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LOK SABHA

Wednesday, 4th May, 1955

The Lok Sabha met at Half Past
Ten of the Clock

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(See Part I)

MOTIONS FOR ADJOURNMENT

DEPORTATION OF CERTAIN SATYAGRAHIS
BY PORTUGUESE AUTHORITIES

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): Sir, I beg to make the following statement in regard to certain recent occurrences in Goa. Government are much concerned at recent developments in Goa which indicate a deepening of the crisis there. The Portuguese authorities have not only lost all faith in the Goan people, but suspect Goan police officials also, and are relying more on the military. Many reports and rumours reach us about events in Goa. It is not always possible to confirm the reports received as the Portuguese authorities endeavour to prevent news from leaking out.

I give below an account of recent developments in Goa based on what we consider reliable information.

The Satyagraha Movement which was launched on the 15th August, 1954, took the form of batches of Goans from inside and outside Goa offering satyagraha on selected days. As a result, satyagraha was offered on the 26th of January, 1955, Republic Day, and the 17th of February, Gaitonde Day. The 6th of April was

fixed by the Goa National Congress as a day on which this organisation was to hold its open session in Mapuca, inside Goa. At this session Shrimati Sudha Joshi, the newly elected President, was to read out her presidential address. As the satyagraha on Republic Day and Gaitonde Day had produced considerable enthusiasm, the arrests numbering over 135, despite the precautionary measures taken by the local authorities, the Portuguese Government mobilised their entire military and police forces for the 6th April. There was a considerable show of force in order to intimidate the people. The Army was called out and in places like Partagal and Canacona, even tanks and artillery were on display. Preventive arrests of nationalist workers particularly in Margao, Mapuca and Panjim were made. In Siolim two girls were arrested and in Canacona six girls were arrested. On the nationalist side there was considerable activity resulting in the display of Goa Congress posters and Indian National flags all over Goa.

No open session could take place at Mapuca, but Shrimati Sudha Joshi, President-elect of the National Congress of Goa read out part of the presidential address. She and over 40 satyagrahis were arrested in Margao and Mapuca on the 6th. The total number of known arrests from the 6th to 20th April is 61. According to reports, Shrimati Sudha Joshi was abused and ill-treated during interrogation. Three of the male satyagrahis were beaten in public.

Later reports indicate that on the 6th April, military had to be called out in Margao to disperse a crowd of about 2,000 who had gathered to witness the satyagraha. Ruthless methods verging on barbarity were

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

adopted against the satyagrahis. According to latest reports, a critical situation is developing in Margao, Mapuca and Canacona. On April 24th, two policemen were arrested in Bicholim for allegedly helping Goan Nationalists. The Portuguese authorities, distrusting the Goan police force, are making increasing use of the military.

On the 21st and 31st March, and 18th, 21st and 27th April, 1955, the Military Tribunal passed following sentences on Goan satyagrahis arrested on the 15th August and in September, 1954:

1 to 28 years deportation or 20 years R.I.

(Shri Anthony De Souza)

- 5 to 8 years R.I.
- 10 to 7 years R.I.
- 8 to 6 years R.I.
- 6 to 5 years R.I.
- 11 to 4 years R.I.
- 4 to 3 years R.I.
- 1 to 1 year R.I.

In addition to the above, a political suspect arrested in July, 1954, was sentenced to 4 years imprisonment on the 10th March, 1955. A Goan Customs guard was also sentenced to 4 years R.I. on the 21st March for having surrendered to the satyagrahis who hoisted the Indian National Flag on the Terekhol Fort on the 15th August, 1954.

Only one of the satyagrahis sentenced to 3 years R.I. claimed to be Indian by birth. On enquiries it has been found that his parents are Goans. About 86 Indian satyagrahis have been arrested by Portuguese authorities since June 1954 as against more than 320 known arrests of Goan satyagrahis. Of the 86 Indian satyagrahis, 59 were released early this year and 27 are in custody and are still to be tried.

On receipt of press despatches on the 21st April, that 32 satyagrahis

sentenced by the Military Tribunal to the terms of imprisonment stated above, have been deported to Lourence Marques in Portuguese East Africa, immediate inquiries were instituted. According to information available, about 52 long-term criminal prisoners were removed to a penal settlement at Diu, a Portuguese island off Saurashtra by Portuguese sloop 'Alfonso Albuquerque' on the night of the 17th April. While there are persistent rumours that satyagrahis have been deported to Portuguese East Africa, Government has not yet been able to confirm the fact of deportation. Further inquiries are in progress.

