

amendment that he moved. The position is that there is a slight concession that is being given by the Explanation. My hon. friend wants an extension of the area of concession. If there is any representation made by the Banks and I find that something has to be done, I am prepared to consider it.

Mr. Speaker: Motion moved:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

Shri Tulsidas: No.

Mr. Speaker: He is thoroughly satisfied with the Bill.

Shri Tulsidas: I have not risen to speak. There is no meaning. After all, he is not prepared to accept.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

The motion was adopted.

CULTURAL DELEGATION TO U.S.S.R. AND EAST EUROPE

Mr. Speaker: The House will take up the Half-an-hour discussion.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty (Basirhat): My half-an-hour discussion is a long postponed discussion. I would like, at the very outset, to state the reason why I have persisted in having this question discussed. Firstly, I attach very great importance to these cultural delegations which we send abroad, who are ambassadors of goodwill, because they have direct approach to the hearts of the people through culture and art, not obstructed by political antagonisms. Secondly, I hold them important because we hold up before the world the prestige of our ancient culture. When we were young, when we were under British rule, our Asian culture was looked down upon and the best thing to do was to try to imitate all that was from the West. I remember many people felt ashamed

of their parents, however cultured they may be, because they did not have western culture. They were even ashamed to admit that they were their parents. Now, a new wave has come throughout the world. Every country in the world desires to know our culture and Indian culture has been presented to the world through successive cultural delegations. The world has seen what treasures we have. They have begun to realise that Asia has a very very old tradition and culture which can surpass all that has, up till now, been presented to the world, to the West. That is why, at this posture of events, it is necessary to know what type of cultural delegations we should send abroad. It is on this broad principle that I have approached this question.

Many of my friends have taken up a much more narrow parochial attitude towards it. I have been told that I should not raise it because the leader of the delegation is a Bengalee coming from the same State as I come from and as such, I should not raise it. I would request the House not to look at this question in that parochial way. I feel that we from Bengal have contributed a great deal to the common heritage of our land and I am proud of my national heritage. That is why I feel that it is necessary to discuss this matter in a dispassionate manner.

I am a Bengalee. That is why I have been touched to the quick in the way this delegation has been chosen to present Tagore before the world. I do not claim that I am a great person of culture. I do not claim either to be a great votary of Tagore or a person who knows very much about Tagore. Every Bengalee, even if he does not know to read or write, is greatly devoted to Tagore. We love the songs and the dances that he has given to us. I must therefore refer to the names of the people who had gone to represent Tagore to the Soviet Union. I have been there, and I have seen their ballet. What they present to the world in their ballet is something to be proud of. Therefore I feel that our Tagore who really tried to represent Indian

ballet to the world should be represented in the best manner possible. That is why in that respect also I was touched to the quick, and these are the reasons why I have brought forward this question before the House.

18 hrs.

I remember the hon. Prime Minister—he is just here—while answering a question said: "We are young in sending delegations abroad, and therefore there may have been certain mistakes". I grant him that, I grant all of us may make mistakes, but what I have felt is that we have sent cultural delegations abroad earlier, we have sent very good cultural delegations. As a matter of fact, I remember the delegation which went to the U.S.S.R. under the leadership of our colleague, Shrimati Chandrasekhar. It was a good delegation. It was a delegation which did credit to us in the sense that it did present facts of Indian culture which were of the highest quality, and therefore I feel that it is necessary to try and find out why it was that after having gone a step forward we should have to go a step backward. The question is: have we gone a step backward?

I was not present at the show which was shown here at the National Physical Laboratory, but I have seen almost every paper in the country commenting adversely upon it. I would not like during this debate to try and bring before the House the various comments that were made. I have got before me the *Times of India* which says:

"Members of the press and public who saw the preview of the delegation's performance in the Capital were universally critical of its low standard. Old students of Shantiniketan were particularly hurt that the troupe representing the university did little credit to their *alma mater*."

