

LOK SABHA DEBATES

Date 09/12-2014

(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

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LOK SABHA

Tuesday, 22nd February, 1955

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
(See Part I)

12 NOON

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

ELECTIONS IN ANDHRA

Mr. Speaker: We will now take up the adjournment motion. I should like to have the statement from the hon. the Home Minister.

The Minister of Home Affairs (Pandit G. B. Pant): I rise to make a few remarks about the motion for adjournment notified yesterday, as directed by you. I have made an enquiry about the allegations made by the sponsors of the motion but find that those allegations are utterly lacking in substance, or grossly exaggerated. It is a matter of some regret to me that this question should have been raised in these circumstances. The people and the authorities in Andhra are today engaged in a colossal undertaking. The number of voters there exceeds 11 million. The number of polling centres comes to about 14,000. And the elections are still in progress. The State was divided into five centres. Polling has been held only in three out of the five on the 11th, 15th and 18th of this month. The other two will be going to the polls on the 23rd and 27th. In view of the delicacy of the task in which the people there are engaged, the

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enthusiasm that has been whipped, and the fever heat that has gripped all who are today interested in the election there, it would have been desirable if we all had helped in further heartening those who are engaged in this delicate affair and also making things easier for them. I think that on occasions like this when many other remedies are open to those who may have a feeling of grievance, whether genuine or imaginary, it would be profitable if a certain degree of restraint were exercised. However, it is not.

Shri N. C. Chatterjee (Hooghly): On a point of order. Is this relevant, these remarks of the Home Minister?

Mr. Speaker: Let him finish.

Shri N. C. Chatterjee: Did we ask for a factual statement or his *obiter dicta*?

Pandit G. B. Pant: You make the choice.

The adjournment motion is couched in very wide terms. The allegations about facts themselves are vague. But besides these specific allegations, the introductory part of it, if it may be so called, is sufficiently vague. The sponsors of the motion are resourceful and are endowed with a prolific imagination. I do not want to indulge in speculation and do not know how things are developing in Andhra, but I hope that any discussion that we may hold here at any time will not affect the even tenor of things there.

So far as these allegations are concerned I have already said that there is little substance in them. The first one relates to five thousand voters being forcibly prevented from proceeding to polling booths in Nallamada

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constituency on 15th February, 1955. The State Government are not aware of this. They have made, I think, very careful enquiries but find that nothing like this happened. A thing that might be said to be somewhat like that which happened is a simple affair. Fifteen or twenty voters while on their way to a polling station tried to force their way through a sugar-cane field belonging to a candidate who owed allegiance to a different party. The man who was looking after the field resisted this attempt and did not allow them to pass through the field. The voters were enraged and that person was assaulted and he sustained a bleeding injury. On this the villagers assembled there and there was some sort of clash. The voters returned to their village. When the matter was reported and reports were lodged by both sides, the police went to the village and asked those voters to accompany them to the polling booth if they had any desire to record their votes. They declined to do so. That is the only thing that we have been able to ascertain. There was not a single case in which any request for protection was rejected or turned down by the police. That is really the gravamen of the charge. I wonder if any report to this effect were recorded by anyone or if any intimation to that effect has come to the notice of those who may be interested in this election.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty (Basirhat): Yes, certainly it has come to our notice.

Pandit G. B. Pant: If it has come to notice then the place where this happened, the persons who were connected with it would perhaps be indicated in the adjournment motion. But I did not find any specification of that character there.

Well, polling in this case has been heavy, brisk and orderly. Nearly sixty to seventy per cent. of the voters have recorded their votes. It is incomprehensible if there had been an atmosphere which came in the way of

people's expression of their free choice that such a large portion of votes could have been cast. Moreover, this election has covered already more than a week and it is going to take a few days more. The proceedings there are being watched not only by the local correspondents, but by a large number of responsible representatives of the Press, including some of those belonging to foreign countries. Under their gaze, it is impossible that such incidents could have happened without attracting their notice.

Shri Nambiar (Mayuram): There, it is different, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Let him finish his statement.

Pandit G. B. Pant: I have been in the legislature for a long time.

Shri V. P. Nayar (Chirayinkil): We know that.

Pandit G. B. Pant: I am glad that you do.

There is another complaint about another constituency. Here, though the number has dwindled from 5,000 to 1,200, the nature is not altered or varied. We have made enquiries. The State Government have not received any report from any authority whether engaged in the task of managing the polling affairs or in the executive administration: not even from the candidates themselves. In these circumstances, I wonder to which quarter to we should go to seek enlightenment.

