

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Constitution of India."

*The Motion was adopted.*

**Shri Shree Narayan Das:** I introduce the Bill.

14.38 hrs.

**SIKH GURDWARAS BILL—contd.**

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** The House will now resume further discussion of the motion moved by Sardar A. S. Saigal on the 28th November, 1958, namely:

"That the Bill to provide for the better administration of Sikh Gurdwaras situated in different States of Indian Union and for inquiries into matters connected therewith be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon by the 30th March, 1959."

Out of 3 hours allotted for discussion of this Bill, 9 minutes were taken up on the 28th November, 1958, and 2 hours 51 minutes are now available.

Sardar A. S. Saigal may continue his speech.

**Shri Easwara Iyer (Trivandrum):** Sir, I rise on a point of order. My point of order consists of two parts. This Bill involves expenditure from the Consolidated Fund and under Article 117(3) the hon. Member ought to have obtained the recommendation of the President for consideration of the Bill before it is passed. The second point which I would place before you is with respect to rule 69 of the Rules of Procedure. Rule 69 says:

"A Bill involving expenditure shall be accompanied by a financial memorandum which shall invite particular attention to the clauses involving expenditure and shall also give an estimate of the

recurring and non-recurring expenditure involved in case the Bill is passed into law."

In amplification of my point of order, I would invite your kind attention to clause 12 at page 7 of the Bill. Clause 12(1) says:

"For the purpose of deciding claims made in accordance with the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may from time to time appoint one or more Tribunals consisting of—"

So, it contemplates the appointment of tribunals.

Another clause is clause 34 which deals with the election of members of the Board and preparation of electoral rolls which involves expenditure.

Another clause is clause 49 which speaks of the appointment of a Commission and sub-clause (3) of this clause would itself show that expenditure is involved. It says:

"The net expenses arising from the appointment of the Commission including the remuneration of its member, officer and the staff shall be defrayed by the Board".

Sub-clause (4) says:

"Any sum due to the Central Government under the provisions of sub-section (3) shall, if not recovered within a year after a demand has been made, be recoverable, as if it were an arrear of land revenue".

So, this Bill involves expenditure on the part of the Central Government. Of course, the answer might come that regarding some of this expenditure the Board which is contemplated to be appointed must incur a part of the expenditure

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** He will kindly see clause 75(4).

**Shri Easwara Iyer:** It says:

"All the expenses arising from the administration of this Act or incurred under any provision of this Act, including the expenses relating to any Tribunal, Board or Commission, and remuneration of the members of all such Tribunal, Board or Commission and other expenses incidental thereto shall be met from the General Board Fund".

I have seen that clause, but it speaks of expenses to be incurred first by the Government and then of a refund to be made as recovery of land revenue is made. So, my first point of order is, under rule 69, a financial memorandum should have been attached.

My second point is this. It is under article 117. Of course, it might be contended that for the passing of the Bill alone a recommendation is necessary. But I would respectfully say that if passing of the Bill is held up and the recommendation is for consideration of the Bill under clause (3) of the article, then, a subsequent recommendation cannot validate the passing of the Bill unless we go through the Bill all over again. So, my respectful submission is there is no use wasting our time, unless there is a recommendation.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** As the hon. Member himself is conscious, it is not a money Bill. Clause (3) says:

"A Bill which, if enacted and brought into operation, would involve expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India..." etc.

**Shri Easwara Iyer:** I do not say that it is a money Bill.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** It comes only under article 117(3) which reads:

"A Bill which, if enacted and brought into operation, would involve expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India shall not be passed by either House of Parliament unless the President has recommended to that House the consideration of the Bill".

Now, it has been held previously that it is permissible for a Member to move a motion for circulation of a Bill which requires the President's recommendation for consideration under article 117(3). It has not been obtained by the Member in charge. Even if a Bill requires the President's recommendation and conceding that it has not been obtained—a motion for circulation can be made.

**Shri Easwara Iyer:** No motion for circulation is made.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** This is a motion for consideration. It is being made now. Therefore, a motion for circulation is permissible. Moreover, as the hon. Member himself has read, under clause 75(4) of this Bill, all expenses are to be met by the General Board Fund and not out of the Consolidated Fund of India.

**Shri Easwara Iyer:** But there is a provision for recovery by the Government as arrears of land revenue. So, that implies expenditure.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Let us read that. But that would be hypothetical just at present.

"All the expenses arising from the administration of this Act or incurred under any provision of this Act, including the expenses relating to any Tribunal, Board or Commission, and remuneration of the members of all such Tribunal, Board or Commission and other expenses incidental thereto shall be met from the General Board Fund".

"...shall be met from the General Board Fund". That ought to be clear. There ought to be no hitch. Then, as I have said, the motion for circulation is not barred at all, even if we concede the fact that President's recommendation was required. Sardar A. S. Saigal will continue his speech.

**Sardar A. S. Saigal (Janjgir):** In my speech the other day, I was saying that the tenth Guru punished those *masands* and that their places were then occupied by persons of integrity, honesty and by those who could render services to the community. With the establishment of the Sikh empire by Maharaja Ranjit Singh the power and splendour of these gurdwaras rose and with its fall once again there was a decline in the requisite standard of management of the gurdwaras and its shrines.

The situation worsened with the advent and establishment of British rule in the Punjab. The laws enacted by the foreign rulers made the position of *mahants* or priests virtually as independent as that of persons owning private property. The *mahants* not only could squander the income of the gurdwaras on loose and immoral living, but could also dispose of lands and property attached to the religious places with impunity.

This official connivance and support naturally resulted in increased official influence over these religious places and thus the central Sikh gurdwaras at Amritsar. Taran Taran and Nankana Sahib virtually passed into the hands of the Government authorities. The managers and priests of these important historic gurdwaras began to consider themselves secure against any check from the Sikh *sangats* and began to introduce whatever changes they liked in the performance of the religious worship therein. The worst of it all was that these places being the premier gurdwaras, their example came to be followed everywhere. Nirankari,

Namdhari and Singh Sabhas movements tried to bring about necessary reforms but could not achieve substantial results. The situation deteriorated so much during the first two decades of the present century that the entire Sikh community seriously began to find out the real malady and its cure.

I now come to the gurdwara reform movement. Sikh religion is essentially a reformist movement driving at purification and reform of human mind and body. It condemns idolatry, ritualism, ceremonial ostentations, which were repugnant to the growth and development of rationalism and spiritualism. Most of the Sikh gurus undertook extensive tours and travels throughout India and outside

14.50. hrs.

