose the extension of time that has been sought by this Committee because the manner in which the Committee has been formed and

the way it has been functioning, has lowered the dignity of Parliament as an institution.

When reports first appeared regarding payments that were made for securing this contract by the Bofors company from India, all of us from this side demanded the formation of a parliamentary committee specifically to find out whether these reports were true; if they were true, how it took place and who were the recipients. I would like to recall that at that particular moment of time, the then Minister of Defence including the Prime Minister himself who held the portfolio, charged us with falling into a trap of a process of destabilisation. He said that these reports were malicious, mischievous, false, motivated, etc etc. We took them by the word and dropped the matter and after that the discussion was over. But when the Swedish National Audit Bureau gave the report saying that money had passed hands, Government virtually accepted the position and then decided to set up a committee. Here I would like to point out to the Defence Minister, who has repeatedly been saying that it is you who have asked for the Committee, that there was a qualitative difference between the time when we asked for the Committee and the time you decided to set up the Committee. We asked for the Committee when this report came, to find out whether it is true or not. And you decided to agree to set up this Committee after it was established that money had passed hands and corruption had taken place at very high places.

When this Committee was formed, one of the things we insisted upon was that a sub-committee of the Committee should be allowed to go abroad, if it was necessary, in case the institutions abroad said that they would give you the information if you came over to Sweden. Please go through the motion that you have brought forward on the floor of this very House. The motion debarred the Committee from examining anybody, any foreigner and from recording evidence in a foreign country. We have been told that you have to go and gather the evidence. How does one gather evidence without recording it? Would



[Shri V. Kishore Chandra S. Deo]

sight-seeing trip have brought out the truth as to who had received or taken the bribes? Well, at that particular moment of time I felt and still feel that there was no necessity for a Committee at all. It was a question between the buyer and the seller to determine who these recipients were and for what purpose this money was paid. At that time, several colleagues of mine from this side including me had demanded that Win Chadha's passport be impounded. Government did not find enough reason to impound his passport. I charge that he was deliberately let off. Now, you say that Win Chadha is necessary for evidence. But he is not available and so on and so forth. In the annals of parliamentary democracy, in the history of parliamentary democracy, this will go down as one of the most deplorable incidents where the institution of parliament has been used to carry on a huge cover up operation to push under the carpet the truth regarding such huge amounts of corruption which have taken place at very high places.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, much of the information which emanated, came from institutions abroad. Mr. Ringberg, the Chief Prosecutor started an investigation himself. Well, one of my colleagues mentioned over here that it may have been a coincidence that he announced the discontinuance of this particular investigation just at the moment when our Prime Minister was present there. That besides, I would like to point out to the reason that he has given. He has said that there has been no effort made from the Indian side and that there has been no cooperation from the Indian Government who obviously don't want to know the truth, so, he felt that it would be a futile exercise for him to carry on this investigation. Well, several reports have appeared in newspapers. On the 2nd of February, there was a report giving the bank accounts, names, addresses, people who have been handling those accounts, and no contradiction has come from the Government so far. I really don't know whether any show cause notice has been issued. It is a breach of privilege, when the Committee is looking into something, for

somebody to publish information which would go against the interests of the Committee. If that was so, they should have instituted some kind of proceedings against that newspaper, or at least called him to give evidence before the Committee.... (*Interruptions*).

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI K.C. PANT): What does one do if an hon. Member reads out from newspapers the same names? The sense of responsibility should also extend to the House.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Well, I would like to know from the Chairman of this Committee whether at least he summoned the Editor of this newspaper to find out from where he got this information and whether it was true or not. When it has appeared, did he make this minimum effort of even asking him from where he got this information, to verify whether it was true or not?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: That was raised in the Committee.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Sir, further I would like to state that when a Committee was already functioning for a particular purpose, the people who came from this company were allowed to give names to the Government. This is against all the precedents, conventions, traditions and privileges that a parliamentary committee enjoys. When the Parliamentary committee is seized of a particular matter, we don't even raise it on the floor of the House. And here, when the Committee was already there for this purpose, the members of this Committee did not know that these representatives from that particular company were coming here, and after they came here, they had the audacity to give the names to the Government, ignoring the parliamentary committee, and the Committee members don't seem to have taken any objection to that.

