

LOK SABHA DEBATES

LOK SABHA

Thursday, April 17, 1975/Chaitra 27,
1897 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock

[MR SPEAKER in the Chair]

OBITUARY REFERENCES

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, I have the painful duty to inform the House, with profound sorrow, of the sad demise of Rr. S. Radhakrishnan former President of India, who passed away during the early hours of this morning at Madras at the age of 86.

A great son of this land, Dr. Radhakrishnan was known as the philosopher-statesman who earned laurels not only for himself but also for this country and brought dignity and lustre to the high offices held by him. Starting his career as a professor of philosophy in the Presidency College, Madras and the Arts College at Rajahmundry, he held many a high position in educational, diplomatic and administrative fields. His philosophic acumen was evident right from his student days when he chose as his subject for thesis for M.A. The Ethics of Vedanta and its Metaphysical Presuppositions'. His first philosophical work namely 'Philosophy of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore', followed up with the 'Reign of Religion in Contemporary Philosophy' earned him great reputation not only in this country but also in many foreign universities. He was invited to the International Congress of Philosophy at Harvard University and later he delivered the Haskel lecture at Chicago University. He was then offered the Chair of comparative religions in Manchester College,

Oxford. His profound interpretation of Hindu religion and the *Bhagavad Gita* are examples of his erudition and masterly philosophic attainments. A great orator with a towering personality, who made his audience spellbound, he conducted many lecture-tours in South Africa, China, U.S.A. and many other countries and enlightened the scholars of philosophy. He was then nominated to the League of Nations Committee for Intellectual Co-operation at Geneva. He also led the Indian delegation to the UNESCO's first conference in 1946 and was appointed Chairman of Indian Universities Commission in 1948.

In the field of education, among the high offices held by him were those of the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University during 1931-36 and Banaras Hindu University during 1939-48. He was a Member of the Constituent Assembly of India from 1946-49. In 1949 he was appointed the Indian Ambassador to the Soviet Union and he held that office till 1952. During his tenure he had the distinction of meeting Marshal Stalin both when presenting his credentials and later when laying down that office. He was elected as the Vice-President of India in 1952 and was re-elected to the same office in 1957. During his ten year tenure as Presiding Officer of Rajya Sabha, he exhibited his masterly skill as a parliamentarian and laid down high traditions. He then rose to the highest office of the President of India in 1962 and held that office till 1967. His mature guidance to the Government and the nation during that period is well known and in him one could see the philosophy of Plato about philosopher-statesman finding a practical demonstration. His eminence as an intellectual giant and philosopher was evident

as another intellectual of our times, Bertrand Russell once observed about Dr. Radhakrishnan that it was his philosophy which could be understood by everyone as it was written in simple and lucid language, unlike that of other philosophic theories.

Varied national and international honours were conferred on Dr. Radhakrishnan, the for most national honour being Bharat Ratna in 1954, the British Knighthood in 1931, Fellow of British Academy in 1962, Master of Wisdom (Mongolia) in 1957, Goethe Plaque in 1959 and Templeton Foundation Prize for progress in Religion in 1975. He had not been keeping good health for some time but the end came when no one was even apprehensive of it. The void created by his passing away will be difficult to fill.

Hon. Members, I may also inform the House of the sad demise of another of our former and distinguished colleagues, Shri Khandubhai K. Desai, who passed away at Ahmedabad this morning at the age of 77.

Shri Desai was a Member of the Constituent Assembly during the years 1946-50, Provisional Parliament during 1950-52 and of the First Lok

Sabha during 1952-57. He was Union Minister of Labour during the years 1954-57 and later Governor of Andhra. A great Trade Union Leader, he had been President of the Indian National Trade Union Congress. His skill and eloquence as a parliamentarian is well known. His selfless work and dedication to trade unionism and welfare of labour will be a standing tribute to his memory.

We mourn the loss of Dr. Radhakrishnan and of Shri Desai and I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolences to the bereaved families.

The House may stand in silence for a short while.

The Members then stood in silence for a short while

MR. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned as a mark of respect to the memory of Dr. Radhakrishnan till 11 A.M. tomorrow.

11.08 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, April 17, 1975/Chaitra 28, 1897 (Saka).