[PANDIT THAKUR DAS BHARGAVA in the Chair]

to stress the necessity of appreciating notions by practising truth, tolerance and humanitarianism by eschewing formalism, which created divisions and dissensions among the people of different races, regions and religions. The Sikh temples were desired not only as places of mere worship, but were also to be utilised for imparting training of social service, reforms, etc.

The Chief Khalsa Diwan had formed a sub-committee for finding out means and methods of securing reforms in Gurdwaras, but the position of the Diwan was not strong enough to enable it to effect it in the teeth of increasing opposition from *pujaris* and the officials. *The Khalasa*, *Panth Sewak* and some other newspapers were most active in exposing the deplorable conditions of Gurdwaras all over the country and vigorously advocating reforms in their management. The cases instituted by the Sikh Sangats against the priests in connection with the management of Gurdwara Babe De Bari, Sialkot, Smadh Akali Phula Singh, Gurdwara Guru Hargobind Sahib at Hafizabad.

[Sardar A. S. Saigal]

Gurdwara Dewan Khana, Chuna Mandi and some other Gurdwaras at Lahore stirred the entire Sikh community and the Sikhs became impatient and serious for securing necessary reforms in their holy places.

After the terrible tragedy of Jalianwala Bagh at Amritsar in 1919, the whole of India went through an unprecedented crisis; and the political movement in the country assumed a new shape altogether. The Sikhs could also not remain unaffected by this new turn of events and refused to remain contented with any piecemeal reforms in their religious places.

**Shri Ajit Singh** (Bhatinda—Reserved—Sch. Castes): On a point of order. The hon. Member is reading his speech.

**Sardar A. S. Saigal**: I have already got the permission of the Chair. I referred to the hon. Speaker and got his permission.

**Shri Raghunath Singh** (Varanasi): He is consulting his notes; he is not reading.

**Mr. Chairman**: It is a religious matter. The hon. Member says he has got the permission of the Chair. Also, in an important measure like the Gurdwaras Bill, I do not think he should speak extempore. It is desirable that he should speak from written notes.

**Shri Tyagi** (Dehra Dun): It is a controversial matter and so my friend may be permitted to consult his notes liberally. He always looks towards the Chair after every sentence. So long as he sees the Chair, it is all right.

**Shri Easwara Iyer**: On a point of order. The Statement of Objects and Reasons at the end of the Bill says:

"The Bill seeks to bring uniformity in the performance of all religious rites in all the Sikh Gurdwaras".

The Bill seems to be regarding the performance of religious rites in any part of India. It offends article 25 of the Constitution. We are only anxious that it may not be declared *ultra vires*; I am not against this Bill. I am only trying to draw the attention of the House to certain provisions in the Constitution. Article 25 says:

"(1) Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion.

(2) Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law—

(a) regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice ..."

So, legislation with respect to any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice is permitted. But how far legislation with respect to religious rites goes against the fundamental rights is a matter to which I would like to draw the attention of the House.

**Shri Naushir Bharucha** (East Khandesh): May I point out that the Statement of Objects and Reasons is never a part of the Bill itself? It is never recognised as a part of the Bill. Secondly, it does not clash with article 25, because whether you bring the rites to a uniform level or not, the freedom of the individual is still there and they need not follow the uniform rites.

**Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi** (Ludhiana): I support my hon. friend,

**Shri Bharucha:** There is no provision in the Bill actually which in any way interferes with the performance of any religious duty. The Statement of Objects and Reasons only postulates certain things and says that the Bill seeks to bring uniformity. Otherwise, there is nothing, no clause in the Bill itself which offends any article. So, the point of order is not valid.

**Shri Easwara Iyer:** I withdraw my point of order.

**Shri Tyagi:** We would always respect the sentiments of the Sikh Members.

**Sardar A. S. Saigal:** The first session of the newly found Sikh League was held in 1919 at Amritsar and it referred to "these sores of long-standing grievances of the Sikh Community" in its main resolution and demanded that the administration of the Golden Temple, which was in the hands of a Government nominee, should at once be placed in the hands of a representative body of the Sikhs.

Meanwhile, the complaints against the conduct and character of the priests and manager of Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar became so numerous, that their position became intolerable. The Sikhs of Basra, Baghdad and Maymyo also sent resolutions to the Government to withdraw their control of Sri Darbar Sahib. The Government, however, in their communique of July 14, 1920, quoted the following reply to a question in the Punjab Council on March 13, 1920:

"The question of management of the Golden Temple at Amritsar has been under the consideration of Government for sometime. It has been decided to defer the question until the Reforms Scheme has been brought into operation."

The then managers of Sri Darbar Sahib presented a robe of honour to General Dyer and this enraged the Sikh sentiment and they rightly de-

manded his resignation; but, the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar instead of asking the manager to retire, sent police to forbid a meeting of Sikhs within the compound of the temple. The people, however, held a meeting in spite of the police and decided to burn the manager's effigy in case he failed to resign by the 29th of August.

15 hrs.

On 12th October, 1920, the so-called Achhuts, baptised as Sikhs at the annual meeting of Khalsa Brotherhood, were brought in a procession to Golden Temple. After paying homage to Shri Harmandir Sahib, the Party went towards the Akal Takhat. At this, most of the priests fled from their posts and those who remained, refused to accept offerings or offer prayers for the new Amritdhar Sikhs. The Pujaris were called upon to express regret. But, they did not come even when the Sarbrah called them.

The next day, the local Deputy Commissioner convened a meeting of a few representatives of the Sikhs and the priests to discuss the new turn of events in the Golden Temple. The Pujaris did not turn up. The Deputy Commissioner formed a provisional committee of nine Sikhs, all reformists, including the Sarbrah, at its head to manage the Golden Temple until a permanent one was constituted.

A mandate was issued from Sri Akal Takhat summoning a great assembly of the Sikhs to meet on the 15th November, 1920 in front of the Takhat Sahib for the purpose of electing a representative body of the Panth to govern and control the Golden Temple and other Gurdwaras. But before the meeting was held, the Government hastened to appoint a committee of 36 members all reformers for Golden Temple and other Gurdwaras affiliated to it. The Sikhs of all shades of opinion attended the meeting of 15th and 16th November and unanimously resolved to form a Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, con-

[Sardar A. S. Saigal]

sisting of 175 members to control all the shrines of the Sikhs whether in Punjab or elsewhere including the 36 so nominated by the Government. All parties were thus satisfied.