Sir, there have been many a slip between the cup and the lip, as far as this Committee is concerned. Several questions remain unanswered. The main purpose of

us to ask for this committee was to find out about the corruption, whether bribes were paid, whether commissions were paid and, if so, who received them. But to divert the attention of the people and of this Parliament, this Committee has gone into the technicalities. We are not technical people. But even here I would like to mention that according to the Mayadas Committee's Report, which was placed on the Table of this House by one of my colleagues--I do not know whether it has been circulated to the members of the Committee--there was one gentleman who preferred this Bofors gun; sixteen gave it the third place. This particular gentleman who had given Bofors the first preference, has been promoted to the rank of Major General, and he is assisting the Committee. It is unfortunate, Sir. I further understand that there is another Report given by one Mahendra Singh who had said that this Bofors was as good as the French gun. In fact, he has preferred the Sofma's rapid fire capability, about which they are talking. I am told there was a difference of one and a half second between the two guns and the cost was also not more as far as the other gun was concerned. This gives rise to a lot of speculation. So, Sir, I would again like to stress over here that it is the dignity of the Parliament that we are concerned about and we cannot allow the institution of Parliament to be utilised in this clandestine manner, for sopping up probably one of the biggest clandestine operations that have taken place in recent times. Therefore, I hope that this Government would at least wind up this Committee and lay on the Table of the House whatever information they have with them because I have my own doubts whether they will get any information at all. In fact I personally feel that the Report has already been ready even before the witnesses have been examined. What is the point of continuing this farce? For how long? How is it going to help? So, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I oppose the extension of this rather vehemently and I would like to register my protest and go down on record against this kind of an operation which has actually affected the dignity, prestige and decorum of this institution which we have nurtured for the last 40 years.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN (Bahraich): Sir, I rise to oppose the motion for the extension of the term of the Joint Parliamentary Committee to give its report on Bofors.

Sir, Bofors in the last six months has become a name. It is a name which sounds odious to the ears of every one who believed this promise of clean Government. The scandal involving Bofors is appalling, horrifying, shocking and has eroded the moral authority of the Government, has even cast reflections on our institution and, Sir, I very strongly feel that we should not allow anything more to be done which further harms.

Shri Shankaranandji, who has moved the motion, when he took over this responsibility to chair the Committee, if I am right, Sir, then he was holding the charge of the Ministry of Water Resources. He was made to resign from the Ministry at a time when the country was facing the most serious drought of its history. We thought possibly the Government attaches more importance to the work of the Bofors Committee that the work of providing water to those who are 'thirsty, who are suffering on account of drought, and we thought that because you are making the Minister for Water Resources to resign and take over this responsibility, then naturally you feel that the matter is urgent and it will be attended to. But now all the time he is coming to the House asking for extension of the term of the Committee. Then, even those hopes that Government attaches importance and considers this as urgent, even all those hopes have been belied. Sir, I feel we seem to have reached a stage where we don't have the courage to speak the truth nor we do have the grace to tell a convincing lie, and that is the whole problem, that is the reason why again and again we are:....

DR. KRUPASINDHU BHOI (Sambalpur):  
Lie' is unparliamentary.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Very well, Sir. This is a remark and I am not

[Shri Arif Mohammad Khan]

taking credit for it, but almost a similar remark has been made even in the House of Commons. If necessary, I will present the proceedings here. That is the whole problem and that is the reason because they do not have the courage to admit the truth and they do not have the guts, they do not have the grace to convince about their cover up operations. That is the reason why all these extensions are being sought. I would like to point out, Sir, that after the Prime Minister had made this statement to which many hon. Members have referred that he has personally sought an assurance from the Prime Minister of Sweden that there will be no kick-back, there will be no middleman. If I am not wrong, he even went to the extent of saying that he put a provision into the contract that there will be no middleman and after that, when the Director General of Sweden, of the Audit and Accounts, when he in his report admitted that the kick-back has been paid, Sir, they took only 30 days to tell us that the statement which was being made by the Prime Minister here was not true or even if it was true, the other party has not honoured the commitment, the assurance which they had given to our Prime Minister. They took only 30 days to establish that. Our Committee is already six-months old. Half the work has already been done by the Audit Bureau of Sweden. But our Committee in six months' time has not been able to establish who are these people who have received the kick-backs. The people of this country are not interested in niceties; they are not interested in any other thing. They are interested in knowing who are these people who have run away with 53 crores or 163 crores or Rs. 200 crores, whatever the amount. Who is the person who has run away with this huge amount, which should have been spent on the millions of poor people of India, who do not even have the basic amenities. They are interested in knowing this.

