

I beg to move for for leave to withdraw the Bill to provide for eradication of unemployment from the country.

MR CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to withdraw the Bill to provide for a scheme for eradication of unemployment from the country."

*The motion was adopted*

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA: I withdraw the Bill.

17. 04 hrs.

PROHIBITION OF USE OF RELIGIOUS, COMMUNAL, REGIONAL AND SECTORAL NOMENCLATURES FOR POLITICAL PARTIES AND PREVENTION OF MISUSE OF RELIGIOUS PLACES BILL.

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now Shrimati Basavarajeswari.

SHRIMATI BASAVARAJESWARI\*  
(Bellary): I beg to move:

"That the Bill to prohibit the use of religious communal, regional and sectoral names for political parties and to prevent the misuse of religious places, be taken into consideration."

[*Translation*]

Mr Chairman, Sir, I have brought this very important Bill in this august House with the main objective to check the use of religious, communal, regional and sectoral nomenclatures for political parties and to prevent the misuse of religious places. Especially in the present time, when there is a steep increase in the number of communal clashes this Bill assumes greater importance. It has to be discussed thoroughly to

find out the causes of such clashes. The Government after finding out the causes should take firm and immediate steps to check the communal clashes in the country. This has become very urgent in the interest of the unity and integrity of our nation.

Ours is a vast nation. It has its own cultural heritage. It has its own history and tradition. The father of our nation has shown the path of peace and non-violence. We have to follow this path and protect our democracy.

Our country has huge national resources. It has vast area of fertile land. Irrigation facilities are abundant and there is rich storage of ores. These resources have to be exploited to the maximum extent for the all round development of the country. Then only each citizen can feel happy about his life and the nation will be a model to the world. Unfortunately this is not happening. On the other hand we find communal clashes taking place almost every day. This should come to an end.

In our country there are different kinds of people. The regional differences of our country were manipulated and misused by the Britisher who ultimately managed to rule our country for about three hundred years. During the freedom struggle there was unity in the country in spite of several differences like language differences, regional differences, community differences etc. At the time of freedom, there were different groups of people who were demanding separate nations, like Khalistan, Pakistan and a separate country for the Harijans. We fought two important wars after independence. Victory in these wars once again demonstrated our strength of unity to the world. We have the history of working unitedly for protecting the country and for its progress. In fact our late Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has said that India is a country of unity in diversity. Ours is a socialistic democratic republic country. There are several religions. People have the freedom of expression. From Article 25 to 30 there are provisions for the people to practice their

\* The Speech was originally delivered in Kannada

own religions but we cannot build the nation and strengthen it on the basis of religion or community. Similarly political parties also cannot take shelter under religion, community etc. Religion and politics can never be mixed, if they are mixed the country will be in great danger.

If we analyse the reasons for communal clashes we arrive at the following important causes:

- (i) Vested interests;
- (ii) Foreign interference;
- (iii) Separation and isolation among minorities;
- (iv) Linguistic provinces;
- (v) Religious orthodox ideas;
- (vi) Economic backwardness;
- (vii) Hindu chauvinism.

Many political leaders forget their responsibilities and duties. They indulge in so many activities just to get votes from the people. At the time of elections they take the name of religion and give provocative speeches. Thus vested interest create disturbance in the minds of the people.

Regarding foreign interference with our country's affairs the press is giving elaborate explanation every day. Some countries poke their noses in our affairs even though they cannot solve their own problems. Some of them are trying to provoke minority communities of our country against our country. This kind of misleading attempt by foreign countries must be condemned and stopped for ever.

Some of our religious leaders are also contributing to the process of foreign interference by isolating the minorities. Some of them are of the opinion that only their religion should survive. They expect the minorities

to follow the way of life of the majority. This has created tension in the minds of the minorities in our country. They have their own religious institutions, which are being strengthened day by day. It may be Arya Samaj or Hindu Maha Sabha, or Jana Sangh, or Shiv Sena. We have heard the speeches and the argument of these religious leaders. In fact some of them go to the extent of saying that we should get Pakistan back, merged with the West Hindustan. This kind of treatment to the minorities cannot be allowed in the larger interest of the country which is the biggest democracy in the world.

