

12.37 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Communications (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh): Sir, with your permission, Sir, I would like to inform the House that it is proposed to include the motions for consideration and passing of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Continuance Bill, 1967, in the agenda of Wednesday, the 29th March, 1967, before the resumption of the debate on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address. This has been necessitated because the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act will expire on the 4th of April, 1967 unless the Continuance Bill is passed by both Houses of Parliament and assented to by the President before that date. I have already consulted the Whips of various Groups and they have kindly agreed to this proposal.

Mr. Speaker: Was it agreed to?

Shri Nambiar (Tiruchirappalli): Yes it was agreed to

12.38 hrs.

STATEMENT Re. TIMES OF INDIA DISPUTE

The Minister of Labour and Rehabilitation (Shri Hathi): Sir, on the 23rd March, 1967, I had made a statement in the House about the dispute between the management and the employees of the *Times of India* at Bombay and Delhi. I had then stated that negotiations between the two sides were in progress and I hoped that they would reach an amicable settlement. I am happy now to state that as a result of further discussions and negotiations between the two sides, a settlement has been reached. The strike has been withdrawn and the lock-out lifted and normal work at Bombay and Delhi has been resumed. The papers are likely to commence publication from tomorrow.

12.39 hrs.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION BY MEMBER

(Shri A K Gopalan)

Shri A. K. Gopalan (Kasargod): Sir, on 18th March, 1967, towards the end of the day's Lok Sabha proceedings, Shri V. C. Shukla, under the pretext of making a personal explanation, stood up and stated, among other things the following:—

"When certain charges were levelled against Shri A. K. Gopalan, there was no point of order raised on this procedural matter. It was only said that these charges were false. Then the Speaker said that if the charges were falsified to his satisfaction, he will have them expunged; and he sent a letter to me and asked me to give the documents in proof of what I had said. I sent the documents as proof of what I had said. The Speaker was satisfied that these were full facts and that is why they were not expunged."

But, immediately after this statement of Shri Shukla, since the House adjourned, I take this opportunity to make a personal explanation and set the record straight.

Shri Shukla uttered a falsehood when he stated that the then Speaker said that if the charges were falsified he would have the charges expunged from the record. The then Speaker never said that. Neither the Speaker, nor anyone else at that, ever raised the question of expunging the allegations from the record, during the said proceedings. The Lok Sabha record dated 11th March, 1965 will bear me out completely.

And yet Shri Shukla has put these words in the mouth of the then Speaker, so as to mislead the House into believing the latter part of his

statement, that, the Speaker subsequently did not expunge these allegations from the records because he was satisfied that the charges against me were true.

The Speaker did not expunge Shri Shukla's allegations, because what was raised by the opposition was not the question of expunging but the procedural propriety of allowing a member to make allegations against another member on the floor of the House in his absence to which the then Speaker ruled that it could be allowed if the member making the charges was sure of his grounds. Having held so, he allowed Shri Shukla to proceed

Shri Shukla uttered another falsehood when he stated on 18th March, 1967 that the then Speaker was satisfied that there was full proof about the allegations against me and my wife. In fact I was the first to send a written denial of these charges as 'wild, baseless and foul', to the then Speaker, on 13th March, 1965 itself i.e., immediately on seeing the press report of 11th March, 1965 proceedings while I was inside jail. In fact, I also requested the Speaker to read my statement on the floor of the House. The Speaker did not accede to my request, because according to his own words in a previous letter "it is not the practice to circulate to members, written views of a member, on a matter coming up before the House". Instead, the then Speaker adopted the procedure of exchanging letters between me and Shri Shukla, and then treating the matter closed. I emphatically assert that the Speaker did not proceed further in the matter solely in pursuance of this "practice", and not because he was satisfied about the bogus proofs of Shri Shukla.

