

forcing engineers to do it in three to four years. Naturally, teething trouble is there. Stabilisation of the sets is taking time. This is why we are not getting the full benefits. We are getting impatient and we are asking the engineers to expedite the whole thing. So, I would like to tell the hon. Members that we have requested all the State Boards to maximise the generation as far as practicable. We have also requested them to inform us about their difficulties. We are also trying to help them with BHEL experts so that they can remove their operational difficulties. This is all that I can say. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Now, Statements by Ministers. Mr. Narasimha Rao...

SHRI BUTA SINGH (Ropar): This is a very vital question, Sir. No question has been asked on behalf of the northern region.

MR. SPEAKER: That is the rule; nobody from outside the list can ask any question; it cannot be allowed.

Mr. Narasimha Rao.

12.36 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. INCIDENT OF REFUSAL OF ENTRY TO SHRI ROMESH CHANDRA BY BRITISH GOVERNMENT AT LONDON AIRPORT

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): On 25 January a report was received that Shri Romesh Chandra, President of the World Peace Council had been held in detention by the British Government on his arrival at London airport the previous day. Our High Commission in London was informed of this on the morning of 25 January by the Secretary of the World Peace Council in London. Our Acting High Commissioner immediately moved the Foreign Office and the Home Office

for Shri Romesh Chandra's release. He was informed that the Secretary of State of the British Home Office had exercised his powers under the Immigration Act 1971 to refuse entry to Shri Romesh Chandra on the ground that his "exclusion was conducive to the public good". The Acting Indian High Commissioner was also informed that Shri Romesh Chandra had already been put on a plane to Warsaw.

In this connection, however, we understand that Shri Romesh Chandra had visited Britain twice in 1979. This incident is the first we know of where an Indian citizen has been denied entry into Britain on the ground that he is an official of a political organisation.

While the British Government has the sovereign right like any other State to exclude the entry of any foreigner, we cannot but express our dismay and concern over the indignity and discourtesy to which an Indian citizen has been subjected. This has been conveyed to the British High Commissioner.

The British Government will, I trust, take notice of the Parliamentary and public reactions in India and adopt early measures to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in the interests of the cordial Indo-British relations.

SOME HON. MEMBERS rose—

SHRI CHANDRAJEET YADAV (Azamgarh): Sir, may I seek a clarification?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat): On a point of clarification....

MR. SPEAKER: This is not ordinarily done...

AN HON. MEMBER: This is a very important matter...(Interruptions)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (New Delhi): We knew this. That is why we wanted a call-attention to be admitted. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: All right. You may ask questions. But this will be an exception. Mr. Indrajit Gupta.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Basirhat): The order which was served on Mr. Romesh Chandra from which the Minister quoted—I have got a copy of that order—is an order under the Immigration Act of 1971. Now, may I know from the hon. Minister whether the Government instructed our High Commissioner in England to point this out to the British Government that, whatever other objections they may have, however deplorable, to Mr. Romesh Chandra's entry, he was certainly not an immigrant or intending to be an immigrant into Britain? Have they protested on this ground that the order under the Immigration Act is being misused in this way to exclude Mr. Romesh Chandra from entering Britain? This is a very serious matter. This is the order which is usually given to exclude people whom they suspect to be people intending to come in and settle down in Britain.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Before the hon. Minister replies, may I also put a small question, namely, whether a formal protest has been lodged?

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO: I would not quite say that the provision of law has been misused. The provision of law, as pointed out by the hon. Member is generally meant for immigrants as such. But the Secretary of State has given direction for persons not to be given entry into U.K. on the ground that their 'exclusion is conducive to public good'. This is what the order says. Now the provisions say that this order is not appealable. This is final. So technically I would say that the order is not open to question but, as rightly pointed out by the hon. Member, the question of propriety is there....

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: I asked you whether you have protested against it.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO: We have conveyed our dismay and concern over the indignity and discourtesy to which an Indian citizen has been subjected.

SHRI CHANDRAJEET YADAV: I wanted to know from the hon. Minister. As he himself has admitted, this is the first time that an Indian has been expelled by the UK government and also the order was personally passed by the Secretary of State or whoever it is. I would like to know whether it is enough that our High Commissioner only conveys his dismay and displeasure or will the hon. Minister himself write to the Minister concerned in UK because this is the first time that not only an Indian citizen who is distinguished citizen of India—he is the President of World Peace Council—but a member from a Commonwealth country has been expelled like this. That is also for political reasons. Will the hon. Minister take up this issue and write a letter to the Minister concerned in U.K.? This is a serious matter.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO: This is a serious matter—I agree. But what was considered sufficient and warranted by the situation has been done. I may inform the hon. Member that we have had some more information from the British High Commission and we are told that in the past on similar grounds other persons have been excluded although they were not Indian citizens.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Were they Commonwealth citizens?

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO: They were not Commonwealth citizens. Therefore, the question arises because a Commonwealth citizen does not need a visa. He gets stopped when he actually reaches London and not before. If he had applied for a visa, being a citizen of some other country, they say that they would not have given him a visa and such a situation would not have arisen. This is their answer.

As regards the other point raised by the hon. Member, as far as we have considered it necessary, we have conveyed our views and our dismay. Beyond that what could be done is a matter which will have to be examined further because technically what they have done cannot be challenged. That happens to be the position.

I would also inform the House that when Lord Carrington, their Foreign Secretary, came here we did have a discussion on some of the aspects of the Immigration Act and how it was being implemented. Now at this stage, I think that there is a chance of further discussions on these matters and, therefore....

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: This has nothing to do with immigration.

SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO: I have already stated that it has nothing to do with immigration. But action has been taken under a provision contained in the Immigration Act.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: That is precisely what you should protest about.

SHRI P. VENKATASUBBIAH: Normally, when a statement is made, no questions are allowed but because of the seriousness of the matter, you have allowed questions....

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, it is not done, but as an exception I permitted.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: My question has not been replied.

MR. SPEAKER: Whatever he has done, he has done. He has replied and if you are not satisfied, that is another question.

Now, Mr. P. Sivasankar.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE: Sir, in diplomacy there is something like lodging a protest....\*

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded that I do not allow.... He has already said what he has got to say. Mr. Sivasankar.

12.44 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. REVIVAL OF BHARAT RATNA AND PADMA AWARDS

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. SHIV SHANKAR): Mr. Speaker, Sir, The recent decision of the Government to revive the Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards has caused misgivings in some sections of the House and a doubt has been expressed in some quarters that this is not in conformity with the Constitution and in particular Article 18 thereof.

At the outset, I would state that the Government yields to none in its respect for the Constitution and its determination to see that the Constitution is observed not only in letter but also in spirit. But it is necessary to see what exactly is the nature of the prohibition contained in Article 18. Article 18 is one of the several Articles dealing with the right to equality. If states that no title, not being a military or academic distinction, shall be conferred by the State.

In order to understand the scope of this prohibition, it is necessary not only to ascertain the meaning of the word 'title', but also to have regard to the circumstances in which this Article was adopted by the Constitution-makers had before them the provisions of other Constitutions prohibiting the grant of titles of nobility. Our Constitution-makers did intend to go further than this, and to prohibit the conferment of titles which