It is the duty of majority communities to protect their religion and cultural heritage. At the same time they cannot ignore the interests of the minorities. They should protect the interests of the minorities as well. Both majority and minority people should join hands in protecting the culture of our country. They should work hard together for the progress of the country. No community can be neglected in a set up like ours.

I come from a rural area of Hyderabad Karnataka province. There Hindus, Muslims, Christian and all others join together to celebrate Muslim festivals like Ramjan, Muharram etc. In a similar way all Muslim and Christian brothers will join Hindus in celebrating Dussehra festival, Mahanavami, Wagadi festival etc. We find peace and amity every where. People belonging to all religious of that area take part in the processions of religious festivals. There is no room for any kind of communal disturbance.

One cannot come to the conclusion that only persons born in a major community are intelligent and good. Similarly a person born in a so called lower community cannot be less intelligent. This kind of low and high status by birth should end. There are good and intelligent people in all religious and communities. The political leaders should find out such people and they should be given responsibility of maintaining peaceful atmosphere in the society. This should be a coordinated effort. It cannot be done by the

[Smt. Basavarajeswari]  
people belonging to only one religion or community.

We cannot build educational or political institutions only on the basis of religion. It may be Jamat A Islam, Muslim League or Majlis. These institutions instead of giving courage to minorities are creating a sense of fear in their minds. This has contributed to the increase in the number of communal clashes. In this 20th century we have seen the maximum number of communal clashes. There were clashes in Bihar, Gujarat, Meerut, and other places resulting in deaths and huge loss to property. This tendency has to be curbed. If a communal clash occurs at a place then the leaders of all communities should visit place to sort out the problem and to spread peace in that area. This responsibility should not be left only to those community leaders who took part in the clash. Community living and brotherhood should be encouraged. This would create a sense of security among all the sections of society. Political leaders should realise this major responsibility.

Karnataka is a peace loving State. In many parts people do not know how does a clash or agitation occur. Even in such a peaceful State there were 20 deaths due to communal clashes within a short span of five to six months. These deaths occurred at Bangalore, Ramanagram and Mysore. This is not only astonishing but also shameful. Some leaders on the one hand say that political leaders are responsible for such clashes and on the other hand they say that political leaders should try hard to put an end to such brutal communal killings. However, we have to take the lead to find out the causes and to stop such clashes.

Political parties should not be allowed to have nomenclatures in the name of religion. They cannot deliver political speeches at worshiping places. Provocative speeches are the main cause for communal clashes. Hence the Election Commission should go a step forward to ban election speeches from religious places. This has to be done under

the law. There should be provision in the Representation of People Act to punish those who deliver political speeches in religious place to gain votes. Our Government should take keen interest in this regard to curb misuse of religious places and nomenclatures by political parties. An amendment should be brought forward in this direction immediately.

Periodical meetings of the National Integration Council are being held. Most of the Chief Ministers and the hon. Home Minister took part in these conferences. They have condemned the incidents during 1976 in Punjab. Religious places are not to protect the criminals and to dump arms and ammunition. Emotions and sentiments for narrow sectoral affinities tend to blur the enlightened public opinion and balanced judgement of the people while deciding the destiny of the nation through elections. Nation's unity and integrity have to be protected. The principles of sovereignty, socialism, secularism and democracy have to be respected and followed.

All religions have the same goal. It may be Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity or Islam but the essence remains the same. No religion is in favour of robbery and terrorism. All religions have the same objective of taking humanity towards bliss. This is like different rivers submerging in one ocean.

Many senior leaders like Shri Bahuguna, Shri Jyoti Basu have condemned the violence which took place at Amritsar. Committees have been set up and they have given their reports. The Centre is doing its best to impress upon the States and Union territories to take firm steps to check communal clashes. In this regard my suggestion is to appoint a peace Committee in each district. This Committee should include members of all religions. The Committee should find out the places which are prone to communal clashes. It should take the opinions of the people and stop all kinds of clashes.

