

LOK SABHA

Friday, March 1, 1963/Phalguna 10,
1884 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the
Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

11.00 hrs.

OBITUARY REFERENCE

DEMISE OF DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD

The Minister of Finance (Shri Morarji Desai): Sir, the whole nation is in mourning today, for one of the most illustrious sons of this land, who was born also in that part of the country which has produced those who gave us our philosophy and our culture, known affectionately as Rajen Babu, has passed away. He gave the most precious years of his life for the freedom struggle and, then, for the reconstruction of the country. He was one of those colleagues and followers, at the top, of Mahatma Gandhi who was nearest to him in philosophy, in life's action and in words. One of the gentlest persons, he had a rare combination of dignity with humility and had the simplicity and nobility in every behaviour of his. A year and a half ago he was seriously ill and was on the point of passing away, but God spared him for some more time and took him away last night. The path that he has shown to us, a path of service, humility and impeccable integrity, is one which will always lead us on to work, which will enable us to reconstruct this country and make, it as all of us want to make it, a land of happiness, strength and culture.

Of course, all those who are born have to go. But there are some who

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become as precious after death as they were in life, and he was one of them. Rightly, he was the President of the Constituent Assembly and he was the first President after freedom. Nobody could have been more suitably elected as the first President than he. We all mourn his loss very deeply and request you to convey the deep sorrow of this House and all of us to the members of his family.

Shri A. K. Gopalan (Kasergod): Mr. Speaker, Sir, on my own behalf and on behalf of my party in Parliament, I join in the sentiments expressed by Shri Morarji Desai and also the sentiments expressed outside this House. I had occasion to work with him as the President of the Congress. I knew him personally. He was a very loving person, humble and simple. His death is a very great loss to the country. Allow me, Sir, to express our deep condolences to the bereaved family.

Shri Ranga (Chittoor): Mr. Speaker, I associate myself with every word that has fallen from the lips of my hon. friend, Shri Morarji Desai, about Rajen Babu. We have known him quite long and some of us have had the privilege, the high privilege, of having worked under him for more than thirty years. We came under his influence more than thirty years ago. It is a heavy loss, personal loss to some of us, and a grievous loss to the nation as a whole. I speak now on my own behalf and on behalf of Rajaji, his beloved comrade and the founder of our Swatantra movement, and also on behalf of the Swatantra Party.

It was in 1917, when I was a boy, that I began to feel that even peasants in this country could have a place in public life and political work. When

[Shri Ranga]

I learnt that under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi there was such an intellectual giant as he was then though so simple in demeanour and so smiling in the ordinary conduct of affairs—Rajan Babu began to work for the peasants, for the kisans of Champaran—from that time onwards I placed myself voluntarily like Ekalavya under the leadership of Rajen Babu, Mahatma Gandhi and all the galaxy of national leaders who come to range themselves by the side of Mahatma Gandhi. We worked together, Rajen Babu and several of us, in the working Committee and also in the Constituent Assembly for many years.

Future historians as well as political leaders and workers I am sure, would find much to inspire them, also to surprise them if they read the eloquent and inspiring, some times extraordinarily ennobling, speeches that Rajen Babu delivered in the Constituent Assembly, either before we came to face some very intricate problems to be solved or after he had succeeded in solving them when he used to give his benedictions to us.

If there could be a *karma yogi*, he was one. In the Bhagavat Gita the description of a *karma yogi* is given. Many a time I wondered whether it would be possible for any living public workers, who is tossed about by the uncertain currents of events, thoughts and conflicts, to become a *karma yogi*. But he has succeeded in demonstrating to us that it is possible for one to be a *karma yogi* even when one is holding such a high office. Many people wonder nowadays whether it would be possible for the public workers to be honest with themselves, with the rest of the people and the country. Here is an example of how one man, a lawyer, a distinguished lawyer at that, a highly trained scholar and an active politician and the head of a nation for a long time, could succeed in being honest, decent, friendly and smiling to the end.

I am sure, Rajen Babu would not have asked for a better and more easy end to his noble career than what God favoured him with yesterday. The nation did not have any time to prepare itself for this blow as it had done last time. He died in a few hours before anyone had any kind of a warning at all. Just as he has lived so peacefully and without giving any trouble to anyone, he has passed away also quietly and so nobly. I am sure, God would be kind to him as Rajen Babu had been kind to God's creatures. He would certainly be a *mritajivi* for a long time to come, just as Mahatma Gandhi is there for us and Buddha and Asoka, from his own area, are there to inspire us by their examples.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy (Kendrapara): Sir, we have lost a great man and a statesman. He lived a life full of honours. He was the embodiment of ancient Indian culture and a symbol of Gandhian simplicity. Coming from a peasant family, he occupied the highest office in this land. Because of his simplicity and austere nature in whichever capacity he served the nation, he made his mark. His presence in our public life was always a grave reminder to those who associate dignity and efficiency in the exhibition of pomp and grandeur. I am yet to know a statesman, who, even after retirement from Presidency and public life, would come forward in such a forthright manner about the duties and responsibilities of the people of this country in the face of the present emergency. I would refer in this connection to the very first statement that he made after the Chinese aggression.

