

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

2199

2200

LOK SABHA

Saturday, 8th December, 1956

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock.

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

No. Questions:
(Part I not published)

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

BUDDHA JAYANTI SAMITI SARNATH

Mr. Speaker: We start with an adjournment motion. Shri R. N. Singh has given notice of an adjournment motion which reads as follows:

"The total inactivity of the Buddha Jayanti Samiti, Sarnath, and the consequent boycott thereof by the Mahabodhi Sabha, Sarnath, (as reported in Aaj of Banaras dated 6-12-1956, at page 2)".

What is the local Government doing about it?

श्री रा० न० सिंह (जिला गाजीपुर—पूर्व व जिला बलिया—दक्षिण पश्चिम) : हमारी केन्द्रीय सरकार इस पर लाखों रुपया व्यय करती है। वहां पर जो उत्तर प्रदेश की सरकार की तरफ से बुद्ध जयन्ती के सम्बन्ध में समिति बनी हुई है वह कई कार्य नहीं कर रही है। इसलिये महा बोधि सोसाइटी के अधिष्ठाता ने उस समिति का बायकाट किया है। जो उत्तर प्रदेश की समिति ने अच्छी तरह से कार्य नहीं किया है इसलिये

उन्होंने उस में भाग लेने से इन्कार कर दिया। तो मेरा घ्राप से यह अनुरोध है कि यह जो जनता के रुपये का दुरुपयोग हो रहा है उस पर विचार करने के लिये हाउस को कुछ समय दिया जाये।

The Deputy Minister of Education (Dr. M. M. Das): So far as we have been able to collect the information, there is no Buddha Jayanti Samiti set up by the U.P. Government at all. Yesterday, after we received the notice of this adjournment motion, we contacted the Divisional Commissioner of Banaras, Shri Shiweshwarkar, and we received information from him. The Commissioner informed us that there is no official Buddha Jayanti Samiti at Sarnath. There have, however, been meetings for the last few months of departmental officers to co-ordinate the schemes for various improvements at Sarnath and to review the progress of work. The Commissioner is the Chairman of these meetings and the Secretary of the Mahabodhi Society is invited to attend these meetings. No committee has been officially set up by the State Government of Uttar Pradesh.

Now, the last meeting took place a few days back. The Secretary of the Mahabodhi Society did not attend it. Beyond this, and beyond the newspaper report, the Commissioner had no information about the alleged boycott.

Mr. Speaker: Has the committee been set up by the Central Government?

Dr. M. M. Das: No, Sir. There is no official committee at all; neither it was set up by the Uttar Pradesh Government nor it was set up by the Central

[Dr. M. M. Dass]

Government. The officers of the different departments of the Uttar Pradesh Government used to meet occasionally under the chairmanship of the Commissioner and discuss the progress of these celebrations. That was all. The Secretary of the Mahabodhi Society was invited to attend this meeting. The Central Government has got nothing to do about it.

Mr. Speaker: The officers are in charge of the celebration? The Commissioner, along with some other officers, is in charge.

Dr. M. M. Dass: For providing amenities to the pilgrims, on this particular occasion, the Uttar Pradesh Government has taken up many schemes. For example, the construction of hostels, water-supply, electric supply, etc.—all these are taken up. To co-ordinate the activities of the different departments of the Uttar Pradesh Government, the Commissioner calls a meeting of the departmental officers. There is no official committee, as has been mentioned in the adjournment motion.

Mr. Speaker: What is the control of the Central Government over that?

Dr. M. M. Das: The Central Government has got no control excepting over the monument. We have repaired the monument.

Mr. Speaker: It seems to me that there is no particular committee as such. The Commissioner seems to be the officer—an officer of the Uttar Pradesh Government—who is in charge of it. This is a matter for—

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh (Shahbad—South): This is a matter of some significance, because all the work is being carried on under the directions of the Government of India, and instructions have been given to all the important centres, such as Sarnath, Sanchi and other places, to provide some facilities to the pilgrims and to improve hostels and construct new hostels. So far as I can guess, it is

under the consideration of the Government of India and other Governments also. Those officers are meeting regularly. Their names may not be there, but I think the Secretary of the Mahabodhi Society must be taken into consultation with others. What is the good of keeping him there and not consulting him?

Mr. Speaker: Though there may be no formal committee in the sense that non-officials and others are associated with it, there seems to be an official committee over which the Commissioner seems to be the Chairman. He is co-ordinating the activities of all other persons, officers, etc., there, for the purpose of the celebration there. Sarnath and Banaras are very important places of Buddhist pilgrimage. It is admitted that a number of pilgrims come to that place. Their conveniences are being attended to and hostels have been opened. The Central Government is in general charge or overall charge of the celebrations in which Rs. 1 crore has been spent from the Central Government. Thousands of pilgrims come from all quarters of India. I would urge on the hon. Minister to get into touch immediately with the State Government and ask them as to why a Committee over which an official presides should give occasion for such complaints. He must work in co-operation with the Maha Bodhi Society who are in charge of it. I would ask the hon. Minister to ascertain the facts and place them before the House in as short a time as possible, in a week. If really there is any irregularity or indiscretion committed on the part of the Commissioner, all that may be brought to light and brought to the notice of the local Government. I do not see any reason why I should allow the adjournment motion. As early as possible, the hon. Minister will make a statement on the floor of the House. He will get the information and place it before the House. That is all that he can do.