The Chairman of JPC is asking for extension of time, and the Prime Minister before he leaves for Sweden, makes a statement, in the course of an interview: "It is

a very difficult to get the names" When the Prime Minister has already given his mind, he has almost given his direction that it is difficult to get the names, I do not know whether the options of the Committee are still open, after this statement of the Prime Minister. If the Prime Minister feels that it is not possible to get the names, what is the purpose of asking another extension for this committee. With a Urdu couplet, I would like to conclude:

*"Tum hi dilbar tumhi katil, tumhi musif thahre,"*  
*Akarba mere kren khun ka dawva kis par"*

SHRI E. AYYAPU REDDY (Kurnool): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am on a different aspect. I do not want to repeat the points already stated.

The extension of time that has been asked for is the last working day of April, 1988. There are hardly 40 working days and in this busy Budget Session, does the Committee hope to conclude its deliberations and prepare a report? According to our expert on Parliamentary Practice and Procedure, Shri Shakti the Prime Minister is an important witness because he was the person who concluded directly the deal with Olof Palme. Has the Committee decided, in view of the expert opinion of Mr. Shakti, whether it must examine the Prime Minister or not. Has it come to the conclusion that it must examine him, or if it has come to the conclusion, then again it will take time. Another important witness is Win Chadha. Will you be able to get at him, within these 40 days? The other important witnesses who have to help are the people who were in the Audit Bureau of Sweden. No attempt has been made to examine them so far. So, the principal witnesses, most important witnesses have yet to be examined by this Committee. With a lot of work ahead, does the Committee seriously hope to complete its work and give a report before April, 1988. In other words, you have to seek another extension. Why can't you come straight-away and say, you require more time, say up to April, 1989. It would be better if they ask for a realistic time extension.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Extension up to December, 1989 will be better!

SHRI E. AYYAPU REDDY: If really serious work has to be done, these are the important items of work which are ahead of this Committee.

I understand, officers and officials of the Bofors gave information to the Defence Department and at the instance of the Defence Department, they appeared before the Committee. They were not summoned by the Committee. They refused to disclose the names before the Committee.

Now, as was pointed out by learned friend Shri V. Kishore Chandra S. Deo, it really involves a breach of privilege of the Committee and breach of privilege of this House.

DR. G.S. RAJHANS (Jhanjharpur): There is no breach of privilege.

SHRI E. AYYAPU REDDY: It is all right. That is one of the opinions.

PROF. MADHU DANAVATE: He says that is something worse than that.

SHRI E. AYYAPU REDDY: It has appeared in the press also that the Chairman has engaged an investigating Agency, of the names given to him, and Members of the Committee took objection to the Chairman unilaterally taking a decision with regard to the investigation and selection of the Agency for investigation also. Therefore, apparently there seems to be some sort of a contradiction or difference of opinion in the Committee with regard to the methodology of employing the agency for investigating into the names that were given to the Chairman or to the Defence Department. This has to be resolved.

I will not further repeat what has already been stated but it is necessary for me to quote Mr. Kuldip Nayar who has quoted from the public Prosecutor of Sweden, Mr. Ringberg. This is what Mr. Ringberg, Public

Prosecutor of Sweden has to say about India's Cooperation:—

"India is a country of justice and I expected some form of response. But I got nothing at all." His regret is that "Nobody wants to get any information anywhere and all the efforts by India for clarification amounted to a farce."

This is the quotation which a very reputed journalist has published very recently.

DR. G.S. RAJHANS: He is very much biased

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: We may be entitled to our opinion. The hon. Member is entitled to his opinion.

SHRI E. AYYAPU REDDY: There has been no contradiction of the statement of the Public Prosecutor of Sweden. He could not misquote him and if he had misquoted him, certainly the Defence Department should have clarified the position.

Under these circumstances, I say that the motion for extension of time till April is only artificial and the real purpose must be to ask for an extension for a further date.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA (Sangrur): Sir, regarding the motion for extension of Bofors Committee's term, I want to submit that, at first the Chairman of the Committee must inform this House whether he is getting full cooperation and information from this Government and the concerned Government of that country and the concerned company.