My colleague Shri Banatwala was expressing his case about clashes at Meerut a few minutes ago. Our country is facing the

problems of illiteracy, unemployment drug addiction etc. Women are being exploited. Dowry deaths are taking place and every day its number is on the increase. Some of the blind traditions are forcing many young and innocent girls to take to prostitution. In fact some people go to the extent of killing female children as soon as they are born. They want only male children to be born. How can our country progress amidst such blind beliefs. Therefore, there is greater responsibility not only on the Government but also on the religious leaders. Leaders of all religions should take up this challenge. Each leader can select one problem. Law itself cannot solve the crisis. People have to cooperate. Leaders have to take the responsibility of mass awakening. In Karnataka there are several religious institutions (MUTTS) rendering yeoman service to humanity. These religious institutions have established engineering colleges, Medical colleges, Teachers Training Colleges etc. In addition to running these educational institutions efficiently to spread education, they also feed lakhs of students free. Religious institutions can get the help from the Govt. but they should spread education and peace in the society.

Younger generation has to be guided properly.

"Do not open their eyes to differences because they cannot see them. Open their eyes to love and not hatred." This should be the objective of all religions and educational institutions. In fact it should start from the mother because mother is the first teacher.

Basavanna the greatest ever social reformer of Karnataka created history in the 8th Century by breaking all the barriers between people. He wiped out the differences and spread brotherhood not only in Karnataka but throughout the country. He conducted inter caste marriages especially between Brahmins and Harijans and brought revolution of equality in the society.

If we do not lead our younger generation in a proper way and if we do not protect our

democracy, they would be cursing us later.

Our Prime Minister is young in age but has vast experience. He is making all possible efforts to maintain peace and amity in the country, by following the path of non-violence shown by Gandhiji, He is serving the nation day and night. He wants our nation to usher into a new era of progress and prosperity. We have to strengthen his hands. No one should try to indulge in distracting his attention by making some frivolous charges against him.

Unfortunate communal clashes happened in Ahmedabad the birth place of Mahatma Gandhi. This should not have happened. Gandhiji may not be living today with us. But this soul will be expecting a lot from us for maintaining peace and brotherhood. Yesterday some of our Muslim friends were raising the Meerut issue in this House

Who are to protect these Muslims brothers? Our Government and all of us should take up this responsibility. We see and read the story of Ramayana. Kaikei sends Rama to 14 years of Vanavas. In spite of this, Rama respects Kaikei like a Goddess. There is a galaxy of characters like Kaushalya, Sumitra, Sita etc on one side and Janaka, Dasaratha, Rama, Bharata on the other side - each one of them excelling in their virtues of selflessness, tolerance, sacrifice, lover and affection.

These characters should be the model for our citizens. To achieve this goal, all the religious leaders should work together. All religions are the same in the eyes of God.

Science, modernisation and technology have to be utilised for the welfare of the country. Blind beliefs and traditions should not find any place in our society. Nations interest should be our prime concern. I too have my own religion but I practise it in my house. Kindness is the essence of all religions. As Basavanna has said, there is no religion without Kindness. We should be kind not only to human beings but also to animals, birds and other living beings. Then only the society can progress in the path of

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peace and amity and communal clashes will come to end.

I hope and trust that our hon. Minister will look into all the points that I have raised here and take immediate steps to stop misuse of religious and communal nomenclatures and religious places by political parties. I also expect more contribution from my colleagues on this vital issue.

Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity and with these words I conclude my speech.

**SHRI VIRDHI CHANDER JAIN** (Barmer) : Mr. Chairman, Sir. I welcome the Bill moved by Smt. Basavarajeswari providing for banning the use of religious, communal, provincial and regional names and checking the misuse of religious places by the political parties. Our constitution specifically says that we shall have a democratic, socialist and secular State.

To constitute a secular State, it is very necessary that the people of all communities and all religions should respect the religion of one another. If we do not show respect to all the religions we shall not be able to constitute a secular State; not shall we be able to strengthen it. Therefore, it is necessary that our political set up should not be based on any religion or Community. If the political set up is based on religion and communalism, it will be a disregard to our constitution and that cannot be a secular State.

