

LOK SABHA DEBATES

(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)

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LOK SABHA

Tuesday, 21st December, 1954.

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of
the Clock.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(See part I)

12 NOON

STATEMENT RE ORDERS FOR
JEEPS AND OTHER DEFENCE
STORES PLACED ABROAD

The Minister of Finance (Shri C. D. Deshmukh): Sir, with your permission I should like to make a brief statement regarding a matter which has been agitating the public mind for some time and on which the public Accounts Committee have made certain observations in their Ninth Report. This is in connection with the orders placed for certain jeeps in London and for certain defence stores on the Continent in 1948 for the Defence Services. The committee have mentioned the various irregularities brought to notice in connection with these contracts and they have suggested that no effective action has been taken by Government against persons who were responsible for transacting such an unbusiness-like deal in disregard of the administrative and financial rules. We have gone into this question over again, and I lay on the Table a statement which has been sent to the Public Accounts Committee on these cases. [See Appendix VII, annexure No. 17.] As the hon. Members are perhaps aware

in 1952, these cases formed the subject-matter of a detailed enquiry by a Committee of Ministers under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister himself, of which the then Defence Minister, the late Shri Gopala-swami Ayyangar and I were members. This Committee which was assisted by the then High Commissioner in London and senior officials came to the conclusion that though there had been procedural and technical irregularities, there was no reason to doubt the *bona fides* of the officers concerned. This was also made clear on the floor of the House by the late Shri Gopala-swami Ayyangar on the 4th June, 1952. Necessary instructions have been issued to set right the procedural and other defects, but so far as the officers themselves are concerned, Government have come to the conclusion there is no need to take any further action. I trust that in the light of the explanation given in the statement sent to the Public Accounts Committee and what I have just said, the House will treat the matter as closed.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (Shri Satya Narayan Sinha): Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the statement made by me in this House on 15th December, 1954, I made a request for the inclusion of a new item in the programme of legislative business of this House for the Session. This item was the Delimitation Commission (Amendment) Bill which Government is anxious to see considered and passed in the present Session. On 18th December, the Bill was referred to a Select Committee with instructions to report to the House on 22nd December. In the event of the Select Committee reporting and as the House has already

[Shri Satya Narayan Sinha]

agreed to consider and pass the Bill, I would like to inform the House at this stage that in doing so, a certain curtailment of time allocated for a debate on the Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes would be inevitable unless of course the House extends its sittings up to 6 o'clock on the 22nd, 23rd and 24th December.

I am sure that I am voicing the sentiments of hon. friends, representatives of Scheduled Castes, in stating that they would have no objection to a certain curtailment of the time allocated for the debate on the Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes if that would ensure the consideration and passing of the Delimitation Commission (Amendment) Bill. How much time will be available for the debate as against 6 hours allotted for it by an order of this House will, of course, depend upon the time taken for the consideration and passing of the Delimitation Commission (Amendment) Bill.

Sardar Hukam Singh (Kapurthala-Bhatinda): I would request the hon. Minister to make it clear whether it has been assumed that the Select Committee would be able to finish its task within this period because the Report has to be presented tomorrow and only this morning the Committee has met.

Shri Satya Narayan Sinha: It is meeting again this after-noon and the Committee expect to finish the report today so that it will be placed before the House tomorrow.

Shri Frank Anthony (Nominated-Anglo-Indians): Are we to take it that the time allotted for the discussion of the Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes would be reduced for that is what it will come to.

Shri Satya Narayan Sinha: Yes.

Shri Frank Anthony: Then, I respectfully submit that it has already been pointed out that six hours are comparatively inadequate. In the previous years....

Mr. Speaker: Let us take up this matter later on. The situation, as I understand it, is that there has been some necessity for the Delimitation Commission to revise the number of seats in certain States on account of the final census figures coming rather late. If this Bill is not passed, the result will be that the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, whose seats are to be allocated on the basis of the latest figures, will be the sufferers. Therefore, that Bill has to be passed very urgently. That is now I understand the position; and, in view of that, this has to be given priority. That is one thing.

The discussion on the Report may continue for six hours. The alternative is, as pointed out in the statement, that the House will have to sit for one hour longer for three days. There is no objection, on my part at least, to the House sitting up to six o'clock.

Shri Ramachandra Reddi (Nellore): May I suggest that the House may sit from ten o'clock to five o'clock?

Mr. Speaker: I think it is not possible to discuss this matter now. At least tomorrow the House will have to sit from eleven o'clock as there has been no notice. The hon. Members may consult among themselves and come to a conclusion. It need not be discussed here.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

SPECULATIVE ACTIVITY IN TEA EXPORT
RIGHTS

Shri N. M. Lingam (Coimbatore): Sir, under Rule 215, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Commerce and Industry to the following matter