I feel that if the Committee has not done sufficient spade work, the Committee will not be able to arrive at a concrete conclusion even if more time is given to it. So better all the facts, whatever you have found out through the deliberations and meetings and from the witnesses which were available to the Committee during the last one year, and on the basis of that information, certain conclusions should be

[Shri Balwant Singh Ramoowalia]

reached and keeping in mind the importance of this august Committee, the sincerity and seriousness and also the object of the Committee, no further extension of time should be given to the Committee. With these words, I express my feelings.

[Translation]

SHRI RAM NARAIN SINGH (Bhiwani): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, as far as the extension of term of this Committee is concerned, I oppose it. The Members of the opposition parties have spoken and they have given all facts. With regard to this matter, I would like to submit that the whole of India knows about it and the Public Prosecutor and the Auditor General of Sweden too have said that commission was paid in the contract. Mention is being made by the whole of the Indian press and the people that the commission has been paid in this deal. In this regard, a Parliamentary Committee was formed. This Committee has no representation of the opposition Members. Therefore, its proceedings are ex-parte and the ex-parte proceedings are of no use. When a court comes to know that the people have lost confidence in its, it does not take up the case for hearing. The whole press and the public is of the opinion that this Committee is working under pressure and it is not in a position to find out full facts.

Secondly, I want to state that the whole country is facing severe drought and the people are on the brink of starvation. The money to be spent upon this committee will go waste and there will be no use of extending the term of this committee. If that money is spent for the benefit of drought affected people, they will get help from it and would also be thankful to the Government for this. You can see how many cattle in Rajasthan and Gujarat are starving due to shortage of fodder and the situation has worsened to such an extent that the people have also reached the point of starvation. If the term of the Committee is extended, more money will be spent on this. I would like to say that

money should be spent for the drought affected people. That is why I am opposing the extension of the term of the Committee.

[English]

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI K.C. PANT): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, before Shri Shankaranand speaks, may I just say two things because it may be a little embarrassing for him to say and therefore I would like to say it and that is, certain reflections have been cast on the working of the Committee... (Interruptions). The Chairman is there. It may be a little embarrassing for the Chairman. Therefore, I consider it my duty to say that this is both unfortunate and unwarranted.

SHRI AMAL DATTA (Diamond Harbour): How do you know?

(Interruptions)

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO (Parvathipuram): We cannot help it if the truth is unfortunate to you.

SHRI K.C. PANT: I know the officers who are going there. I know the materials have given. I know the agencies that are at their command. I know all those things certainly.

SHRI AMAL DATTA: Are you giving every cooperation to the Committee?

SHRI K.C. PANT: Certainly. We are cooperative. It is for the Chairman to say that the Government is cooperating or not. But I would certainly know as much as any of my hon. friends on the Opposite who have chosen to make these remarks against the Committee. Now, the Committee is a Committee of the House. It is our Committee. It is a Committee of all of us. You had asked for the Committee. At that time also you perhaps knew that the Committee functions in a certain way and it represents the whole House. Some Members did not choose to come on the Committee. We wanted them to.

(Interruptions)

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: It is not like any other Parliamentary Committee. This is an unprecedented Committee.

SHRI K.C. PANT: My hon. friend knows that this is not the time to go into all these things. But it is not we who set the precedent. It is you who wanted the precedent set. Please remember this.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: We wanted it because this was an unprecedented case.

SHRI K.C. PANT: Please remember this. Therefore, you cannot change the facts retrospectively. It is not possible. Retrospective change of facts is simply not possible.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SATYAGOPAL MISRA (Tamluk): Change it now.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please order. Let the Minister speak.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI K.C. PANT: A responsible reaction can only be to await the report of the Committee. That can be the only responsible reaction and in the meantime, to maintain the respect of the Committee and to maintain the dignity of the Committee, that is our duty, in this House. *(Interruptions)* And I do not think, irrelevant remarks are going to change the facts because we owe it to this Committee, we owe it to every Committee of this House, we owe it to every Member who is sitting on that Committee to give them the respect that is due to them as Members of this House. I think, all of us are involved in it. This is not a party matter.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: We are not involved in it.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI K.C. PANT: Of course, some of the opposition members are there. And let me tell my friends that some opposition members are there.