The inaugural meeting of the S.G.P.C. came off at Sri Akal Takhat on December, 12, 1920 and elected its first office bearers. A Sub-committee was formed for drafting new constitution or Dastur-ul-Amal of Darbar Sahib. On 24th January, 1921, the S.G.P.C. passed a resolution that the whole Panth should gather in a Diwan at Nankana Sahib on March 4, 5 and 6 and call upon the Mahant to reform himself. But meanwhile the historic Nankana tragedy took place on 19th and 20th February, 1921, in which Sardar Lachman Singh, Sardar Dalip Singh and hundreds of others Sikhs were butchered and burnt alive by people at the instance and behest of the Mahant. This caused a thrill of anger and indignation in the Sikh community.

The responsibilities and functions of the Central Shiromani Committee increased tremendously by this time and it was therefore got duly registered on 30th April 1921. The new office-bearers and the Executive Committee of the S.G.P.C. were elected on 27th August, 1921 and they nominated local Committees for Golden Temple, Amritsar, Taran Taran and Nankana Sahib and affiliated a large number of managing committees of other important Gurdwaras. Meanwhile a Press communique was issued on February 16, 1921, in which Punjab Government announced that a Committee of Enquiry was contemplated to consider the existing management of Sikh Gurdwaras, Shrines, etc.

The Government then, "in order to ensure the overhauling of the position of Sikh Shrines" proposed the adoption of legislation in the form of appointment of Commissioners of the lines of Charity Commissioners in England. On March 14, Mian Fazli Hussain, then Minister for Education,

moved a resolution to that effect in the Punjab Council and suggested promulgation of an Ordinance on the subject pending the presentation and passing of the legislation. The Sikh members of the Council were all sceptical about the purpose of the proposed Ordinance, which made no distinction between ordinary charitable trusts and the Sikh Gurdwaras which were desired to be managed by strict Sikh principles.

A big representative convention was called at Sri Akal Takhat on 20th March, 1921, under the auspices of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and a Standing Committee of 12 Sikhs were appointed to discuss the matters relating to Gurdwara legislation with the Government, if invited to do so. This convention also asked for the unconditional release of all Sikhs who had been arrested in connection with the Gurdwara Reforms. But the only reply the Government gave to their demands was to arrest more leaders.

On 8th April, the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Bill, as passed by the Select Committee, was published for general information. It was a small measure containing only 20 clauses and provided for the appointment of a Board of Commissioners for the administration and management of certain Sikh Gurdwaras.

This Bill was a hopeless and disappointing document and even those Sikh members of the Select Committee who did not fully represent Panthic views were not satisfied and appended a minute of dissent thereto. The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, met on April 11, to consider the situation created by the publication of the Bill and on the refusal of the Government to release the Sikh prisoners, the Bill was declared as most unsatisfactory and was rejected *in toto*. On 11th May, the S.G.P.C. called upon the Sikh community to resort to passive resistance to maintain its possession of the Gurdwaras that had already come under its

custody and to resort to non-violent non-co-operation if necessary.

On 7th November, a Magistrate accompanied by a police party took away the bunch of 53 keys, belonging to the Golden Temple from its then President. This was followed by the indiscriminate arrests of Sikh leaders and members of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee and the trial of the Sikhs began. Other communities and organisations looked on with satisfaction and blessed the Sikhs for giving a good account of themselves. Congress, Khilafat, Parsi Sabha and many other associations sent resolutions of sympathy and appreciation. Late Lala Lajpat Rai wrote the following about the progress of this great struggle of the Sikhs.

"The Sikhs have given the most amazing proofs by their behaviour at Nankana Sahib and Amritsar. They have proved themselves worthy descendents of their Gurus and the example they have set of self-sacrifice, calm, courage, devoid of swagger and absolute self-control in the face of provocation, will be hard to meet."

All the oppression and harassment failed to deter the Sikhs from the path of their firm determination to free their sacred places of all external influence. The Government had to yield. The Government released most of the Akali leaders on 17th January, 1922 and handed over the keys to the President of the S.G.P.C. on 19th January. This was the "First decisive battle won by the Sikhs in their present struggle for liberation of the Gurdwaras" as Gandhiji put it when he heard of the news of the Sikhs' success.

While the Government was on the one hand promising support in finally settling the Gurdwaras and Kirpan questions, it was on the other hand contemplating and taking most oppressive measures against the Sikhs and their organisations. The S.G.P.C.

in the meanwhile had enjoined on all Sikhs, including Council members, not to have anything to do with the proposed Bill.

The Government now again resorted to the policy of repression. On 9th August, 1922, it, at the instance of the local Mahant, arrested some Sikh Sewadars from historic Guru Ka Bagh, for cutting wood from a dry tree for use in the Gurdwara Kitchen. It became more active in the fourth week of August and began to carry out wholesale arrests of Sikhs. Most of the office-bearers and workers of S.G.P.C. were put under arrest for abetting theft of firewood from Guru Ka Bagh. Regular *jathas* of 100 persons began to march towards Guru Ka Bagh for exercising their right of cutting wood from the said Bagh for its use in the Gurdwara kitchen. The police under the command of the notorious Mr. Beaty, began to mercilessly beat and belabour them with *lathis*, until every one of them became wounded and unconscious.

This continued till the middle of September when the Government ultimately withdrew its cavalry and police forces on the road to Gurdwara, Guru Ka Bagh and allowed the Sikh *jathas* to proceed there without molestation. About 1,450 persons were estimated to have received brutal beating during the liberation of the above said Gurdwara and it was declared to be most cowardly and inhuman by all the great national leaders like Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Motilal Nehru and Mr. C. F. Andrews.

This Bill also did not meet the requirements of reform and was, therefore, rejected *in toto* by the Sikh community. Sikhs wanted a legislation, but such as could fulfil the purpose of reform and in an honourable manner. They accordingly continued their struggle to achieve their long cherished goal and objective.

The Sikh Gurdwara Bill passed in 1922 remained a dead letter throughout. Birdwood negotiations also failed.

[Sardar A. S. Saigal]

In November, 1924, negotiations were again started between the representatives of the S.G.P.C. and the Government for arriving at some agreed proposals regarding the Gurdwara legislation.

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, order. The non. Member has already taken 51 minutes. I do not want to stop him from going on, but at the same time he must realise that about eight or nine Members more are desirous of speaking on this Bill. I hope he will leave some time for them and finish his speech in as brief a time as possible.

**Sardar A. S. Saigal:** I will take 15 minutes.

**Mr. Chairman:** Three hours were allotted for the Bill out of which 2 hours and 51 minutes remain today. Out of that 50 minutes the hon. Member has already taken. I will request him to be rather brief so that other Members may also have a chance to speak.

