

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

OFFICIAL REPORT

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HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE

Monday, 30th November, 1953.

The House met at Half Past One
of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair.]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(See Part I)

2-39 P.M.

DEATH OF SHRI B. N. RAU

**The Prime Minister and Leader of
the House (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru):**

Sir, I beg your leave to refer to a sad event that took place in the early hours of this morning in the City of Zurich, Switzerland. It is customary in this House for reference to be made when a Member of this House or of the past Assemblies dies. It is not customary for such reference to be made in the case of a non-Member. I venture to make this mention here in regard to a person who was not a Member of this House, but who was nonetheless connected very intimately, if I may say so, with this House, and more especially the Constitution under which this House is functioning. I refer to Shri Benegal Narasing Rau who died at about half past two this morning at Zurich. Shri B. N. Rau was, as the House knows, eminent in many fields and he served the country in various ways. I remember—it is a memory of long ago—seeing him as a contemporary at Cambridge in my own college, an exceedingly shy person who

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almost refused to talk to one because he was so shy. Since then he accumulated a great deal of learning and experience and scholarship. But he bore that great weight of scholarship always in an unassuming, unobtrusive way. I doubt if anybody saw him ruffled at all. Always he had that gentle way of approaching questions which surprised very greatly many people during the discussions in the United Nations where he represented India—because often in the United Nations discussions very hard words are said. But whatever was said, Shri B. N. Rau remained his quiet, gentle self without being ruffled or moved in the slightest.

He had a distinguished career. He was High Court Judge for a long time. But we are specially concerned with his activities which led to the Constitution. He was also, the House will remember, the Chairman of the Hindu Law Committee from which emanated various pieces of legislation which, in a different form no doubt, have come up before Parliament. He was intimately connected with this Constitution-making, and he might well be called one of the principal architects of our Constitution. In fact, while he was engaged in making the Constitution of India, he was sent for by the Government of Burma to make their Constitution, which he helped in making also. And then he played a very distinguished part in our foreign work. He was our representative and the leader of our U.N. delegations. He became the permanent representative of India in U.N. And last of all, only last year or nearly two years ago he

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

was elected to the International Court at the Hague.

In spite of this prolonged record of service he was not an old man. He was slightly older than I am—and I do not consider myself too old to do work yet. As I said, he was a contemporary of mine for a while at Cambridge. He had been ill for a long time, and for the last fortnight or so we had been led to expect that he would not recover. Nevertheless his passing away is a matter of sorrow and shock to all of us who looked upon him as the perfect civil servant in one way, and also as an ideal servant of India in other ways too.

So I think it is right that mention of the passing away of such an eminent son of India should be made in this House.

Mr. Speaker: Although, as stated by the hon. the Leader of the House, it is not the practice in this House to make references to the passing away of non-Members, either of this Parliament or its predecessors, when the hon. the Leader of the House asked me as to whether I could permit him to make a reference, I instinctively felt that I must, because the case here is quite exceptional. Apart from the unique personality of Mr. B. N. Rau and his eminent services to the country, what weighed most with me was that he was, as it were, interwoven in our present parliamentary life. He worked for it during the last few years of his life, and we all know what a valuable document in the form of the Constitution we have got. He was also the architect of the Hindu Law reform Bills. Thus his association with Parliament or the Legislature was so extensive and so wide that it is only technically that he was not a Member of Parliament. Apart from that, of course, he was an eminent Indian and it is but proper that we all should gratefully remember him and express our sorrow at his sad demise at a comparatively, (as the Leader of the House said), young age.

We may send our condolences to his family in their sad bereavement. I entirely associate myself with all that the Leader of the House has said.

The House may stand in silence for a minute as a mark of respect.

The House then stood in silence for a minute.

PARLIAMENTARY PROPRIETY

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta, North-East): Sir, may I have your permission to mention a matter which has important implications in the context of our parliamentary life today? I submit that the Minister of Commerce and Industry, when he spoke on the 25th November in reply to the discussion of his motion for consideration of the Dhooties Bill, chose to use certain expressions regarding Communist Members of this House and particularly one of them, Mr. Gopala Rao, which were an unambiguous reflection on their *bona fides* and were therefore equally an unambiguous reflection on the House. I submit if I were present at that time I certainly would have drawn the Chair's attention to the Minister's lapse. But I happened to be in a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee, and I have taken the earliest opportunity of bringing the matter to your notice.

The Minister said in the course of his speech—I am quoting from pages 2102—2112 of the cyclostyled report:—

"Mr. Gopala Rao asks: 'What have you done?' Must I give this Rs. 3½ crores to Mr. Gopala Rao so that he can fight an election? Then it is very logical! Give the money to him.

Shri Gopala Rao: That means you refuse to learn.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I refuse to yield any place to communism. I refuse to accept your *bona fides*. I refuse to believe that you do any good to the people. I refuse to believe that anything