I have also spoken to various people who have attended this. I have seen

the actual list of those who represented Shantiniketan, because, after all, that was the only part of the performance about which I could have some knowledge or ability to appreciate. I do feel that this was not a delegation which did reflect the very best talents which we have.

Of course, I believe Government will try and say that everybody was consulted. As a matter of fact, in answer to my question it was stated that the opinions expressed by competent persons, and organisations on the actual performance were taken into considerations in the choice of the delegation. As far as I know, most of the choice was left to an individual. At the most it can be said that the External Affairs Ministry was the deciding factor. Of course, I am sure my friends of the Education Ministry will take up the cudgels and say it is joint responsibility, and that they knew everything about it. But as far as I know, it is the External Affairs Ministry and especially the leader of the delegation that had almost everything to do with it. As a matter of fact I was very surprised that the Sangeet Natak Akadami which to my mind would be a much better body to have chosen the personnel of the delegation, was called upon almost when everything else was settled. And I believe that as far as Shantiniketan is concerned, they had suggested that we should send a full ballet.

The Deputy Minister of External Affairs (Shri Anil K. Chanda): On a point of information, the representative of the Secretary of the Sangeet Natak Akadami was present in the first meeting when we had discussions about the composition of the delegation.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: I do not say that she was not present.

Shri Anil K. Chanda: You say at the last stage.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: She was present at a meeting which was convened.

Mr. Speaker: At the first meeting, they say.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: May be, I cannot check up, but this much is true that the representative did recommend that a full ballet should be sent to represent Tagore's ballet. After that we find that people are chosen, four dancers and two singers are sent. The dances that were shown in the National Physical Laboratory everybody who has ever seen anything of Shantiniketan dance, says was a disgraceful piece of performance.

There was a young man called Biren Palit, I have nothing against him, he may be a relation of the leader of the delegation.....

Shri Anil K. Chanda: No, Sir.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: ...but certainly he is not a man who would be outstanding in that particular line. I have no objection to anybody; he may be a relation or may be anybody else, but my point is that the person chosen should be outstanding people.

Shri Anil K. Chanda: On a point of clarification. He is no relation of mine, and he is the teacher of Rabindra Sangeet in the Viswabharati, Shantiniketan.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: As far as the Viswabharati is concerned, it was never asked to select the candidates. It was asked for the leave of the personnel after the selections had taken place. I feel that it would be better—I do not presume that Government are going to accept my suggestions, but certainly I think—to ask the universities or the people concerned to choose the people who will represent the best personnel that they have. Certainly, those of us who know anything about Rabindra Sangeet know that there are certain very outstanding singers like Suchitra Mitra and people like Shanti Dev Ghosh, who are much better qualified to represent Tagore's songs and ballets. I do not know by what standard Dwijen Mukerjee was chosen.

Regarding Manjula Dutt also, I do not know whether it was only out of friendship or for certain other reasons that she was chosen. But, certainly, she did no credit to Tagore. That is why I have felt touched to the very quick regarding this matter.

I am a person who would not be able to judge about classical music. But a person like Lalita Ubhyankar sang classical khayal; and everybody says that it was certainly a disgraceful piece of work, at least, at the performance that we saw at the National Physical Laboratory. But I am not in a position to judge. I do not know who chose her. I am told, and all sorts of gossips get round, that the Chief Minister of a State had rung up the External Affairs Ministry and asked that she should be included. I think that at least that sort of thing should not be done, and these things should be left to the Sangeet Natak Akadami which is in a much better position to choose than others.

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry was not even consulted. That is my information. Of course, I may be wrong, and I should like to be enlightened about these things.

Of course, there was a man like Vilayat Khan. He was very rightly chosen. That is a case where I think there was a very right choice. Vilayat Khan is an outstanding person and should have been chosen.

So far as Kathakali is concerned, I am not in a position to judge. I have been told by people from Malabar that the choice for Kathakali was all right, but certain people accompanying the Kathakali were not the right sort of persons, and there might have been better choices.