We mourn his loss. I associate myself on my own behalf and on behalf of my Party, with all the sentiments expressed in this House. Let me hope that his noble ideals and actions will be a guide to all of us both in our public conduct and in our private life.

श्री बृजराज सिंह (बरेली) : अग्र्यक्ष महोदय, स्वतंत्र भारत के इतिहास में इतना बड़ा शोकपूर्ण क्षण कभी नहीं आया। देशरत्न डा० राजेन्द्र प्रसाद का भारतवासियों के बीच से उठ जाना आज की संकटपूर्ण घड़ी में विशेष रूप से दुःखद है। वे न केवल हमारे युग के सब से महान् नेता थे, बल्कि उन्होंने भारत को स्वतंत्र कराने और फिर स्वतंत्र भारत को समृद्धि और विजय का मार्ग दिखाने में भी सक्रिय योग दिया।

राजेन्द्र बाबू इसलिये महान् नहीं थे कि उन्होंने स्वतंत्र भारत के प्रथम राष्ट्रपति का पद प्राप्त किया, बल्कि वास्तव में उन्होंने इस पद को ग्रहण करके इस पद को ही महान् बना दिया था।

एक महान् राजनीतिज्ञ प्रकांड विद्वान्, कुशल सेनानी, उत्कट देशभक्त, प्रखर विचारक अर्थात् मानव में जितने महान् गुण संभव हैं, उन सब का उनके व्यक्तित्व में सामंजस्य था। फिर भी अपनी सादगी से, अपनी अहंकार-शून्यता से, उन्होंने अपना स्थान भारत की ऋषि परम्परा में बना लिया था।

राष्ट्रपति पद से अवकाश लेकर वे जनता के बीच आ गये थे। आज तो उनका मार्ग दर्शन हमें सबसे अधिक आवश्यक था। ऐसी ही घड़ी में उनको खोकर हम अनाथ से हो गये। भगवान् उनकी आत्मा को शांति दे।

मैं अपने जनसंघ दल की ओर से इस महान् संत की दिवंगत आत्मा को हार्दिक श्रद्धांजलियां भेंट करता हूँ।

Shri Frank Anthony (Nominated—Anglo-Indians): Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of the Independent Parliament Group I associate myself with what has fallen from the hon. Finance Minister. May I only add this that Dr. Rajendra Prasad, known to many of us affectionately as Rajen Babu, was a rare soul indeed. In spite of

his outstanding capacity and achievements, he remained humble, simple and self-effacing. He was truly one of nature's gentleman. May God rest his soul in peace.

Shri Yajnik (Ahmedabad): I associate myself and my Group with all the sentiments which have been expressed in this House and I join the House and the country in mourning the loss of one of the last associates of Mahatma Gandhi. It was, in fact, through Gandhiji that I learnt about the distinguished role that Rajendra Babu had played in the fight for the emancipation of the kisans of Champaran. Then, he joined the other valiant leaders in the Non-cooperation Movement when he distinguished himself as the leader of Bihar. I remember him as a valiant fighter in the movements of 1930 and 1942. I have a vivid recollection of Rajendra Babu shedding copious tears in 1922 when Gandhiji was sentenced to 6 years imprisonment. While he distinguished himself as the President of the Constituent Assembly and afterwards as the President of this country, I think of him as one who dedicated himself to the cause of the most depressed and the poorest in the land. I remember seeing him presiding over a small meeting of the workers in the cause of Scheduled Tribes which met in the Harijan colony and I know that he remained associated with the Adim Jati Seva Mandal till the very last. That I think was the true facet of his personality. He, while occupying the most distinguished posts in the country, always felt identified with the poorest of the poor. It is his spirit of dedication to the poor which enshrines him in the hearts of the millions of this country. I am sure the country will mourn and remember him for many years to come.

May his soul rest in peace.