**An Hon. Member:** His speech may be taken as read.

**Shri Tyagi:** Are you proceeding from some list, or have we to catch your eye?

**Mr. Chairman:** There is no question of a list as so many times the Speaker and the Deputy-Speaker have told the House. Even if there is a list, everybody shall be allowed to speak who catches my eye.

**Sardar A. S. Saigal:** The enormous..

श्री नवल प्रभाकर : (बाह्य दिल्ली-  
रञ्जित-मनुसूचित जातियां) : सभापति  
महोदय, मेरा सुझाव है कि अगर माननीय  
सदस्य अपनी स्पीच टेबल पर रख दें, तो  
घासानी हो जायगी।

**Mr. Chairman:** Order, order. Let him proceed.

**Sardar A. S. Saigal:** The enormous sacrifices made during the previous

four years at Taran Taran, Nankana Sahib, Guru Ka Bagh, Bhai Pheru and Jaito had amply proved that no sacrifice was too great a price to effect the desired reforms. Briefly summarising, these sacrifices amounted to 30,000 arrested, 431 martyred, 2,000 wounded, Rs. 15 lacs of fine inflicted including forfeiture of pensions and a number of jagirs of retired military men confiscated. Besides, the Sikhs were debarred from entering certain departments but all this had failed to discourage or deter them from the path of truth.

The fresh parleys and negotiations accordingly resulted in the Bill which was introduced in the Punjab Legislative Council on 7th May, 1925 which declared as follows:

"The present measure is based on the fundamental principles that Sikh Gurdwaras or Shrines are the heritage of the Panth and would be controlled and managed by the Panth through a central representative elected body, effectively supervising the work of all the Committees of management to be constituted under the proposed enactment."

The new Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925, was to extend to Punjab only and repealed the earlier Act of 1922. It came into force on the first day of November, 1925.

At the time of the passage of the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925, an assurance was held out by the Government that no changes or amendments would be effected in the said enactment except with the approval and consent of the Central Board to be constituted under section 43 of the said Act. This Board was given the option of selecting and adopting any name which it may decide upon at a general meeting of the First Board constituted under the provisions of the Act, and it accordingly selected Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, Amritsar as its name and the same was approved by the Government under section 42(2) of the said Act.



Rules and bylaws were also framed by the SGPC in March, 1927, as required under section 132 of the Sikh Gurdwara Act and the provisions of the Act were now put into full operation.

The amending Act of 1944 received the assent of the Governor on 31st January 1945 and came into force on 6th February 1945. This amending legislation defined an Amritdhari Sikh and a Patit for the first time and laid down that a person shall not be eligible for election as a member of a Board or a Gurdwara committee if such person being a Keshadhari is not an Amritdhari, take alcoholic drinks, cannot read and write Gurmukhi. Such person could not be even nominated or co-opted to the Board or the Committees.

By another amendment in section 5 of the original Act, the Board, i.e., the S.G.P.C. became the Committee of Management for all the notified Gurdwaras situated within the municipal boundaries of Amritsar, Lahore, and Taran Taran and also at Nankana Sahib, Mukatsar, Panja Sahib and Anandpur Sahib. Amendment of section 108 gave larger power to the SGPC to utilise the General Board Fund and the surplus thereof towards the maintenance and support of historical gurdwaras and also on religious, charitable, educational and industrial purposes. The Board was also authorised to prepare schemes for administration and management of the gurdwaras described in section 85 of the Act in consultation with local committees and such schemes were to provide that 10 per cent of the gross income of such gurdwaras be earmarked for promotion and uplift of industries by which the Sikh community shall benefit.

Thus, the sole object of this has been to secure for the Sikh community the effective control of the Sikh gurdwaras and administration.

As has been stated, the gurdwaras are the life and soul of the Sikh community. Sikh religion being pre-eminently a congregational religion,

the main source of its dissemination and inspiration are its holy temples and gurdwaras.

Shri Guru Nanak Devji, the founder of the Sikh religion travelled far and wide preaching the gospel of truth, unity of God and equality of mankind. Wherever he set his foot, he left marks of his personality and teachings, and his devotees founded dharmshalas and gurdwaras in commemoration of his visit to that place. According to historians he went on four Udasis, i.e., missionary tours and visited all important holy places of Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Whatever places he visited for propagating his sacred mission, afterwards became the holy places of pilgrimage for his followers.

Similarly, other Sikh gurus and saints founded a large number of temples and tanks throughout the length and breadth of this great sub-continent for the dissemination and propagation of Guru Nanak's sublime mission. Naturally, therefore, the Sikh gurdwaras, both historic and others, are situated and scattered in almost all parts of India, and are held in great esteem and reverence by the entire Sikh community.

Two of the four Takhat Sahibs, namely Takhat Sri Hazur Sahib Nander and Takhat Sri Patna Sahib, the foremost seats of authority among Sikhs, are situated in Bombay and Bihar respectively. Pepsu, Delhi, Banaras, Agra, Gaya, Puri, Pillbhit, Sasaram, Calcutta, Dhubri, Assam, Burhanpur, in Raigarh, Gwalior, Indore, Jabalpur etc., in Madhya Pradesh Bir-di Dhari have also a large number of historic and sacred Sikh shrines with considerable landed property and endowments. For lack of uniform legislation, they are managed and governed by different sets of rules and regulations mostly influenced by local customs and usages.

The present Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925 extends to Punjab only, and its provisions are not applied to other Sikh shrines outside the present state

[Sardar A. S. Saigal]

of Punjab. United India naturally needs uniform and all-embracing enactments in all spheres of legislation. Most of the surplus notified Sikh Gurdwaras have been left out in the territories now ruled by Pakistan and the statutory Sikh religious body, the S.G.P.C., has suffered a colossal monetary loss. It has been deprived of its landed property worth crores of rupees. Its annual income has immensely gone down on account of the loss of Sri Nankana Sahib Estate etc. Its sphere of religious influence has suffered a definite setback.

The entire Sikh community feels highly perturbed over such a state of affairs. The continuous complaints regarding the mismanagement of Gurdwaras outside Punjab and the reports regarding wastage of their income and property are also causing immense anxiety among the Sikhs. Besides, no uniformity in the performance of Sikh rites and ceremonies can be achieved in all the Sikh Gurdwaras unless they are governed by one statute and by uniform rules and bye-laws. Diversity and differences in the performance of religious rites cannot be a matter of pride for any progressive and puritan community like the Sikhs.

An All India Sikh Gurdwara Act will, therefore, not only create closer contact between the controllers or managers of the different shrines at different places but will also retain the paramountcy of the Panth and the Sangat in the matter of observance of Sikh *Maryada* and ceremonies. It will not only save and secure the valuable properties and endowments of the Sikh Gurdwaras in different parts of India but will also positively secure better administration for the future for all such religious places.

