

[Dr. Karan Singh]

One point I would like to make very clear. Shri Banerjee said that there are people who cannot be touched. There is nobody in this country who is untouchable, who is above the law.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: We are all untouchables.

DR. KARAN SINGH: You may be untouchable inside the House, but not outside.

If any information is given, if any proof is given. I can assure the House that the State Government will take very speedy action. I have been personally in touch with the Chief Minister. I am sure the UP Government is quite competent to deal with this with their police. If they require any assistance, whether from the CBI or from any other organisation, that assistance will be readily forthcoming from us. I have been in touch with the Chief Minister and I have already spoken to him in the matter.

On the question of compensation, I have not got any information. I will take it up with the Chief Minister. I am sure the UP Government will take the necessary steps.

Finally, it is true that these are not isolated incidents and there is a big racket going on in this country. We have been impressing upon the State Governments, in fact we did it only a week ago, to apply the criminal law to drug adulteration.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: It is an inter-State racket. So, the State Government cannot deal with it. The Centre will have to intervene.

DR. KARAN SINGH: We have been impressing upon the State Governments to modernise their drug control organisation and put in positions of authority under this Act people who really know something about how drugs should be handled. As far as inter-State matters are concerned, our own drugs organisation is seized of the matter and I can assure you that whatever is possible will be done.

13.15 hrs.

#### MATTER UNDER RULE 377

NEWS ITEM ABOUT PRIME MINISTER'S VIEWS ON PRESENCE OF U.S. TROOPS IN VIETNAM

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): Sir, a report has appeared in a local English daily today under the caption "Mrs. Gandhi Favoured US troops in Vietnam". According to that report, in 1966 when the Vietnam war was at its height and India was vigorously protesting in public against the US involvement in it, Prime Minister Shrimati Indira Gandhi, and her Cabinet colleagues privately told Mr. Hubert Humphrey, the then US Vice President, that "it was absolutely essential that we (meaning the American troops) were there". This claim was made by Mr. Humphrey in an interview reported in *The New York Times* dated the 15th April, 1974.

This is not the first time we are hearing about this. We have also read elsewhere that she said that Mr. Johnson was a man of peace. We are really disturbed to see this news-item and we would like her to clarify the position.

SHRI G. VISWANATHAN (Wandiwash): Is she replying to it?

THE PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF ATOMIC ENERGY, MINISTER OF ELECTRONICS AND MINISTER OF SPACE (SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI): I should certainly like to reply.

Needless to say, the statement is quite baseless. My views on such matters and especially on foreign troops in Vietnam have been well known. They were formed long ago, before I became part of the Government, and I had expressed them in no uncertain terms when I went to the United States in 1961 and, later, when I went as State guest in 1966. I expressed the same views in private as well as in public. Either the Vice-President has been misquoted or, perhaps, he is con-

fusing me with some one else whom he may have met. This is the only conclusion I can draw. My own feelings have been very strong on this issue. In fact, this was one of the major causes for the irritation of the U.S. Administration towards our Government. We were often told that we expressed ourselves in stronger terms than almost any other nation.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU: They are brought here as State guests—Gen. Westmoreland.

#### RE. PROPOSED STRIKE BY RAILWAYMEN

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, we resume further discussion on the Demands of the Ministry of Steel and Mines ...

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): Seven Iranian students have been deported....(Interruptions).

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): Sir, the National Coordination Committee of Railwaymen have given a strike notice. The former President of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, has appealed to the Railway Ministry, the Railway Board and the railwaymen that in the interest of national economy, a negotiated settlement should be arrived at. I have given a notice for that. The Railway Minister should say something about it.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The Minister is yet to meet them. That is what I was told.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: We want to know whether the Minister wants to assure this House whether they will make an utmost effort to bring about a negotiated settlement. We want an assurance from the Government that a negotiated settlement will be arrived at.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: That may be passed on to the Minister.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: It is such an important thing on which the Prime Minister has been expressing publicly and the Railway Minister has been saying publicly. They should be given an opportunity to say something and assure the House that a negotiated settlement will be arrived at.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: This morning, I saw these notices. My own immediate reaction was that this is an important matter because the news has appeared in the press that they have threatened to go on strike from 8th May. But then, I was told that the Minister has invited them for another round of talks and discussions. In all fairness, I think, we should wait till then. Let the Minister take another opportunity and, I think, that will be the appropriate time to take it up.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Is it your contention that, at a later stage after the 18th, we will be given an opportunity to consider the issue?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Let us come to the bridge. Whether it is worth crossing or not, we shall consider it later on.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA (Begusaral): Have you assured yourself that the Minister is in a fit state of mind to meet them?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I do not know. How can I go into the brain cells of people?

SHRIMATI PARVATHI KRISHNAN (Coimbatore): Yesterday, at the negotiations, we were told that no demand is negotiable. We want the Minister to tell us whether on the 18th he is going to negotiate with them or not.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: How would I know what he is going to say on the 18th. If he does not want to negotiate why does he invite them?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Alipore): I will tell you why. They were invited for negotiations and they found that a