

# LOK SABHA DEBATES

(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

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I

2

## LOK SABHA

Monday, 15th November, 1954.

*The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.*

[MR. SPEAKER (SHRI G. V. MAVALANKAR) in the Chair]

### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(No Questions: Part I not published)

#### DEATHS OF SHRI RAFI AHMAD KIDWAI AND SHRI NADIMUTHU PILLAI

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs and Defence (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your permission I should like to make a reference right at the commencement of this session to the sad and grievous event that took place some days ago. I was far away from India when news of the death of Rafi Ahmad Kidwai reached me, and I remembered then the long period of association that many of us had had with him. Perhaps there is none present here in this House who was associated with him closely for that length of time as I was. But there are many here who were associated for many long years and everyone in this House was associated with him in some way or other, either in the work of this House or outside. So I thought of this long period when about thirty-five years ago he came

fresh from college and threw himself in our national movement. Ever since that time till today I do not think there has been any period when he thought of anything else but that movement in its various aspects and afterwards its aftermath. I hardly know of a single person who was so devoted to one cause in its various aspects as Rafi Ahmad was. He was a Muslim of course, and yet I hardly know of anybody who is more of a thorough Indian in his thought and actions than he was, and not confined to any community.

We all know him, and it is not necessary therefore to say much. He was not born great, nor was greatness thrust upon him. He achieved it by hard continuous work, and work of a type which normally is not perhaps done by most of us. I remember for long years when many of us used to stump the countryside and deliver speeches, Rafi Ahmad never spoke in public. It was a joke amongst us. He was a quiet worker. Speaking in public was always somewhat distasteful to him. He spoke quite enough and more in private groups, but not in public meetings. And so he quietly organised, quietly worked, and probably knew more individuals in India as colleagues, friends and comrades than anybody that I know of. And to his house, when he was here or elsewhere, innumerable persons came seeking help. I am not aware of any single case where a person was turned away from his house. He helped to the best of his ability and beyond his ability everybody who came, and he

## [Shri Jawaharlal Nehru.]

gave solace to anyone who was in distress. And now if you go to his village home at Masauli you will find a broken dahnhouse, dilapidated; part of the house has not even got a roof to it. That is the house he lived in for these many years, and he had neither the time nor the money to repair it or to put a roof when a roof was lacking, because his mind and all his resources were engaged in other ways.

This House knows that he was sometimes a very irritating person. Almost, if I might say so, he delighted in saying things just to irritate the other party, in a friendly way. And yet I did not find any malice in him at any time against anyone.

So he was an odd person, a kind of person one does not usually come across. There might be able persons; there are persons greatly devoted to national causes. It is difficult to measure these things. But the queer combination of things that represented Rafi Ahmad was undoubtedly very unusual. And therefore for him to leave us does leave a gap which I think it is hardly possible to fill.

It has been a grievous blow to Government and to his colleagues in the Government and to innumerable other persons. And yet it seems to me that the manner of his death, that is being in harness to the bitter end to the last moment, was a death which many of us might envy. I was not here then when he died, but I am told that the people of Delhi specially, as people in the rest of the country, but more specially the people of Delhi of all groups, communities, views and parties, all gave a demonstration of sorrow and grief such as Delhi has very seldom seen. Because, Rafi Ahmad ultimately stood in the hearts of the people and served them. That was the real tribute which the people paid, not the few words that I

might say here in this House.

I have no doubt that I speak for this House when I say that I would like you, Sir, to convey our deep sorrow at his death to the members of his family.

**Mr. Speaker:** I fully associate myself with what the hon. the Leader of the House has expressed. Our loss is national and it is impossible to measure its depth. Mr. Kidwai was a brilliant administrator, as we all know him, a man of drive, quick decision and firm action. We have all known how he handled the very complicated and intricate food situation and relieved the country of one of its greatest anxieties. I am sure the House will join with me in conveying to his family our condolences in their sad bereavement.

There is also another report which I have to give to this House, about the demise of another Member, Shri Nadimuthu Pillai who was a Member of the Provisional Parliament. Shri Pillai died at his residence in Pattukottai, Tanjore District on the 26th October, 1954 at the age of fifty-two. He was a member of the Tamil Nad Congress Committee and the All India Congress Committee and was imprisoned for participating in the Congress Movement in 1940-41. He was also a Member of the Madras Legislative Assembly.

We mourn the loss of both these friends and I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolences to their families. The House may stand in silence for a minute to express its sorrow.

The House now stands adjourned as a mark of respect.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, the 16th November, 1954.