The proposed all-India Bill, roughly speaking, aims at dealing with the following subjects, namely (i) to secure better administration of the Sikh Gurdwaras, which have been duly notified by Government to be so

under the provisions of the present Punjab Act of 1925, (ii) to notify new places of worship outside Punjab which are Sikh Gurdwaras and as such are brought under the new legislation, (iii) what property belongs to the Gurdwaras referred to in clause (2) and how that question is to be determined, (iv) how the persons concerned will be adversely affected by the proposed changes in the management of the said Gurdwaras throughout India as a result of the notification, (v) to secure more effective and more efficient supervision and superintendence of the central body over the committees of management of Gurdwaras spread over various territories of the Indian Union, (vi) to remove the defects, deficiencies and difficulties experienced by the Gurdwaras Administration during the practical working of the present Gurdwara legislation over a period of thirty years, and (vii) to safeguard the interests of all concerned.

The spirit which animates the present Bill is likely to be hailed by all lovers of democracy, inasmuch as the Bill is obviously based on sound democratic principles. The first of these principles is that the temples of any religion are the property of the adherents and devotees of that religion, and that the administrations of those temples are not the owners but only the trustees. The second principle underlying the proposed measure is that in a matter of this kind, in which the feelings of the whole community are deeply concerned, the will of the community must in the end prevail. The third, and perhaps, the most important principle of all, is that the accounts of all the revenues of these religious shrines should be regularly kept and properly audited, and the funds be administered and expended only on religious and charitable purposes, to the extent of at least 15 per cent of the income on educational purposes, and at least 25 per cent of the income on industrial purposes, and on such other purposes as are generally

connected with the uplift and welfare of the Sikh community; thus, in all, 40 per cent of the whole income should be earmarked for the purposes that I have indicated.

It is hoped that the new Gurdwaras legislation on an all-India basis will be welcomed and greeted by all shades of public opinion both among the Sikhs and other sympathisers and will meet with the unanimous approval of both the Houses of Parliament.

**Some Hon. Members:** Very nice speech.

**Mr. Chairman:** Motion moved:

"That the Bill to provide for the better administration of Sikh Gurdwaras situated in different States of Indian Union and for inquiries into matters connected therewith be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon by the 30th March, 1959."

**डा० राम सुभग सिंह (सहस्रराम) :** सभापति महोदय, सरदार अ० सि० सहगल जी ने इस सिख गुरुद्वारा विधेयक को यहाँ प्रस्तुत करते समय जो बृहद् भाषण किया है, इसका हम सभी पर खासा भ्रच्छा प्रभाव पड़ा है। सि० जी ने सिख गुरुद्वारों और धर्मशालाओं के बारे में जो त्याग और कुर्बानियाँ की हैं उन्होंने इसका जो इतिहास प्रस्तुत किया है वह बहुत सुन्दर था और इसके लिए मैं उनका मुबारकबाद देता हूँ। वस्तुतः इस इतिहास में मैं गुद इतना परिचित नहीं था और न ही इन सब बातों को जानकारी मुझे थी। इसको सीखने का मुझे भ्रच्छा मौका मिला है।

सिख मजहब के प्रति मेरी प्रगाढ़ निष्ठा है और जितना बलिदान सिखों द्वारा किया गया—यदि मैं सिखों का नाम न लूँ तो भी उचित है क्योंकि वे लोग भी बाकी लोगों की तरह से भारत के निवासी हैं—उनकी सभी प्रशंसा करते हैं। मगर

सिखों में एक खूबी है जिसका मैं जिक्र किये बगैर नहीं रह सकता। वे हर कार्य में अगली कतार में रहते हैं और जब जब देश को उनकी सेवाओं की जरूरत हुई, वे पीछे नहीं रहे और जो भी कदम उन्होंने उठाया उसका देश पर खासा भ्रच्छा प्रभाव पड़ा और देश के हित के कार्यों में इन लोगों ने बराबर हाथ बटाया।

गुरु नानक ने जो एक सामंजस्य का सिद्धान्त चलाया और प्रेम, सहिष्णुता तथा मानवता का पाठ पढ़ाया और उपदेश दिया चाहे हिन्दुस्तान को और चाहे दुनिया को, उसके प्रति सब का मस्तक झुकता है। इस मजहब के आदिप्रवर्तक ऐसे एक महागुरु थे जिन की शिक्षा या जिन के द्वारा दिये गये उपदेशों की आज भी उतनी ही आवश्यकता है जितनी कि उस समय हो सकती थी। आज भी हमारे देश में चाहे वैमनस्य की भावना हो और चाहे एक दूसरे के प्रति ईर्ष्या रखने की भावना हो, वह ज्यों की त्यों बरकरार है और ऐसी हालत में दसों गुरुओं द्वारा दिये गये उपदेशों पर चलने की आज सब से ज्यादा आवश्यकता है।

हम लोगों को एक और भी इससे ज्यादा भ्रच्छा और गहरा सम्बंध स्थापित करने का मौका मिलता है क्योंकि गुरु गोविन्द सिंह जी जोकि दसवें गुरु थे, उनका जन्म बिहार में हुआ था। पटना में उनकी शिक्षा दीक्षा हुई। लेकिन उससे केवल बिहार में ही नहीं जैसा कार्य आज वहाँ होता है तथा जो प्राचीन काल से होता आया है—मैं उसे अभिमान की बात नहीं मानता हूँ—लेकिन यह कहे बगैर मैं नहीं रह सकता कि वहाँ से ही प्रकाश सब को मिलता है। गुरु गोविन्द सिंह जी ने पटना में जो बालक्रीड़ा की और आपकी सूबे में सभापति महोदय, जो उन्होंने जौहर दिलाये, उससे सभी परिचित हैं और जैसा मैं ने कहा इन सब बातों की

[डा० राम सुभग सिंह]

सत्त्व हमारे देशवासियों का मस्तक झुकता है।

जो परिस्थितियां उस समय थीं वे बहुत ही कठोर थीं। उस समय जिस तरह से लोगों को उन्होंने संगठित किया वह प्रशंसनीय है। आज संगठन करना एक तरह से आसान है क्योंकि आज स्थिति अच्छी है। उस वक्त बहुत विकट परिस्थितियां थीं। ऐसे हालात में जिस तरह के राज्य की उन्होंने स्थापना की उससे हम सबको सबक लेना चाहिए। साथ ही साथ गुरुद्वारे उन स्थानों पर स्थापित किये गये जहां कि गुरुओं ने या तो त्याग और कुर्बानियां कीं या उन जगहों पर स्थापित किये गये हैं जहां पर कि उनका जन्म हुआ था या उन जगहों पर स्थापित किये गये जहां से उन्होंने अपना उपदेश दिया था। इन स्थानों से सभी को ज्योति मिलती है, केवल सिखों को ही नहीं। सिख मजहब ऐसा मजहब है जहां सब लोग इकट्ठे होते हैं और जहां जैसे में ने कहा प्रेम, सहिष्णुता इत्यादि का पाठ पढ़ाया जाता है।