Dr. M. S. Aney (Nagpur): I associate myself with the sentiments and

[Dr. M. S. Aney]

opinions expressed by the speakers who have preceded me. In the death of Dr. Rajendra Prasad, in two words I can say we have lost a patriot and a saint, both. He was a living embodiment of Indian culture and more than that, in him, I found an example of the statement in Sanskrit "विद्या विनयेन शोभते" I did not find a better example of humility associated with great learning in as great a measure as I did in the case of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. His services to the country are well-known and I need not recount them. The most striking feature was that he was dedicated to the service of man more than dedicated to public life in a demonstrative way. He was, therefore, a friend of all. In his case I can truly say that, if there was any man after Gandhiji who can be called Ajatasatru, it was Rajen Babu. To the memory of that man, I pay my tribute and I am sure that he will remain in eternal communion with the great soul whom he had been worshipping every day in the whole of his life.

श्री प्रकाशवीर शास्त्री (बिजनौर) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, राजेन्द्र बाबू के देहावसान से ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि द्वारपर का कोई ऋषि, उपनिषद काल का जो कलियुग में जन्म लेकर आया था, आज हमारे मध्य में नहीं रहा। उनकी उच्चता, उनकी गम्भीरता और उनकी दूरदर्शिता, सब से ही आज यह देश वंचित हो गया है। डा० राजेन्द्र प्रसाद के निधन से भारत ही नहीं अपितु भारतीय संस्कृति की भी महान क्षति हुई है। मैं अपनी और अपने सहयोगियों की ओर से उस महान् आत्मा के चरणों में भावभरी श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करता हूँ।

श्री रामसेवक यादव (बाराबंकी) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, प्रातः स्मरणीय श्रद्धेय राजेन्द्र प्रसाद का निधन इस समय राष्ट्र के लिये महान् क्षति है। गांधी के बाद जब कभी इस

तरह की समस्याएँ होती थीं जिनसे कि आज देश दो चार है हम उन्हीं की ओर देखा करते थे। इस समय भी हमें उनका वित्तो आवश्यकता थी। उसे देश जानता है। राजेन्द्र बाबू, सत्य, सदाचार और सादर्य के अवतार थे और मैं उनको अपनी ओर से, अपने दल की ओर से श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करता हूँ। आज वे हमारे बीच में नहीं होंगे, फिर भी उन्होंने अपने त्यागमय जीवन से इस देश का जो महान शुभ कार्य किया है वह हमारा पथ प्रदर्शन करता रहेगा। हमारे बीच में वे शरीर से नहीं रहेंगे फिर भी हम उन की याद करते रहेंगे।

श्री मौर्य (अलीगढ़) : आदरणीय अध्यक्ष महोदय, आज आदरणीय डा० राजेन्द्र प्रसाद के निधन के पश्चात् भारत माता की गोद एक ऐसे महान् सपूत से खाली हो गई है जिसने मानवता को रक्षा के लिये, समता की स्थापना के लिये तथा देश की मान मर्यादा को स्थापित रखने के लिये अपना पूरा जीवन संग्राम में रक्खा। आदरणीय डा० राजेन्द्र प्रसाद उन महान् पुरुषों में से थे जो कि महात्मा जी के बहुत नजदीक थे। सदैव ही उन्होंने सत्यता के लिये संग्राम किया। वे अपने जीवन काल में सादगी के लिये सदैव ही लड़ते रहे। मैं उस महापुरुष के लिये जिसके निधन से आज पूरा भारतवर्ष ही नहीं बल्कि पूरा संसार शोकाकुल है अपनी ओर से, अपने दल की ओर से और देश के शोषित समाज की ओर से, जिनके लिये उन्होंने बहुत किया, श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करते समय यहाँ कहता हूँ कि यह एक ऐसी क्षति है जिसे पूरा करना भारतवर्ष के लिये आगे आने वाले बहुत से वर्षों में संभव नहीं है।

Shri Manoharan (Madras South): Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of my party, the DMK, I associate myself with the sentiments expressed by the hon. Finance Minister and the Members of this House.

The country is grievously shocked at the unexpected demise of one of the old Guards of Freedom Fight. A moralist in politics and an idealist in morality, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, one of the towering personalities of India, though passed away, has left an indelible impression in the minds of India, a legacy which is to be carried by one and all. He was a man of proportion, scruples, honesty and magnanimity. He has been a beacon-light and a bed-rock of noble thoughts and unerring deeds. He has, I believe, been disquieting the oppressor and reassuring the oppressed. Leading a saintly mode of life, he has become a friend to all and a foe to none.

As a President of the Indian Republic, he has done much to the country and created a history of his own. He was passive and peaceful, revolutionary and regenerating. Through his endeavour and ethical temperance, he has established himself a Mahatma Gandhi II of India. The world is there to recognise.

Now, the country is mourning. On behalf of my party, let me pay my homage to this noble soul and express my heart-felt condolences to the bereaved family.