The Note which was handed over to the Portuguese Minister was returned by him on the 12th April on the grounds that it was unacceptable to his Government as it amounted to interference in Portugal's internal affairs. The Foreign Secretary informed the Minister that in the Note which was handed to him on the 11th a formal warning had been given to the Portuguese Government of the serious repercussions of their repressive measures. This warning was repeated verbally to the Minister when he returned the Note on the 12th April.

On the eve of May Day, indiscriminate arrests of Indian and Goanese railway workers at Marmagoa were made. These people were released later after questioning.

This will indicate the seriousness of the situation in Goa and the complete suppression of even normal civil liberties and the terrorization of the people by the Portuguese authorities. The situation is grave and will become even graver if the Portuguese authorities deport any of these satyagrahis.

Dr. Lanka Sundaram (Visakhatnam): In view of the statement made just now, indicating barbarism

and inhuman acts on the part of the Portuguese Government, may I know from the Prime Minister whether any change of policy is indicated by him?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Well Sir, I cannot indicate that. Naturally, we have to keep the situation in view completely and the policy we are pursuing is not exactly a static policy, it is a dynamic policy and whatever change is at any time made, will naturally be brought to the notice of the House. Obviously, I cannot indicate these things vaguely at such a time as this.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: In view of the statement made by the hon. Prime Minister, I do not think it is necessary to give consent to the Adjournment Motion. With regard to the other Adjournment Motion I call upon the Labour Minister to make a statement.

LABOUR SITUATION IN KANPUR

The Minister of Labour (Shri Khandubhai Desai): Sir, I would like to make the following statement regarding developments in the Kanpur textile strike.

The disputes which have arisen over certain schemes of rationalisation in the cotton textile industry at Kanpur are under the Industrial Disputes Act, a matter entirely within the jurisdiction of the State Government. Nevertheless, in response to the requests made by a number of hon. Members, I got in touch with the State Government, who have been only too happy to supply me with all necessary information on the subject.

The question of rationalisation in the textile mills at Kanpur is not a recent one. It was examined in detail by the Rajendra Prasad Committee in 1938 and the U.P. Labour Enquiry Committee in 1948, both of which, with the full concurrence of the workers' representatives accepted and recommended the necessity of rationalisation, particularly of workloads, subject to the adequate safeguarding of

workers' interests. The working of rationalisation schemes in individual units, however, led to same retrenchment. Somewhat concerned over this development, and on the initiative of workers themselves, the State Government held a tripartite Conference at Nainital early in 1954, at which the principle of rationalisation was unanimously approved by all sections, including labour, subject to the following safeguards:

- (1) that the introduction of rationalisation schemes should not lead to the retrenchment of even a single worker whether he be permanent, substitute or temporary, and that any reduction in the size of the labour force should be achieved only through retirement and natural wastage;
- (2) that the profits of rationalisation should be shared equitably between the employer and the workers; and
- (3) that proper working conditions should be ensured so that the revised workload does not entail any hardship to the worker.

A Committee of seven, including three representatives of workers and three of employers with the Labour Commissioner as Chairman, was set up to work out the details of rationalisation schemes in respect of individual mills on the basis of these principles.

It was unfortunate, however that what was intended as a measure to safeguard the interests of workers and to protect them from some of the inevitable consequences of voluntary efforts through private negotiation should have been so speedily misrepresented and made the butt-end of a perverse propaganda by a section of labour, interested apparently not so much in the interests of labour as in the consolidation of its own position, Fantastic pictures of large-scale unemployment and of crushing

[Shri Khandubhai Desai]

work loads were freely drawn to frighten the unsuspecting labour. In face of this propaganda, the seven-man Committee could make no progress and broke up. A newly-formed textile union, the activities of which had already necessitated the promulgation of an order under section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, thereupon gave notice of a general strike in the textile mills at Kanpur and started a campaign of intimidation and molestation of peaceful workers. In the interests of maintenance of peace, the local authorities have had to arrest a number of persons, about 138 till the afternoon of 2nd May 1955, of whom as many as 89 were arrested for defiance of lawful orders.

Of the eleven mills affected by the general strike, one worked with its full complement of labour on the first day of the general strike and two others with more than half of their usual complements. Five others worked with a smaller proportion of workers. In one mill there was a lockout. It was only in two mills that the attendance was very poor. Yesterday, which was the second day of the strike, the situation was not very different.