It is necessary in a secular State that political parties are not formed on religion and caste and even on regional basis. If a political party is religion based, region or caste based, it will cost us our unity and integrity. There will be a persistent danger to our unity. We have such political parties in our country and they are conspicuous by their names. One is Telugudesam party, which is regional party. Similarly, there is Dravida Munetra Kazhagam. The Akali Party is a religious party and similarly, Mus-

lim league is also a religious party. The names themselves reveal that the parties are meant for certain communities or religions. We have adopted a secular constitution and we should not recognise regional parties. They should be banned.

We are a secular State, but still we are tolerating such political parties. If we think of banning them, many difficulties arise, the idea is opposed vehemently and the reason is that we have become slaves of casteism and regionalism. We think that only our religion is good and other religions are not good. We always harbour this feeling. We cannot ban such parties till we are having this feeling. This is the difficulty before us.

If we really want to move forward and make our country a country of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, we shall have to take some concrete steps. We will have to face the opposition boldly. We will have to take these steps to preserve the fibre of our constitution.

In fact, the communal riots which we are facing today cannot be stopped, till the political parties shed their religious and communal stance. Despite your best effort, the riots will continue to take place in some parts or the other, and religious sentiments will continue to be fanned. Therefore, if we want to stop these communal disturbances, we will have to take firm steps for banning religious parties which are functioning as political parties and for this the leaders of all political parties shall have to sit together and take some firm steps. Only then can we maintain the unity and integrity of the country and check communal riots.

Today, different regional parties are coming into existence in the country. It is my conviction that these regional parties cannot maintain national integrity. We cannot stop the formation of regional political parties by law. Therefore, it is necessary that in future we should not allow such parties to come up. We should strengthen our political set up and be ready to face any situation any opposition. If we fail in this effort, the spirit of our Constitution will

*Reg & Sec.*

receive a great setback. Therefore, I would urge upon you to give a serious thought to this.

It is seen that temples, mosques and even the Golden Temple of Amritsar have become the seat of politics and offerings have become sources of income for the political parties. We do not have laws to prevent these things. It is seen that when speeches are made in temples, mosques and gurudwaras, efforts are generally made to attract the people of a particular community and by their speeches, the speakers create communal feelings in the minds of those people. In these circumstances, national unity and integrity cannot be preserved. In this connection, you can make legal provisions to see that during election time, no political parties are allowed to make speeches in temples and mosques. The Central Government should have talks with all the parties because all the political parties are against communal riots. At the end, I will request the Government to take concrete steps to preserve national unity and integrity.

SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL (Kopargaon): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Bill introduced by Smt. Basavarajswari. This is an important Bill. This is the reason that we are discussing this Bill in this House. The whole country is concerned over this issue. Our Prime Minister is also worried about this. We talk much of the integrity and unity but I do not see it anywhere. Today everybody wants to gain political ends by taking recourse to religion and casteism. But the need of the hour is to keep religion away from politics. There are so many socialist countries in this world where politics and religion are not mixed at all. Even in England politics is not mixed with religion. The Britishers ruled our country for a long period and sowed the seeds of discord in the name of religion. That is the reason why communal riots spread here. We should think only about our country and its interest. Religion and politics should be separated. But at the time of elections everybody starts

taking recourse to religion. Political parties are formed on the basis of religions and sects. What does it indicate? Our Constitution provides for a secular State. But our hearts do not accept this. We talk of secularism. But we must translate this into action. Our programmes should show that we are secular; we respect all religions. We have no objection to whatever belief one practises in one's house. But it should not be brought to streets. We are against conversion. Today there is exploitation in the name of religion, though there used to be economic exploitation because of capitalistic policies. The poor has no religion. All the poor have one religion, the religion of poverty. There is no religion and there is no society which has no poor and has all the rich people.