एक और भी अच्छी चीज सिख मजहब में है। दूसरे मजहबों में चाहे वह हिन्दू मजहब हो चाहे मुस्लिम हो—खास तौर पर हिन्दू मजहब में—तीर्थ स्थानों में बहुत ज्यादा धक्के वगैरह दिये जाते हैं, बहुत ज्यादा गड़बड़ी रहती है, कोई विभाग से सोचने की वहां बात नहीं की जाती है। यह सिखों का गुरुद्वारा तो एक सुधार की जगह है। यहां पर वे लोग एकत्र होकर सब विषयों पर सोचते हैं। पुराने जमाने में तो वहां से बड़ी बड़ी लड़ाइयां लड़ी जाती थीं। उस समय युद्ध किसी को सताने के लिए नहीं होता था, बल्कि अपनी प्रतिष्ठा की रक्षा करने के लिए होता था, और ऐसा युद्ध होना चाहिए। हमें गुरुद्वारों से यह पाठ मिलता

है। हमको चाहिए कि हम ऐसे स्थानों पर साथ साथ बैठकर अच्छी चीजें सीखें और जो हमारी रूढ़ियां हैं उनसे ऊपर उठें। असल में तो हिन्दू धर्म में जो रूढ़ियां पैदा हो गयी थीं उनको निकाल फेंकने के लिए शिष्यों ने बीड़ा उठाया था। वे कोई भेदभाव नहीं करते थे। जैसा कि मैंने पहले कहा सिख गुरुद्वारे, धर्मशालायें और उनके तीर्थ स्थान वैसे सभी के हैं। पुराने जमाने में जो दूसरों को सताने के कार्य होते थे उनके खिलाफ सिखों ने आवाज उठाई थी। हमको इससे यह शिक्षा मिलती है कि जो कार्य अच्छे हों उनके बारे में सबको सोचना चाहिए और वैसे कार्य करना चाहिये।

आज सरदार जी ने यह बिल सदन के सामने प्रस्तुत करके हमें यह मौका दिया है कि हम अपने गुरुओं के प्रति अपनी श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करें। और देश के सामने यह मांग रखें कि केवल अमृतसर और आनन्दपुर साहब का ही सवाल नहीं है लेकिन मुल्क में जो अनेक छोटे छोटे गुरुद्वारे हैं उनका भी ठीक प्रकार से संगठन किया जाए। हमारा निर्वाचन क्षेत्र तो पंजाब से ६०० मील दूर है और वहां सिख भी बहुत कम हैं फिर भी लोगों ने मिल कर अच्छे गुरुद्वारों की स्थापना की है और आज वहां काफी कीर्तन आदि होता है। कुछ छोटे छोटे स्कूल भी स्थापित हो गये हैं धर्मशालायें बन गई हैं। मैं चाहता हूँ कि जितने धार्मिक स्थान हैं, चाहे गुरुद्वारे हों या मन्दिर हों या मस्जिद हों, उनकी अच्छी व्यवस्था होनी चाहिये। उनके पैसे से स्कूल खोले जायें और इस बेकारी के जमाने में उनके पैसे से किसी उद्योग धन्धे की स्थापना की जाये ताकि लोग लिखना पढ़ना भी सीख सकें और उनको काम भी मिल सके। हमारे यहां बहुत से मंदिरों की आय गुरुद्वारों की आय से बहुत ज्यादा

है। मैं चाहता हूँ कि यह भाग्य देश के गरीबों की भलाई के लिये खर्च की जाए तो यह एक अच्छी चीज होगी और इसी नाते मैं स बिल का समर्थन करता हूँ।

केवल पंजाब में या गुरु गोविन्द सिंह के जन्म स्थान पटना या नन्देड में ही गुरुद्वारे नहीं, आजकल तो कलकत्ता आदि स्थानों में भी गुरुद्वारे बन रहे हैं और सिखों की एक ताकत है। वे अपने हाथ से काम करते हैं, उनकी अपने धर्म पर निष्ठा है। सिखों ने देश के लिये बहुत त्याग किये हैं। कांग्रेस में गदर पार्टी आदि के रूप में उन्होंने बहुत काम किया है। हमें उनके कार्यों का अनुकरण करना चाहिये। आजकल पंजाब में भाषा आदि के नाम पर पंतरेबाजी हो रही है। मैं तो मानता हूँ कि गुरुमुखी भी हमारी भाषा है। हम लोग तो दूर के हैं लेकिन फिर भी हम गुरुमुखी को अपनी भाषा मानते हैं और समझते हैं कि उसको सीखने में किसी को संकोच नहीं होना चाहिये। लेकिन मैं चाहूँगा कि सिखों को भी ऐसा रवैया नहीं अपनाना चाहिये कि लोग समझें कि वे उनको मजबूर करके अपनी भाषा सिखाना चाहते हैं और उन पर हावी होना चाहते हैं तो कहता हूँ कि सिखों की भाषा हमारी अपनी भाषा है। हम तो उसमें तनिक भी भेद नहीं मानते। और हमारी जो भाषा है वह भी सिखों की भाषा है उसमें उनको भी तनिक भेद नहीं करना चाहिये। मैं समझता हूँ कि सब लोगों को और खास कर सिखों को तो गुरु नानक का प्रेम का सिद्धान्त प्रक्षरशः पालन करना चाहिये।

हमारे देश में जो बड़े बड़े गु हुये हैं, जैसे महात्मा बुद्ध हुये हैं, महात्मा गांधी हुये हैं, गु नानक हुये हैं और गु गोविन्द सिंह हुये हैं। इन्होंने हमारे देश को बी देन दी है। मित्र गुओं की देन एक बड़ी अद्भुत देन है और हमको उसे बरकरार रखना चाहिये। हम केवल उन सिद्धान्तों को बरकरार रखने का ही प्रयत्न करें