Shri M. Muhammad Ismail (Manjeri): I, with all my heart, join in the great sorrow and condolence expressed by the House on the sudden departure from our midst of the dear beloved Rajen Babu. He was a great patriot and a leader of men, and a real lover of the country and the people. His distinguished role in the affairs of men and the great services rendered by him for the country and its people are historical and unique.

I am one of those who can testify to the fact that he, while holding firmly to his own point of view, can really understand and sympathise with the point of view of other men. He has set before us all a shining and living, at the same time, human and humane, conduct that every one of us must emulate.

डा० गोविन्द दास (जबलपुर) : अग्रधक्ष महोदय, परम पूज्य श्रद्धेय राजेन्द्र बाबू को खो कर इस समय हम ने सबसे बड़ी हानि उठाई है। सन् १९२० से ही मैं उनके सम्पर्क में रहा हूँ और स्वतंत्रता के संग्राम में उन्होंने क्या किया यह एक इतिहास का विषय है। उसके बाद स्वतंत्र भारत में संविधान सभा का उन्होंने जिस प्रकार संचालन किया, शायद उससे बेहतर और कोई नहीं कर सकता था। जो कुछ भारतीय है, भारतीय धर्म, भारतीय संस्कृति, भारतीय न्याय, भारतीय साहित्य, भारतीय भाषायें, उस सब के वे मूर्तिमन्त प्रतीक थे। गांधी जी के बाद गांधी जी के मार्ग की ओर हम दो ही व्यक्तियों की ओर देखते थे, एक डा० राजेन्द्र प्रसाद जी और एक सन्त विनोबा भावे। अब केवल विनोबा भावे हमारे बीच में रह गये हैं जो उस मार्ग में हमें प्रेरणा देते हैं।

पिछले मई महीने में जब वे यहां से विदा हुये उस समय इस सदन के सब से पुराने सदस्य की हैसियत से मुझे यह भार सौंपा गया था कि उनकी विदाई का आयोजन किया जाय। वह आयोजन अपने क्षेत्र का एक विशेष प्रकार का आयोजन था। शायद उसके पूर्व इस प्रकार का आयोजन नहीं हुआ था। उस आयोजन के समय हमें यह मालूम हुआ था कि राजेन्द्र बाबू इस देश की जनता के हृदयों पर किस प्रकार प्रतिष्ठित थे। आधुनिक भारतीय इतिहास में वे प्रथम राष्ट्रपति के रूप में तो अंकित रहेंगे, ही, परन्तु उसी के साथ वे सन्त राष्ट्रपति के रूप में भी अंकित रहेंगे। उनमें एक अद्भुत मिश्रण था आध्यात्मिक और आधिभौतिक बातों का जो कि हमारी संस्कृति का एक अद्भुत मिश्रण है। जैसे वे उसके प्रतीक थे, समझता हूँ कि और कोई उस प्रकार का प्रतीक नहीं है।

इस सदन के सब से पुराने सदस्य की हैसियत से मैं अपनी ओर से और सब की ओर से उनके चरणों में अपनी श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करता हूँ।

Mr. Speaker: I fully associate myself with all the sentiments that have been expressed by the Minister of Finance, leaders of various Groups and other Members on the life and service of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. In him we have lost one of the main architects of India's freedom.

Dr. Rajendra Prasad was the President of the Constituent Assembly of India during the years 1946 to 1950 and was Minister of Food and Agriculture during the years 1946 to 1948. He was the first President of the Republic of India and held this office from 1950 to 1962. As President, he continued to be part of Parliament during all these years.

He was a faithful and devoted associate of Gandhiji. In today's papers hon. Members must have noted the extent to which his devotion went. It is reported that once Mahatmaji said that there was one man who would drink a cup of poison if he was asked to do that by him.

A great freedom fighter and an ardent patriot, as President of the Constituent Assembly, he guided its deliberations with patience and foresight. He was the first President of India in very difficult and formative stages. An intellectual endowed with

humility and humanism, he had worked among the poor and lowly and understood their difficulties. He maintained the dignity of the office and yet lived a simple and dedicated life. He laid foundations and established traditions worthy of the constitutional head of a State. His mature wisdom, his long experience and his vast knowledge would have been of great value to us at this critical moment. He has been removed from us at this juncture. The loss is much too great. We deeply mourn his loss.

I am sure the House will agree with me that we may, as suggested by the Finance Minister also, send our condolences to the bereaved family.

The House may kindly stand in silence for a short while.

(The Members then stood in silence for a short while.)

Mr. Speaker: As a mark of respect, the House will now stand adjourned for the rest of the day and will meet again tomorrow at 11 a.m.

11.32 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Saturday March 2, 1963/Phalgun 11, 1884 (Saka).