

## MESSAGE FROM THE SPEAKER

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I have received the following message from the hon. Speaker:

"Dear Mr. Deputy-Speaker,

I have to request you kindly to convey to the House my apologies for my inability to be present at the opening of the present session of the Lok Sabha, as also for some subsequent period on account of the condition of my health. I extremely regret that I should not be able to serve the House for reasons beyond my control. The House is probably aware that I have had an attack of coronary thrombosis in the last week. My medical advisers have prescribed me absolute rest in bed.

It is difficult to say, just at the moment, as to exactly when I shall be able to attend at the meetings of the House.

In the circumstances, I trust the House will forgive me for my inevitable absence until I am enabled to recoup my health completely and join my duties as before.

Yours sincerely,

G. V. Mavalankar."

May I convey to the hon. Speaker the prayerful good wishes of this House for his speedy recovery so as to enable him to return to this House and to the Chair which he so honourably occupies?

## DEATH OF SHRI NATESAN

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I have to inform the House of the sad demise of our friend Shri P. Natesan who was a sitting member of the House. He passed away at 5-30 p.m. on the 4th January, 1956, at his residence in Madras. He was about 64 years old. He had been a member of the Madras Legislative Assembly from 1937 to 1952. He was a sitting Member of this House since 1952.

We mourn the loss of Shri Natesan and I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolence to his family.

The House may stand in silence for a minute to express its sorrow.

*The Lok Sabha stood in silence for a minute.*

## QUESTION OF PRIVILEGE

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** The Secretary will now report about the President's assent to Bills.

**Shri N. C. Chatterjee (Hooghly):** Before we proceed to any other business may I draw the attention of the House to an important matter which, in my opinion, is a matter which involves privilege of the House and privilege of a Member of Parliament? In the *Bulletin* of 31st January, 1956 you will find a letter from the District Magistrate, Mathura, addressed to the Speaker in which it is stated:

"I have the honour to inform you that I have found it my duty under section 124A/117 of the Indian Penal Code, to direct that Babu Ram Narayan Singh, member, Lok Sabha, be arrested for delivering a seditious speech against the Government on 10-8-1955, at Mathura."

I beg to draw the attention of the House, and you know Sir, that it has been already declared by the Punjab High Court in the case of Master Tara Singh that Section 124 is repugnant to the fundamental guarantees which are enshrined in article 19 of the Constitution and that is no longer legal. Sir, it is very important because if any Member of Parliament can be arrested for delivering a seditious speech only against the Government then many of the Members of the Opposition will be in that difficult predicament—almost all of us. Sir, what I am submitting is this. This is something which is basic which involves the fundamental right of citizens and if for the offence of making a speech against the Government a Member of Parliament is detained and is put in jail that involves a matter of privilege and it should be taken serious notice of. And, this Magistrate also has not even the courtesy to say, the propriety to say that he (Babu Ramnarayan Singh) has been arrested for being alleged to have committed an offence of sedition, but he says: "He is arrested for delivering a seditious speech against the Government". It is a very serious matter and the House should take notice of it.

**Shri U. M. Trivedi (Chitoor):** I support it.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I do not know. The matter has to be considered in proper proceedings. The House cannot be