बल्कि उनकी उन्नति के लिये ज्यादा से ज्यादा प्रयत्न करें। हमें चाहिये कि हम सिख गुरुद्वारों के साथ साथ देश के अन्य धार्मिक स्थानों का भी ठीक प्रबन्ध कराने का प्रयत्न करें। और यह काम केवल धर्म प्रचार के लिये ही न हो, हां धर्म प्रचार हो, लेकिन इन स्थानों के रुपये से देश की जनता की भलाई भी करें ताकि धर्म का असली मकसद सिद्ध हो। नानक जी और दूसरे गुरु लोग देश भर में घूमते थे और सब की भलाई के कार्य करते थे।

आज सरदार जी जो बिल लाये हैं में उससे सहमत हूँ। यह पंजाब की गुरुद्वारा प्रबन्धक कमेटी के सुधार के लिये है। यह भी आवश्यक है कि जो छोटी छोटी जगहों में गु द्वारे स्थापित किये गये हैं उन सब की उन्नति के लिये भी कानून बने और वह कानून लोगों के हाथ में हों। यानी यह न हो कि उसमें केवल पार्लियामेंट के सदस्य ही रहें और मारी देख रेख करें। सरदार जी ने अपनी स्पीच के अन्त में कहा है कि जो लोग दसों गुओं को मानते हैं और गुरु ग्रन्थ साहब के प्रति जिनकी श्रद्धा है उन में से बालिग लोगों को यह समिति निर्वाचित करने का कार्य देना चाहिये। वे अपने इन के मुताबिक कमेटी बनावें और इस कार्य को प्रागे चलावें और जो एक एक पैसा आवे वह गुरुद्वारों की उन्नति के लिये और देश की भलाई के काम में लगे। इसलिये मैं इस बिल का समर्थन करता हूँ।

**Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi:** I congratulate my hon. friend, Sardar A. S. Saigal, on sponsoring this Bill and bringing forward this motion for circulating it for eliciting public opinion. Indeed, he is not only doing a signal service to the Sikh community but he is furthering the cause of the purification of the administration of religious places.

The Bill is an important measure from three aspects. Firstly, it pro-

[Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi.]

poses to meet the long-cherished wish of the Sikh community to have a piece of all-India legislation for the control and proper administration of the Gurdwaras. Secondly, it enables Government to implement the undertaking and promise given at the time of the settlement of the Punjab linguistic problem that they would sympathetically consider legislation of an all-India type for the better administration of the Gurdwaras throughout the country, thirdly, because it proposes to bring in legislation for the uniform administration of all the Gurdwaras throughout the country on democratic lines by having a Board which will be constituted on adult franchise basis and would have complete powers over the expenditure of the funds.

Dealing with the first point that it meets the long-cherished wishes of the Sikh community, I need not go into the historical background. That has been amply described by my hon. friend, Sardar A. S. Saigal. He has taken the House through the immense sacrifices that the Sikh community underwent for the purpose of having control of the Gurdwaras. He has rightly said that the Gurdwaras are public institutions and they should be under the control of the Sikh public. That is the basic principle and there cannot be any difference of opinion on that. He has also said that the management should be always on democratic lines. He has told the House of the great sacrifices that the community underwent in the years past and how in turn they got Act VIII of 1925, which, he rightly said, was not satisfactory. But, all the same, it was accepted because that was the best that could be had under the circumstances.

The history of the sacrifices of the community, as he rightly remarked, is written in golden letters in the annals of Indian history and, at one time, it earned the admiration of all the leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai and Madan Mohan Mala-

viya. It was the first non-official fight against the stooges of the alien rulers and the alien rulers themselves which culminated in the complete success whereby the community was able, at least, to get hold of all the religious places of Punjab.

Therefore, I submit that this proposed Bill which intends to have legislation of a uniform type has been the long-cherished wish of the community as a whole. There is complete unanimity on the point from all quarters.

As you are aware, when Indian leadership in its wisdom wanted to solve the Punjab linguistic problem and met the representatives of the Sikh community and evolved the regional formula which gave satisfaction to all the quarters in the State, a request was made to Indian leadership that a legislation is desirable on an all-India basis for the control of the Gurdwaras. And I am happy to say and we are grateful for it that an undertaking was given that such desire of the Sikh community would be sympathetically considered. And, I am glad that today the proposed Bill of Sardar A. S. Saigal has got the sympathy of the Home Ministry and we are on the way to elicit public opinion.

Not only this. There is another fact which needs consideration. As I said, this Bill proposes to have legislation on an all-India basis for the control of all the Gurdwaras and also for bringing in uniformity. We have got an Act in the Punjab and its amendment is also on the legislative anvil in that State. And, yet, the Punjab Act, as you well know, suffers from certain limitations. It has territorial limits; that Act applies only to certain parts of the State; and, secondly, there are limitations on the powers of the Board.

This Bill meets both the points. It extends to the whole country and is entirely on democratic lines. As the

provisions of the Bill lay down, this Bill postulates having a Board which would be elected on the basis of adult franchise by all Sikhs above the age of 25 who have certain qualifications; and the Board will have entire control of the Gurdwaras and the religious institutions. This principle of having a Board on democratic lines is just in consonance with the Sikh principles.

As you know very well, the Sikhs believe in complete democracy and among the Sikhs the *Sangat* or the congregation has got greater importance than even the Guru himself. There are several instances in Sikhism where the *Sangat* or the congregation had been given greater importance and its word was given more value than even the word of the Guru. Guru Govind himself, the tenth Guru, when he baptised—when he created the Khalsa—and gave *amrit* of baptism to 5 beloveds, then he had himself baptism from those 5 men in order to give importance to those five.

Later when he was in the fort of Anandpur, when he was besieged and he refused to go out, he was commanded by the *Sangat* to come out. He could not disobey and he came out. There are several other instances also. At one time even Maharaja Ranjit Singh was brought by the *Sangat* before it for a certain moral omission and was ordered to be flogged. And the *Sangat* brought him before them; he was tied down to a tree and was going to be flogged when the *Sangat* again forgave him and he apologised.

I am submitting all this to the House to show that the *Sangat* among the Sikhs is of greater importance than any individual, however great he might be, and even more important than the Guru himself. I submit that this Bill which has been brought forward by Sardar A. S. Saigal is just in accordance with the basic principles of the Sikhs that the Board is purely democratic, elected on the basis of

adult franchise having complete control of the Gurdwaras and having a free hand in the administration.

So, my respectful submission to the House is that not only is there complete unanimity of the Sikh community for the principle behind the Bill; but I am glad to say that there is consensus of opinion throughout the country in support of the Bill. I am glad that my hon. friend, Dr. Ram Subhag Singh, has given support to this Bill in this House and I need only draw the attention of the House to an article that appeared in the *Hindustan Times* just a few days back.

15.49 hrs.