I deny that Shri Shukla ever sent any documents to the Speaker, which may be even remotely considered to be an evidence supporting his very wild and baseless charge that we have acquired some property. In fact, after my writing to him, when the

Speaker wrote to Shri Shukla on 1st July 1965, asking him to produce any proof that he may be having with him, Shri Shukla dared not respond immediately. Full two months after receiving the letter from the Speaker, Shri Shukla sent to him two documents which had nothing to do with the allegations he made.

The main allegation by Shri Shukla was that "these members of the Communist Party amassed wealth from sources which are undisclosed to us and assets have been acquired under very suspicious circumstances". No evidence had been given to prove these wild allegations.

The Speaker sent Shri Shukla's reply to me and I sent a detailed reply to the Speaker, refuting the allegations made on the floor of the House. When he first made the allegations on the floor of the House he talked of my "having purchased a costly cardamom estate", which is false even from the account he sent to me through the Speaker. In the reply he sent to me and the so-called documents he produced, there was a document showing one P. A. Nair having purchased a piece of land leased for Rs. 500, whereas on the floor of the House he had alleged that it was my wife who had made the purchase of a big cinema house, what he could produce was only a copy of an application by Karunakara Panikkar, requesting that a licence for a tourist cinema with a thatched roof may be granted to him

Thus, Shri V. C. Shukla not only could not adduce even a semblance of evidence in support of the wild charges he made on the floor of the House, but he had not even got the decency that is expected from every gentleman, to express regret for having made false allegations at a time when I was in jail.

From the recorded proceedings of the House it is clear that at a time when the House was discussing the activities of the Communists who had been arrested in large numbers, he

[Shri A. K. Gopalan]

made these wild allegations against me and other members of my party with the sole intention of scandalizing me and my party and in order to indulge in the game of character assassination.

It is further amazing that he sticks to these charges even now. He has thus deliberately misused his privileged position as a Member of Parliament to scandalize me and other members of my party. If he has the courage, I would ask him through you to make these charges outside the House and face the consequences.

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Shri Vidya Charan Shukla): Sir, I have one or two points to clarify. Shri Gopalan has said that I have uttered a falsehood in the House . . . (Interruption).

Mr. Speaker: If Shri Shukla wants to make a statement, he should give me a copy in advance, then I will permit him later on to make it.

Shri N. Sreekantan Nair (Quilon): Under what rule?

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: I do not want to make a statement. I only want to clarify two points that he has made.

Mr. Speaker: Please give me a copy today and I will allow you to make it tomorrow.

Shri Vidya Charan Shukla: And, again, Shri Gopalan will be allowed?

Mr. Speaker: No; somewhere it will end. After I read the statement I will see what action is to be taken.

Shri Nambiar (Tiruchirappalli): On a point of order, Sir. My point of order is that he cannot make a statement. He may be a Minister of State or damn God himself, but he cannot talk nonsense. He must understand that we belong to a respected party. He must know to behave. He may be a Minister . . . (Interruption).

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

12.47 hrs.

RE. CALLING ATTENTION NOTICE

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी (बलरामपुर):
अभी एक काल एटेंशन नोटिस लिया गया था। उसके ऊपर आप दो बजे सवाल एलाऊ कर दे तो अच्छा होगा।

Shri P. K. Deo (Kalahandi): All those who are likely to ask a question are not here and they were told that it will come up at 6 o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: I have no objection to taking it up at 6 o'clock or at 5 o'clock.

Shri P. K. Deo: The Lobby Assistant came and informed us that it will be taken up at 6 o'clock.

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी: मेरी कठिनाई यह है कि प्रधान मंत्री ने एक बँटक बुलाई है . . .

Mr. Speaker: When some other hon. Member says that it is inconvenient for him, we have to take that into consideration

Shri A. B. Vajpayee: Let it be taken up tomorrow immediately after the Question Hour.

Mr. Speaker: I have no objection.

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Communications (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh): But there is one difficulty. We have some questions in the other House regarding the same matter and we might be detained there. So, I would request that it may be taken up today at 6 o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: All right.