*(Interruptions)*

I do not want to call anyone names. But the point of the matter is that even if it were only members opposite, I would not say such things against them. This is all I can say. I would hold them in respect. Today they are sitting opposite. do I call them names? Is that the way to behave in the House? Just because you are sitting opposite does not mean that I will call you names. *(Interruptions)* Many things have been said. I do not want to repeat them. But I think, we owe it to ourselves to show more respect to our Committee to await its report.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI AMAL DATTA. We disown this Committee.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY (Katwa): It is a useless Committee.

*(Interruptions)*

SHRI K.C. PANT: I beg you pardon? My young colleague at the back who called this Committee a useless Committee, let me listen to him.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY Government should show respect to the Committee. But first the officials met them and then they were sent to the Committee...*(Interruptions)*. They were not allowed to give names

SHRI K.C. PANT. My friend, the Government has shown every respect to this Committee and it intends to show every respect to this Committee. If you also show respect to the Committee, that will go down well in the country and if you do not show respect, it will betray your bias

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: They have to.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.C. PANT: I am afraid that your remarks today will be construed in the country as showing bias. Otherwise, an unbiased approach would have been to wait the report of the Committee. After that there will be a debate. You could have picked holes in it. It was open to you to have criticised at that stage. But at this stage, when the Committee is going into the facts, it almost seems as though you are afraid of the truth that the Committee will bring out.

(Interruptions)

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: It is in your interest.

(Interruptions)

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI (Guwahati): Do you think we have got no right to oppose extension?

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.C. PANT: I am not saying you have no right. Far be it from me to say that you have no right. But I have only referred to only one particular point. I am not answering a debate. I would refer to one particular point because, I thought, it would be embarrassing for the Chairman to say these things. I think somebody ought to say it and therefore, I said it.

Now the other thing is, a point which is not quite relevant to this matter has been raised, that is, the Prime Minister's visit to Sweden and trying to link it up with the Prosecutor's closing of his enquiry there. Now the point is very simple. All the Hon. Members know that the Prime Minister's visit was in connection with the meeting of the six leaders and six leaders of five continents who have been working for peace and who have been active in the whole process which has led to the INF Treaty between USA and USSR. We should

be proud of that effort and the Prime Minister's role in it. (Interruptions) ... Yes, because this is the same group of six and the meeting was fixed much earlier.

Hon. Members are entitled to their opinion about Mr. Ringberg's inquiry. I have nothing to say about it, I have already said something about it earlier, I have nothing more to say. But the two have no connection and to link it up in this manner is most unfortunate. It shows the paucity of argument and it shows that everything is good enough to beat the Government with, even though it means denigrating country's effort in the direction of peace. What an unfortunate thing this is that something which pitched at that level should be dragged down to this level here! This is all I would say.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: If you are saying all this to defend this Committee and its operation, I am extremely sorry and if you have to drag matters about peace, etc. When have we not supported the Government's efforts on these matters?

SHRI K.C. PANT: That is what the meeting in Sweden was about. (Interruptions) .... My young friend, this is what the meeting was about in Sweden. If you are following it closely, then you would know that the purpose of the meeting in Sweden was the meeting of the six leaders. Once you know that, then you should know what all that group of six has done for peace, for non-alignment and for a cause which all of us support.

PROF. MADHU DANAVATE: Nobody questions that.

SHRI K.C. PANT: Well, nobody questions that. I am only submitting to you that the Prime Minister's visit was in that connection.

PROF. MADHU DANAVATE: I am afraid Mr. Defence Minister, even if we raise the question of privilege, you may say that it will disturb world peace. That is the trouble. Why do you have all this cause-effect relationship?

SHRI K.C. PANT: Cause and effect must be related. You are quite right. Therefore, when here it is wrongly related, I have a right to tell you so. You are not agreeing with me. But I must say so because if I do not say this, than what five-six members have said will be reported in a wrong way. I don't want that. The country must not misunderstand this matter and therefore I want to make it clear that there is no linkage between these two matters.... . . . . .  
(Interruptions)

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND (Chikkodi): Sir, I never expected that the opposition for the extension of time to the Committee will take such a long time.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Actually, we wanted more extension for discussion. We did not press for it.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: The Opposition Members must thank you because you allowed them to say anything which is not relevant here.

SHRI AMAL DATTA: This is a reflection on the Chair. This should be withdrawn. I am very serious about it. Sir, kindly expunge it.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is not a reflection on the Chair. Please carry on.