Again, I want to underline this point that we want that the very best should go abroad. I say so because I regard these cultural delegations as very important delegations, as delegations which should show to the world the very best that we have. So, we have to evolve right methods of choice and that choice should not be guided

personal considerations; that choice should be guided by the committees that have been set up, by the Akadami that have been set up, by people who have choice knowledge about these matters; they should be the people who should be in consultation with a Ministry such as the External Affairs Ministry, who, obviously, will do the technical part of sending them abroad.

There is one other point that I would just touch upon, and that is, that when delegations are sent abroad, as the Prime Minister has had occasion to impress upon the House, they must behave in such a way and their composition must be such that it will do credit to our country. It is very right that he has even told us about the question of finance. We must be absolutely self-sufficient. There have been occasions when poor people, workers' representatives, and representatives of trade unions wanted to go abroad, and when they had actually collected money, their trade unions had been told that it was not right that they should just go round abegging for money and sending their people abroad, even when it was a case of our own money.

Anyway, it is not that I agree with everything, but I do think that we should keep up our national prestige when we go abroad. That is why I feel that the inclusion of very close personal relatives of the leader of this delegation should not have been there. I think in future we should beware of such a thing.

The last point that I would like to mention is this. We may be regaled to a large number of press cuttings from the Soviet press or any other press belonging to the country to which our delegation has gone. There is no doubt about it that there is a fund of goodwill towards India right throughout the world. That is something of which we are very proud.

It is also true that there will be very few countries in the world, including our own, who are going to decry goodwill delegations especially

to countries with whom they want to have very close relations. That is not the yardstick by which we should judge our delegations. The delegation must be judged by this yardstick, that we should send abroad that which is the best; we should consider whether we have done the best and whether we were capable of sending the very choicest artists that we have in our country. I believe even our Ambassador's report has been critical of it. The Soviet Press has been very appreciative of it, but at the same time, our Ambassador himself has made certain criticisms of it.

Therefore, I hope that this whole matter will not be taken in a narrow or parochial manner, but will be looked upon in a much broader perspective. Although we are young in sending delegations abroad, we have sent very good delegations. We have sent good delegations to South East Asia. We have sent a delegation to the Soviet Union before. Therefore, I feel that in respect of this particular delegation certain things have happened which are rather unfortunate. I hope that in future such things do not happen and we are able to send people who will do credit to us, who are of our best, so that Asian culture, which today has come into its own, which was looked down upon for centuries, will be able to show to the world the treasures which we have and which we are now developing.

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. lady Member has drawn attention to a number of points with regard not only to the delegations that went to the USSR and other countries but generally to all delegations. With a great deal that she has said about delegations in general, I am in entire agreement.

I am taking part in this discussion partly because as a Minister in the External Affairs Ministry, the responsibility is partly ours—though I had nothing to do with this particular delegation; in fact, I was not in India

at the time—and partly because my colleague, the Deputy Minister, who led this delegation will feel—though he will, no doubt speak—that it is somewhat embarrassing for him, naturally, to deal with a matter in which he himself is concerned.

Now, the points that arise are: what is the procedure to be adopted in regard to the selection of delegations; secondly, the actual choice of this particular delegation or any other; and thirdly, the consequences, as to whether this particular delegation succeeded or did not succeed. Now, I am not competent to select people. Sometimes I have participated in committees which select, and I have ventured to offer some opinion; it was not of great consequence. But the difficulty we had to face is that the person who might be considered first-rate here from a point of view, of being a big virtuoso, that particular person may not succeed and may not be appreciated abroad, just as it is quite possible that some Members of this House, including myself, find it a little difficult to appreciate the highest type of Indian music, which is very fine; but I am just ignorant of it. And if this highest class of Indian music goes there—it is just, we might say, above the head of the people—it is so novel to them that they do not appreciate it. That is the difficulty in choosing, that people—except, may be, some select few—prefer something that they can understand.