Just now, the Unemployment Bill was being discussed. People are facing great difficulties on this count. Prices have risen. The basic problem before us is how to eradicate poverty. We have to take our country towards socialism through our programmes. But we have failed in our endeavour because religion has taken main place in our society. We are using our religious places, mosques, gurudwaras or temples for our political gains. We can understand their use for teaching purpose. They are meant for teaching humanity, fraternity and integrity. All the religions, Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, christianity teach us the lesson of brotherhood. The people are being exploited in the name of religion and disruptive forces are being encouraged to disintegrate the country. No religion ever teaches such things. We are very much concerned about it. Common people are the worst sufferers of these activities. Today, every person, every party is thinking about themselves only. Nobody is worried about the poor. It should be considered as to how effectively the programmes made for the poor such as 20-point programme, IRDP, or any other such programme can be implemented. Religious places are not meant for political purposes. They are meant for the spiritual upliftment of mankind. But the religious places of this country are being used

[Sh. Balasaheb Vikhe Patil]  
for dehumanisation, which is a matter of great concern. It is a serious problem. I would suggest that election laws should be amended keeping in view the amendments made by our late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi in the Constitution to secure secularism and no political party should be allowed to be formed on the basis of religion and sect. Hinduism has four vernas. Islam has two sects, Shia and Sunni, the Christianity has catholics and Protestants. It means that every religion propagates the development of mankind. Every person should help in the upliftment of fellow beings so that there is no poverty. The means of production are concentrated in the hands of a few people in the country. The rich try their best to instigate others to fight with one another. I am at pains to say that the people of this country are drifting away from their aims in the name of dowry or religion. There are many parties which do believe in secularism. They want secular India. We all must sit together and pledge for the well being of humanity and religions. We must not allow human exploitation. All are humanbeings. There is nothing to fight on this count. All the religions are good. Therefore, I would like that there must be some amendment in the election laws. We have not been able to bring the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes into the mainstream even after 37 years of Independence. It is a matter of great shame for us that when a scheduled caste contests election for general constituency the caste-Hindus do not vote for him. Similarly, if a Hindu contests from predominantly Muslim inhabited areas he is not elected. We should not select candidate on the basis of religion and caste. We shall have to change this conception. The leaders of like minded parties should come forward and bring some changes in this thinking.

There is mushroom growth of the regional parties. These parties are constituted on regionalism and language basis which is a very dangerous thing. There are talks of decentralisation and more powers to the States. This will weaken the Centre and encourage communalism and regional par-

ties. The more the regional parties the more the communal riots. We should be a little cautious in this respect. I suppose all agree that religion should not be combined with politics, but when it comes to implementation no action is taken in this regard. There is a lot of difference between saying and doing. Therefore, people are losing faith in this dictum. People are fed up with communal riots and disturbances. Through this august House I want to submit that people who are against communalism and favour social reformes, and who want to build a new society based on secularism and humanity must join hands and work for the betterment of the people of India so that our country emerges as a strong, united and developed nation. Otherwise foreign aided disruptive and separatist elements will weaken our country. We must not fall pray to disruptive powers.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, I support this Bill and thank you for giving me time to speak. This is an important Bill. No politicking should be allowed in any religious place and if some one indulges in such activity, he should be punished severely. With these words I conclude.

[English]

SHRI S.B. SIDNAL (Belgaum): Sir, it is very difficult to distinguish and separate politics and religion in this country because the leadership we have inherited since long is the same. The scope is limited in the static society and the scope is unlimited in the moving society and even all the religious places have become the centre of political activities. Regularly, we are all proceeding in the same direction. Therefore, politics is also made out of religion and other things. If any party deviates from this path as a reformist party, that party will fail to win the elections and that party will not prosper. That has become a concept of now-a-days politics through-out the country. Every one of us wants that we should practise secularism. Every one preaches secularism to the whole world. Every one of us expects that the others should be secular and that he should always practise communal things, more so

sectarian things. Therefore, it is very difficult to do away with all these things...

11.00 a.m.

18.01 hrs

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member will continue his speech on the next occasion.

The House stands adjourned to reassemble on Monday, August 3, 1987, at

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, August 3, 1987/ Sravana 12, 1909 (Saka).*

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