(Interruptions)

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: I never interrupted a single Hon. Member during all these two-three hours. May I expect the same from them? After all, you are speaking of the dignity of the House. Let us keep the dignity of the House. I can only say one thing to the Hon. Member who spoke about the dignity of the House. Should I say with all humility that I have been here in this House for the last more than 20 years continuously? I know what the dignity of the House means. I have not read about it only in the newspapers. I know that an Hon. Member should be responsi-

ble to keep the dignity of the House. People outside are just looking at us as to how are we behaving. There are Hon. Members, may be more senior than myself sitting on the other side. I need not tell them what the dignity of the House means but let us not indulge in things simply to denigrate the parliamentary committee which is the creature of this House by saying so many things which are utterly irrelevant. The dignity of the House can be kept if the members behave in a responsible manner.  
(Interruptions)

It pains my heart to see that those people who are crying hoarse about the dignity of the House are not all caring for the dignity of the House. (Interruptions) The dignity of the House is there in observing the rules and procedures of the House. Dignity of the House depends on the behaviour of the members in the House. Dignity of the House depends on keeping parliamentary procedures and how well we are equipped and earnest in keeping those procedures. That alone will keep the dignity of the House and not by slanderous and suspicious statements and not by creating baseless scandals. This will not keep the dignity of the House.

(Interruptions)

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: If it is baseless scandal then why do you want this committee?

SHRI AMAL DATTA: By saying it is a baseless scandal he has already reached his conclusion.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: By saying it is a baseless scandal he has already given his report.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: He is explaining. Please first listen to him.

(Interruptions)

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Mr. Shankaranand, if you have already said that these are baseless scandals then that



means you have already arrived at the conclusions and there is no need for extension of time or you want extension only to build up reasons.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, I may be allowed to clarify. I have never referred to the term 'scandal'.

SHRI V. KISHORE CHANDRA S. DEO: Of course, you did.

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: Sir, you see the record he has said 'baseless scandal'. (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let him clarify.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, the dignity of the House requires that they listen to me. Scandals I said not with reference to the work of the Committee or any subject-matter. That has nothing to do with that. (*Interruptions*) Creating baseless scandals does not mean or in any way affect the work and functioning of the Committee or matter before the Committee. That is what I am saying: I am not going to deliberate upon the proceedings of the Committee here because under the rules, the proceedings of the Committee are to be treated as confidential. May I for the benefit of the hon. Members refer to the rules?

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: Everything is coming out.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: I don't expect that the hon. Member knows anything. If you know it, all the while, you should please.....

SHRI AMAL DATTA: It is coming in the paper.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: You have a habit for which there is no medicine.

In the Rules of Procedure, rule 41, sub-rule (2) (xxi) says:

"It shall not ordinarily ask for information on matters which

are under consideration of a Parliamentary Committee;"

(*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Give time. Have patience.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Rule 275 says:

"(1) A Committee may direct that the whole or a part of the evidence or a summary thereof may be laid on the Table.

(2) No part of the evidence, oral or written, report or proceedings of a Committee which has not been laid on the Table shall be open to inspection by any one except under the authority of the Speaker.

(3) The evidence given before a Committee shall not be published by any member of the Committee or by any other person until it has been laid on the Table."

Now I quote direction 55 from Directions by the Speaker:

"(1) The proceedings of a Committee shall be treated as confidential and it shall not be permissible for a member of the Committee or any one who has access to its proceedings to communicate, directly or indirectly, to the press any information regarding its proceedings including its report or any conclusions arrived at, finally or tentatively, before the report has been presented to the House."... (*Interruptions*)...

May I request you to please listen? Running commentary is not required here. It is required somewhere else.

AN HON. MEMBER: His point is that Committee is constantly leaking.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: It is for the

House to decide what what action can be taken against any Member if he is leaking. (Interruptions) ... I am quoting direction 65(2).

AN HON. MEMBER: Nobody is disputing that. What is the use of reading the rule.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Let the other Members know that.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He wants to build up his case. Just listen.

(Interruptions)

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: This is how they are keeping the dignity of the House. (Interruptions)... Direction 65(2) says:

"Relevant portions of the verbatim proceedings of the sitting, at which evidence has been given, shall be forwarded to the witnesses and members concerned for confirmation and return by a date fixed by the Lok Sabha Secretariat..."

Now these verbatim proceedings are to remain confidential under the rules

15.00 hrs.