The second difficulty is that we are always asked—we have specially been asked when a delegation goes to China or to the Soviet Union—to send a mixed delegation with all kinds of people in it. In fact, hon. Members who know of the delegation which went to China may remember that there were some very high class items of dance and other things and opera and, some jugglers and some acrobats, very good in their own way, but a completely separate thing. We are always told by our Ambassadors in these countries, 'Please have variety'.

In fact, we have been asked to send acrobats and jugglers with them too.

Shri Kamath (Hoshangabhad): Send some Sadhus as well.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: It is quite possible that some people here would be shocked if we send some acrobat from here.

The third thing to which the hon. Member referred was the behaviour of our people. By behaviour, I am not meaning anything bad, though there have been cases, of course, of definitely bad behaviour—not in this particular Delegation but in many Delegations, including, if I may say so with all respect, in some Delegations in which even Members of Parliament were included. It is not a question of bad behaviour but behaviour in circumstances to which a person is unaccustomed. That is the difficulty.

Now, we send a person, let us say, who has never been abroad, who does not know anything about foreign customs, foreign food, foreign everything. The result is, he is unhappy and he does not just fit in. Not only is he unhappy, but he communicates his unhappiness to all those around him. So, to fit in all these things is not an easy matter, to have variety, to have artists, who not only are good but are likely to be appreciated by the large audiences that they attract there, and who can fit in there and not be unhappy themselves and make others unhappy. It has been a very difficult task.

We started sending these Delegations rather in a haphazard manner. I do not say there was no particular organisation to choose them. We formed informal committees. Normally, the people concerned are, there of course, the Education Ministry and more especially the Sangit Natak Akademi, and the Ministry of External Affairs. The information and Broadcasting Ministry comes in because they are connected with so many artists and they know a lot about them. It is true, as the hon.

Member referred,—I am not referring to this particular Delegation but others too—that this process of choice and consultation has been rather haphazard. They have all come and they have all been invited. Somebody cannot come and sometimes they cannot be collected; and a meeting is held and at the last moment we are in a hurry.

Then again the artists themselves. Normally, all artists are difficult persons to deal with. We cannot get them when we want them. The hon. Member has repeatedly referred to the adverse criticisms passed on the performance they gave at the National Physical Laboratory at the time just before they went. I myself did not see that; I was not present here myself. Apart from the quality of the artists, the fact of the matter was that they never functioned together. They never had rehearsals like the other Delegations. Quite so. It is partly the fault of the artists. They could not be collected. Naturally, I admit this fact. But, it is very difficult to get them together and I think no Delegation should be sent like this till they have had some time to function together as a team here. They could not function as a team there.

Shri Kamath: Is it not possible to assemble them in Delhi before they leave?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: But they did assemble here. Some did not have the costumes here and so on.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Is it not a fact that the Sangit Natak Akadami had done this earlier for the other Delegations. This was the only Delegation which did not do it.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: The Sangit Natak Akadami by itself had not dealt with these Delegations. It may be in the case of some that they played a greater part; others, the External Affairs, the Education and I & B Ministries were present. As a matter of fact, we have made some fairly regular rules for this in so far as procedure is concerned. That will, no

doubt, help us somewhat. But the real thing is that it is not an easy matter to select people whom the hon. Members might consider good but who would be appreciated there.

Take the case of Kathakali. It is my personal opinion; it may not be worth much. Normally speaking, kathakali dance is not appreciated the first time or the second time you see it; you have to grow into it. I have grown into it. When I saw it 20 years ago, I was astonished, I was taken aback and I did not quite understand it. Now I think it is one of the finest dances in India and I have grown into it. But those people in the other countries have perhaps not yet grown into it.

Generally speaking, therefore sending kathakali dancers, except to some places where they might be really appreciated, is not worthwhile.

Regarding other types of dancing, even take our typical dance, the Bharata Natya, the classical dance, again some of our best Bharata Natya dancers want an hour or two to warm up in the job, and after an hour and a half or two hours they are in perfect form. But they have no time to warm up because they have only ten minutes for this item. Our sitar players get annoyed when you tell them to play for 15 minutes and more. All these difficulties are there. You cannot have a sitar player to function for an hour or two. The whole performance may be for an hour or two and so we cannot have it. I would like the House to appreciate these difficulties.