Government feel that the agitation at Kanpur against what are normal and usual schemes of rationalisation is entirely misguided. Kanpur Mills are not trying to do something which mills in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Sholapur, Indore and Coimbatore have not done. Workers would be well advised, in their own interest, to understand their problems in the correct perspective and not to allow themselves to be misled by false and harmful propaganda. The Government of Uttar Pradesh have always been sympathetic to the cause of labour, and it would be a pity if the textile workers at Kanpur were to deny themselves the assistance of such an impartial and sympathetic authority in the solution of, what is after all, a difficult problem. The Central Government would therefore, advise the textile workers of Kanpur to give up their present unreasonable attitude, which cannot but lead to

futile acts of violence, and to resume the constitutional methods, suddenly broken off after the nainital Conference, of settling these problems with the active sympathy and support of the State Government.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam): Sir, may I make a submission before you dispose of this Adjournment Motion? I am not going into the merits, but I would request you to kindly admit this motion for the following reasons.

In the textile industry at Kanpur today there are thirty thousand workers on strike, and this will naturally affect the seven lakh workers engaged in the textile industry all over India; this will have its repercussions there. Secondly the Central Government has got its responsibility in view of the fact that it is on account of the rationalisation scheme that the whole strike is there. The third is the modest demand of the workers for the appointment of a high power tribunal to go into the question of rationalisation. In view of these grounds I would request that this Adjournment Motion may be admitted, so that we may be able to put forth our view-point on this.

Dr. Rama Rao (Kakinada): May I also make a submission? The Labour Minister has read out just now the conditions of the agreement. The first and the most important is that not a single worker should be thrown out of employment. Here the whole strike is due to huge unemployment caused due to this rationalisation. Thousands have been thrown out of employment.

Shri Khandubhai Desai: No, no.

Dr. Rama Rao: This is the basic and fundamental issue. They are asking for a high power Commission to go into the facts. He is willing to consider the matter even if a single man is thrown out of employment, whereas here thousands are thrown out due to rationalisation.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I have heard both sides and the statement of the Labour Minister. It is not an urgent

matter in the sense that rationalisation was started only recently; it seems to have been started earlier and there seems also to have been an arrangement. Of course, labour might not be satisfied and some persons might be interested in it.

Under the circumstances I do not think any purpose will be served by giving consent to this Adjournment Motion.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

REVIEW OF GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE

The Minister of Commerce and Industry (Shri T. T. Krishnamachari): I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Review of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (Placed in Library. Se No. S-165/55)

STATEMENTS SHOWING ACTION TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT ON ASSURANCES, ETC.

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (Shri Satya Narayan Sinha): I beg to lay on the Table the following statements showing the action taken by the Government on various assurances, promises and undertakings given by Ministers during the various Sessions shown against each:

Supplementary Statement
No. II—Ninth Session, 1955
of Lok Sabha.

[See Appendix XIII, annexure
No. 12]

2. Supplementary Statement
No. I—Eighth Session, 1954
of Lok Sabha.

[See Appendix XIII, annexure
No. 13]

3. Supplementary Statement
No. X—Seventh Session, 1954
of Lok Sabha.

[See Appendix XIII, annexure
No. 14]

4. Supplementary Statement
No. XVI—Sixth Session, 1954
of Lok Sabha.

[See Appendix XIII, annexure
No. 15]

5. Supplementary Statement
No. XXI—Fifth Session, 1953
of Lok Sabha.

[See Appendix XIII, annexure
No. 16]

6. Supplementary Statement
No. XXVI—Fourth Session,
1953, of Lok Sabha.

[See Appendix XIII, annexure
No. 17]

7. Supplementary Statement
No. XXXI—Third Session,
1953 of Lok Sabha.

[See Appendix XIII, annexure
No. 18]

8. Supplementary Statement
No. XXIX—Second Session,
1952 of Lok Sabha.

[See Appendix XIII, annexure
No. 19]

9. Supplementary Statement
No. XXX.—First Session,
1952 of Lok Sabha.

[See Appendix XIII, annexure
No. 20]

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam): Could I know from the hon. Minister if there are still assurances etc., given in 1952 pending? I find that assurances given in 1952 are being complied with now. How many of such assurances given in 1952 are still pending?

Shri Satya Narayan Sinha: May be one or two but I cannot say it definitely from memory, but most of the assurances have been complied with recently.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: It is already three and a half years since 1952 and those assurances are being laid down now. I do not know what will happen to the other assurances.

Shri K. K. Basu (Diamond Harbour): We may not be here when they are laid.

Shri Satya Narayan Sinha: The hon. Member must be aware that there is an Assurances Committee of the House which goes into these matters fully.