Now, Sir, I am really wondering because the Members are speaking as if they are deliberating upon the merits and demerits of the report which is before this House. I do not know whether they are speaking out of their mind or not. Perhaps, they are basing their arguments on the newspaper records. Otherwise, may I ask any Member who spoke about the merits or the functioning and the proceedings of the report. Has any hon. Member come to know about this? If they know, from whom? It is for the House to take any action prescribed under the rules. If not, they are speaking out of their imagination.

(Interruptions)

SHRI AMAL DATTA: Why can't he explain?

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I cannot.

(Interruptions)

SHRI AMAL DATTA: Let him explain.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let him speak.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Now, some hon. Members who spoke in the beginning--he is asking about the pace of the working of the Committee. Perhaps, let the hon. Member have some patience to listen to what has happened. I do not know what the hon. Member believes about it. Sir, I have already said to the House as to why I am seeking extension. It has been clearly stated that when the evidence of the witnesses is being recorded, I need time. May I inform the House if I am not revealing about the proceedings to the House--one thing I can say is that we had 12 sittings before I sought extension on 6th November 1987. The Committee had 12 sittings and after that till now, the House may appreciate, that we have had 26 sittings. We are not sitting quiet without doing any work. I cannot tell the work we are doing unless I submit the report before the House. I cannot tell you. If you know the rules, you will not ask this question. That is why I read the rules for your benefit.

(Interruptions)

SHRI AMAL DATTA: You are saying that you don't know the rules.

(Interruptions)

AN. HON. MEMBER: We are not owls.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: My learned friend is always quoting the rules. The rules say that the verbatim proceedings of the evidence cannot be cited but if my friend wants extension of time on the ground of examining, then the House is entitled to know as to who are the witnesses that he is going to examine because he has given

[Shri Dinesh Goswami]

the witnesses. If this is the case that the names of the witnesses violates the confidentiality, then he has given such names. He has given 12 names which he has examined. The House is entitled to know whether relevant witnesses are to be examined. There is no violation of confidentiality. We know the rules as well as he does. Let him not take up the position that we do not know the rules.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: The hon. Member has taken a very good stand. I have no dispute with what he says.... (Interruptions)... Please keep quiet. I am going to tell you what you have said. I am supporting you.

(Interruptions)

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Why are you opposing me unnecessarily?

(Interruptions)

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: The hon. house is entitled to know as I have stated, the witnesses whom I have examined and is also entitled to know the witnesses whom we are going to examine.

(Interruptions)

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Will you examine the Prime Minister?

(Interruptions)

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Please listen to me. The Committee has to decide its own proceedings. The Committee has to decide as who are to be examined and we are yet to decide.

(Interruptions)

At the moment the Defence Secretary is being examined. What else do you want to know?

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Who are the other persons who you are going to examine?

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: I said that his evidence is being recorded and that is all.

(Interruptions)

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Sir, I am on a point of order. In his statement he said:

"Besides the Committee has recorded the evidence of the following officials of the Ministry of Defence"

and on first number appears the name of Shri S.K. Bhatnagar which means his evidence has already been recorded and his evidence has already been completed whereas Mr. Shankaranand is saying here that at the moment Mr. Bhatnagar is being examined.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: This will not help my friend.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: Then say something which will help.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: I am stating the facts and I am not misleading the House. We are still examining the Defence Secretary.

SHRI AMAL DATTA: It means what is stated here is incorrect.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Let him explain.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Sir, one can wake up a man who is really sleeping but if one is pretending to sleep then we cannot help it.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: That is the difficulty with you.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: I cannot satisfy you. All the Members who opposed this motion on extension were deliberating upon the merits of the case. They do not know what is happening in the Committee.

Its proceedings are confidential. They are merely giving their surmises based on the newspapers' records. They want me to react on the newspapers' records. How can I do that? If I do the same thing, I will be committing the same mistake by revealing the facts that are going on in the proceedings of the Committee. I will not do that.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: O.K., then let us come to the Motion.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Yes, I will do that. Members said that this is a white wash and cover up operation. May I say, with all humility, that they should not denigrate their own Committee. It is a Parliamentary Committee. *(Interruptions)*

The members have revealed enough of their agony but they have not revealed their anxiety to know the results of the Committee. They are only worried... *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: This is a baseless allegation. *(Interruptions)*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, order.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: I cannot give them any dose for their emergent fears. I thought...