The third charge relates to the smashing of the offices of the Communist Party. Bold should be the man who would dare do so. Of course, complaints and counter-complaints have been made by all. But, so far as this particular complaint is concerned, though all records seem to have been consulted, only one complaint has been unearthed, and about that one too, it was found after enquiry that it could not be substantiated. There the matter ends.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: Which one?

Pandit G. B. Pant: About the smashing of offices.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: Which one?

Pandit G. B. Pant: No one was mentioned here and I do not exactly know really what was meant by smashing of offices: whether the buildings were demolished in which the offices were lodged or whether the records were taken away.

Shri Nambiar: Records taken, furniture broken.

Pandit G. B. Pant: Well, I think hon. Members are masters of the English language. 'Smashing' did not convey to me what was intended or meant. Any way, taking it in its normal sense, nothing like that seems to have happened.

The next charge is about an assault having been committed on a particular individual. It is true that the individual had received a simple injury. I will not go into the circumstances under which he got it. There may be many reasons. Whether he was to blame or others, that too I would not like to say. The matter is, I understand, under investigation and has already been reported. So, it being *sub judice*, I need not venture to express any opinion myself. But, some people tell me that there have been only 30 cases of injury and out of these, more than two-thirds who have suffered belong to the Congress. All the thirty have my sympathy. But, these twenty, I think, have suffered, perhaps, because they could not refrain from discharging their duties in an honest and enthusiastic manner.

The general elections do not call for any further comments. I may, however, state that the elections in Andhra have been organised by the Governor. The Ministry is not there. The Congress is not there. The Governor is an experienced, energetic and able administrator. On the very day he took charge or shortly after, he made a solemn declaration that he would see to it that the elections were free and fair.

Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy (Mysore): Hereafter?

Pandit G. B. Pant: He has adhered to that declaration.

Shri Nambiar: Next elections; not now.

Pandit G. B. Pant: Let us see whether many people survive at all till the next elections.

Any way, he has stuck to his declaration. He has issued instructions time and again to the Collectors, to the officers and to all concerned to do their part efficiently and well without fear or favour. He also appealed to the people to behave with restraint and dignity, so that a proper atmosphere necessary for elections in a democratic country may be maintained. There were still some petty incidents, trivial ones, perhaps unavoidable where full-blooded and vigorous men are arrayed against each other. But luckily, the serious cases were very few. I will not say who suffered in these cases or who were the aggressors. I had better leave that alone. I would spare the susceptibilities of the Members sitting opposite. I do not see there can be any room for apprehension or suspicions in these circumstances. I am confident that the election will be continued and held without any disturbance of public order. Those in charge will not allow any impediment to come in their way, and the elections will be completed smoothly, efficiently and peacefully.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: The hon. Minister said that he has not had any specific cases given to him. Every one of these telegrams—one of them sent by Shri A. K. Gopalan, M.P.—gives the name of each person injured in the particular case which has been mentioned there, and has been sent directly to the Election Commission which has received it and also to the Home Minister, and I am surprised to hear that he says he has not received them.

The other thing is that on the 12th at Pamudurthi and Tanakallu in Nallamada constituency police protection was sought. On the 14th, the

[Shrimati Renu Chakravartty]

office at Tanakallu was smashed up, and the cook of the candidate was stabbed and the house-owner was beaten and the jeep of the candidate was smashed, and as a result of it one of our candidates and one of our other comrades were arrested instead of the others, and the hon. Minister says that none of these things happened.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. So far as the motion is concerned, I find, if not altogether cent. per cent., at least substantial denial of the facts alleged, and this House will not be able to sit in judgment as to what happened. That is the business of the courts where people concerned might go. If the elections are disturbed, they can go to the Election Commission and have election petitions. If there is breach of the peace, there are the law courts, there are the criminal courts to which they can go and have recourse.

Then, I might just tell the hon. Members that the object of an adjournment motion is to discuss a certain policy or a certain conduct of Government, but not to discuss and settle what the facts are. (*Interruption*). This kind of running commentary when the Speaker is speaking is not a good parliamentary habit.

So, it is not to settle or discuss facts. Facts will require evidence and all that and the House never discusses that; and where there is a difference in the facts there can be no room for any adjournment motion or any discussion. I do not think I could consent to an adjournment motion like this in view of...

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta North-East) rose—

Mr. Speaker: I will hear if the hon. Members have to say anything.