Many of these artists normally are rather sensitive and sometimes there is a great deal of mutual jealousy with them as to who goes first, who goes second, who gets five minutes more, who gets five minutes less and so on. It is an exceedingly difficult business to keep them in good humour....

Shri Kamath: The leader should control them.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I think the leader does. One thing that I came to know some time back is that in all these delegations it is quite essential to get a woman to look after the women artists—there are many women artists too. With all respect to my hon. friend there, I may say that women artists are very good, but sometimes quarrelsome.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: But they should sing in tune.

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Therefore, I came to the conclusion that it was important that a woman, who has some influence on them, should go. In this particular case it was I who felt strongly that the leader's wife should accompany because there are other women in the team. She herself is used to dealing with these people, and I thought that either his wife or some other woman had to be chosen.

It may interest the hon. Member that as a matter of fact, this particular delegation which was so adversely criticised on its first trial appearance here, was notably better afterwards when it settled down. It really was an unusual success wherever it went. I am not talking about the success in which naturally the audiences to show courtesy and friendliness want to express pleasure. That is true. But the report of our own Ambassador was—

"There is little doubt that Soviet audiences derived a great deal of enjoyment from our concerts. There was greater variety in the programmes than in the concerts given by the Indian delegation which come to Moscow two years ago."

The previous one, according to the hon. Member, was of a much higher class. From the point of view of Soviet audiences, the music of these artists was slightly above their heads, above the heads of these audiences. The light dances and light music were appreciated.

Then again the report of the Ambassador says—

"The harvest dance of the Shantiniketan girls stood in a different category. It was light, graceful and easily intelligible. The audiences liked it. On the whole, the visit of this delegation will be remembered with pleasure by the Soviet people for a long time to come."

Again, this is from Czechoslovakia:

"The visit of our cultural delegation was a real success. It helped the people of Czechoslovakia to understand and appreciate our dance, music and culture. Many people including the diplomats who had seen the performance of our previous delegation a couple of years ago, remarked that the present troupe was better and of a high order."

I am no judge. This shows that this difference was not so obvious, that it was appreciated.

I quite agree with the hon. Member that we should take full care to have the best selections considering the various factors that I have mentioned. There should be variety. It should be appreciated by them. It may not be the class of persons who get the President's gold medal for music or sitar play. It should function as a team. All these things are there. We have profited, I hope, by our experience and we shall continue to profit by them.

I think a good deal of criticism has been about the leader on the basis of his carrying some relatives with him. One relative—not relative exactly—is the wife. I would say that at my instance he took her. From all accounts, she was a very great help. The other is supposed to be a distant relative—one among the Shantiniketan girls. She seems to be a grand-daughter of a sister.

Some confusion was caused by the fact that his son went but his son had nothing to do with the delegation. He paid his own fare and in fact, he went to Poland to learn gliding. The Polish gliders invited him. Unfortunately, he fell there—the poor boy.

So far as the others are concerned, they were selected, rightly or wrongly, in the normal procedure. It is true that the leader—I am told—wanted to have some Shantiniketan girls and he was asked to select them. It is perfectly true. The leader exercised his choice—whether successfully or not, that is a question of opinion. From the report, it appears that these girls were successful. They were very much appreciated. I do think that it is not fair to bring in this question of relatives because the

grand-daughter of a sister was included in the troupe among a number of girls.

Then, the hon. Member said: "Why weren't the *Viswa Bharati* authorities consulted?" They may or may not have been consulted. But here again, the difficulty is this. You are trying to make a mixed team of all kinds. It is no use seeing only one side of the picture. Suppose, you want the best sitar player you consult various sources. The best sitar player may not fit in for other reasons. That is the difficulty. Normally, one should consult as many people as possible.

Mr. Speaker: The discussion is over.

18-29 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, the 13th December, 1956.