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: We can give you information but we cannot give you courage.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: May I say a word about me.

SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN: No, not about you personally.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: Some members said that I was made to resign. Because my name was taken, I have a small explanation for that. *(Interruptions)*

I am thank the hon. Members if there are no aspersions on my individual stand.

SHRI AMAL DATTA: You are a nice chap. We know about you.

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: I have made you laugh and for nothing else except laugh

on your own performance. You will be laughing at yourself. *(Interruptions)*

Hon. Members have suggested some names of the witnesses. The Committee will definitely take into consideration the suggestions made by the House. For the effective and purposeful conclusion of the work of the Committee, we will call all those people who are necessary to depose before the Committee. We will call all the records that are necessary.

I must bring it to the notice of the House that the Government of India, the Ministries concerned, the Officers are extending full co-operation for the working of the Committee.

I want to refer to Prof. Madhu Dandavate's objections. I do not want to comment on the merits of his objections. But they are not relevant for the extension of the Committee. That much I can say. He has talked about the Terms of Reference. He has said the same thing since the Committee was constituted or even before the Committee was proposed to be constituted. He is repeating the same arguments/judgements today also. He wanted that all the Defence deals should be the subject matter of the Committee. He wanted the Minister to disclose. This is what he has stated in the House. These arguments of the hon. Members opposing the very constitution of the Committee are being repeated here. Now, they are opposing the extension of the time for the Committee. They are not at all relevant. I do not know what they want this Parliament to do. But I am sure we are not going to oblige them.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: You need not oblige us, but don't oblige Bofors. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI B. SHANKARANAND: This Committee is not going to oblige Bofors or for that matter anybody else. There should have been an appreciation for the work which the Committee has been doing. We took the first opportunity of catching the Bofors' people when they were here in this country. We did not wait. If the House is at

[Shri B. Shankaranand]

all interested--specially the Members who are opposing this--in finding out the truth, they should gladly agree for the extension. Why they are not prepared for the extension of the Committee, I do not know. The intentions are not clear. Perhaps they do not want to see the entire Report of the Committee. They want that this Committee should be wound up and whatever it has done be placed on the Table of the House. What for? Are you not interested in finding out the truth? At least let us know what are you driving at? Do you not want to see the result of the Committee? Do you not want to see the full report of the Committee? If not, then why are you saying that the Committee should be wound up? You want that whatever is written should now be placed on the Table of the House. These things are not going to help you. I can only say that irrelevancy is not going to bring any best interest. Relevancy can definitely act. What I found from the objections that have been taken for the extension of this Committee are all irrelevant which I should not have replied to, but still I say please set a good example. The Committee is the Committee of Parliament. I know your intentions. I need not tell or comment on the intentions but I can only sum them up. I know your eagerness for seeing the result of the Committee. They want that truth should be found out. That is how I take your comments. If that is so, may I request the hon. Members to say 'yes' for the extension of the Committee. Let us not divide ourselves on the extension of the time because we are all interested in finding out the truth. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

That this House do further extend upto the last working day of April, 1988, the time for presentation of the report of the Joint Committee to enquire into Bofors Contract."

*The motion was adopted.*

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: We are protesting against a very wrong decision and we are symbolically staging a walk-out.

15.14 hrs.

*Prof. Madhu Dandavate and some other Hon. members then left the house.*

15.15 hrs.

MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS --Contd.

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House now shall take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Shri B.R. Bhagat and seconded by Shri Naresh Chandra Chaturvedi on the 24th February, 1988:--

"That an Address be presented to the President in the following terms;--

"That the Members of Lok Sabha assembled in this Session are deeply grateful to the President for the Address which he has been pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on the 22nd February, 1988."

Prof. Soz, you can continue your speech. You have already taken 11 minutes. Within 10 minutes, you try to wind up.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ (Baramulla): I have already placed on record my appreciation for the President's Address. I have also indicated areas where I have found that the esteemed President had paid his attention to certain very urgent problems. Then I have also found that the President has not dealt with certain areas deeply in his Address. The President has not dealt with communalism deeply and gone to the root of this problem. In this connection, I had said that although personally I was not interested in the dispute like Mandir and Masjid because I feel that the Constitution of India must be treated as the Bible for all Indians and we must always be conscious of what the Constitution provides for, but then there is a dispute known as Babri Mosque dispute. Although I personally feel that the Muslims have a rightful claim on