There is another ground also on which I would not like to give consent, and that is, they will get an opportunity of saying whatever they want to say when they speak on the President's Address. All the things

will be open for discussion, of course within certain limits as may be permissible and not to any extent they like.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: Our object is not to have an adjudication on the facts as we have got them or as the Government have got them at the present moment, but we are getting sheaves of documents from very reliable sources including Members of Parliament which leads to considerable perturbation regarding the conduct of the elections. It is our object to communicate that perturbation to Government and to secure from Government a categorical assurance that there is going to be really free and fair elections, even on the two last days of elections for which polling still remains. In order to do that it is very necessary for us to bring before the attention of the House the allegations which we have got. I cannot say for myself, neither can Mrs. Chakravartty, that these facts are absolutely correct, nor can Pandit Pant say for the matter of that that whatever he has heard from his subordinate officials there is gospel truth. But we want a discussion of the reports which are streaming from Andhra Desh, because, if we have that discussion in the House, we can get from the House, at any rate, some kind of ascertainment of the desire of the Government to see to it that, at any rate, if anything has gone wrong, it is in spite of the Government, and that in future the Government is going to see to it that in the two last days of polling which remain something definite and drastic will be done to ensure fairness.

Mr. Speaker: I think there seems to be a fundamental misconception as to what an adjournment motion means. I may just take some time and try to explain, though I have explained it a number of times, without any result or impression. An adjournment motion is really a very, very exceptional thing, because hon. Members will see that to allow a matter to be discussed in the House in respect of which no previous notice is given and which is not placed on the Order Paper, is

doing injustice to a large number of absent Members. Therefore, the practice has been that nothing will be introduced extraneously in the Order Paper of the day, unless the occasion is of such a character that something very grave, something which affects the whole country, its safety, its interests and all that, is happening, and the House must pay its attention immediately to that. Then only an adjournment motion can be conceived. This has to be remembered by all who wish to bring in such motions that adjournment motions cannot be brought in and an extraneous matter cannot be introduced in the Order Paper unless the extent of the matter, its importance, its gravity, justifies it. The matter may be important, but it cannot be all important for the entire House to go out of the normal order of the day and take up another subject. That is one aspect of the thing.

As regards the facts, I have already stated that if the hon. Member's desire is to invite attention—he has said the reason that he cannot vouchsafe for the correctness; I am happy he made that admission—then, there are various other remedies which our Rules provide. He can give notice calling the attention of Government. If the matter was urgent in which he wanted anything very urgently, I can ask the Government immediately to make a statement in reply to his notice and he could get the facts as Government knew them. If he wanted further any discussion, there is also a separate Rule specially providing for two hours discussion. He can give notice under that, and the matter might be considered, and might be fixed for discussion under that particular Rule. But, somehow or other, I have noticed one thing, that we have some kind of special attraction for the words "adjournment motion", and therefore, people insist on adjournment motions; but it is impossible for the Chair to allow these motions as adjournment motions. If they want a discussion, there are other ways open and they can resort to those ways.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE
MADRAS ESSENTIAL ARTICLES CONTROL AND REQUISITIONING (TEMPORARY POWERS) ANDHRA AMENDMENT ACT

The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs (Shri Datar): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Madras Essential Articles Control and Requisitioning (Temporary Powers) Andhra Amendment Act, 1955 (President's Act No. 1 of 1955), under sub-section (3) of section 3 of the Andhra State Legislature (Delegation of Powers) Act, 1954.

[Placed in Library. See No. S-14/55.]

INDIAN STANDARDS INSTITUTION (CERTIFICATION MARKS) RULES

The Deputy Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri Kanungo): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Indian Standards Institution (Certification Marks) Rules, 1955, published in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Notification No. S.R.O. 151, dated the 15th January, 1955.

[Placed in Library. See No. S-19/55.]

COAL MINES (CONSERVATION AND SAFETY) RULES

The Minister of Production (Shri K. C. Reddy): I beg to lay on the Table, under sub-section (4) of section 17 of the Coal Mines (Conservation and Safety) Act, 1952, a copy of the Coal Mines (Conservation and Safety) Rules, 1954, published in the Ministry of Production Notification No. S.R.O. 3146, dated the 25th September, 1954.

[Placed in Library. See No. S-18/55.]

PRESS COMMISSION REPORT—PARTS II AND III

The Deputy Minister of Rehabilitation (Shri J. K. Bhonsle): I beg to lay on the Table a copy each of the following reports:

- (i) Report of the Press Commission, Part II—History of Indian Journalism; [Placed in Library. See No. S-15/55.] and
- (ii) Report of the Press Commission, Part III—Appendices [Placed in Library. See No. S-16/55.]