[SHRI BARMAN in the Chair]

While discussing the changes in the Bill being brought for amending Act VIII of 1925—the Gurdwaras Act of 1925—of Punjab, the *Hindustan Times* gave this opinion. Referring to the amendments that are at present before the Punjab Assembly, it says:

“The proposed measure for unified control of Gurdwaras both in the Punjab and of areas formerly of PEPSU is aimed at nothing more than administrative convenience. Meanwhile, there is a Private Member's Bill—(and it refers to Sardar A. S. Saigal's Bill)—awaiting Parliament's attention which is of wider scope. Gurdwaras are not confined to Punjab; they are scattered all over the country and, among the 4 major ones called the Takhats, Amritsar, Anandpur, Patna and Nanded in Hyderabad, 2 are far away from Punjab. Why should not all the Sikh shrines be treated in the same way and a central law enacted to ensure that their funds are not exploited for political, party and other undesirable purposes and that they are managed not by persons interested in establishing political hege-

[Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi.]

mony but for advancing the religious, social and educational needs of the community in such areas."

Therefore, from this leaderate, in the *Hindustan Times*, it will be seen that there is complete unanimity that there should be legislation of all-India type for the purpose proper and better administration of the gurdwaras. Now, my hon. friend, Dr. Ram Subhag Singh was correct. I need not go into a theological discussion but I might remind the House of one thing. When Guru Nanak went into meditation for three days inside water and when he came out the first word that he uttered was: "न को हिन्दू न को मुसलमान" The basic tenets of Sikhism are the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. He did not say that there was no Hinduism or Islam. There is no Hindu or Musalman; all are one. *Seva and Smaran*—that is—prayer and service are the basic tenets and Sikhism is based on them. I need not go into that discussion. By bringing in a legislation of this kind, we will be only having a sort of a common thing where everybody will be welcome. All Members of the House know that the gurdwara is open to everybody, whatever religion that individual might belong to. It is not reserved for any particular person or community.

This Bill proposes to repeal Punjab Gurdwara Act which only applies to the area which was previously East Punjab before Partition. It does not apply even to the PEPSU areas which have been merged with the present Punjab. We have got some amendments in Punjab proposing the enlargement of the present Act and apply it to PEPSU areas also which have been merged in Punjab. But this Bill is wider in its scope inasmuch as it would not only apply to Punjab as a whole but it will also apply to the entire country. This Bill also proposes to repeal that Act. Otherwise, the question arises: what about

the Punjab Act? My submission is that the Bill is correct in its provision that the Punjab Act should be repealed. There are reasons for it. The first reason is that the Punjab Act is limited in its territorial jurisdiction. Secondly, the Punjab Act is limited in the powers it gives to the board in the matter of expenditure. This Bill meets the situation by eliminating the board. There have been amendments which have been proposed for the Punjab Act by the advisory committee of the Punjab which comprises all the Sikh M.L.A.s and M.L.C.s whereby PEPSU would be delimited in constituencies and members would be elected. Certain amendments of a controversial nature have probably been proposed in the Regional Committee. I speak from the information that the Press has given. I have got no first-hand information. I did try my best to get them from the Speaker and the Secretary of the Punjab Vidhan Sabha to see what amendments had been made. But unfortunately the proceedings of the Regional Committee are said to be very secret and so I was not given that information. Why should the proceedings of the Regional Committee be secret? Why should it be given the status of a Select Committee, when it is discussing such an important subject as the Gurdwara Act? That is why, Sir, people are losing confidence in the Regional Committees. Because its proceedings are kept a secret, people feel that the Regional Formula is not being properly implemented in the way it ought to be done. People are not aware of it. If the proceedings are open to the public and to the Press, people will be inspired with confidence. I personally feel that the Regional Formula is much better than the *Punjabi Suba* which some people desired.

So, my respectful submission is—this was only a digression—that I could not get the recommendations of the Regional Committee. The recommendations as they appeared in the



Press are: 13 members nominated by the State Government from PEPSU in Interim Board, 12 members nominated by the S.G.P.C. sitting there from PEPSU and these 25 members to nominate another 34 members. This will be not only unjust, not only undemocratic but un-Sikh-like. It would not be just. For that reason, Sir, I welcome this Bill, because it is democratic in its principles, it is democratic in its application and it would repeal the reactionary provision made in the Punjab Act to which I have referred.

Now, there is another reason also why I support this Bill. That reason is, it takes away the sort of provincialism. Of course, I am a Punjabi, but, all the same, it enlarges the vision, it bests the control in a body which would be formed on an all-India basis and it will take us from a sphere which was very small so far.

But, as I submitted, the Bill is not perfect. It needs drastic changes, which can be done by eliciting public opinion. It has got very many defects and omissions, though inadvertent, but I think they would all be corrected when we have got the public opinion on it. I would submit, now that we are having a legislation of the kind which pertains to a sort of religious board of which the function is only to have better control on gurdwaras, we must think if we are going to allow such boards to be forums of political controversy. We must calmly consider this point. I submit that all efforts should be made to have a legislation of the kind where a board of the type as is contemplated and proposed in this Bill should be a purely religious body devoting its attention to reform of gurdwaras, better administration and proper expenditure of funds, and one which will think of the community as a whole.

Sir, we have seen the picture lately of the S.G.P.C. in Punjab, because of the politicians being there, becoming a forum of fight between those who

hold different political ideologies. They want to show their strength in a religious body. That is not only a dangerous thing, but it is detrimental to the interests of the Sikhs as a whole as well as the country.

I would suggest to Sardar A. S. Saigal that after eliciting public opinion he should make it a condition that no politician, no Minister, no Member of the Parliament or any State Assembly, no member holding an elected post should become a member of the S.G.P.C. It is purely a religious body. Sir, that will exclude most of the controversies from which Punjab is suffering now. I have seen how politicians, Ministers and M.L.A.'s manoeuvre and adopt methods for furthering their own ends and political ideologies. A body like the S.G.P.C. is not a political arena where the politicians could fight among themselves. It is an organization of the Sikhs who devote their attention, their entire and unstinted attention, to religious reformation. I would seriously ask my friend to consider this aspect, namely, that there should be at least a condition incorporated in this Bill to the effect that no politician or no person who aspires to an elected office should be a member of the S.G.P.C., and that the person's attention should be totally devoted to the organization.

16 hrs.

There are other things also to which I should like to refer, but I do not want to take up more time and stand in the way of others participating in the debate. As a matter of fact, in respect of the administration of gurdwaras also, the Bill does not go far enough. There are similar other points also. But the Bill is going out for eliciting public opinion, and I am sure that it will have unanimous support among the Sikhs of India as a whole. That support is obvious from the fact that when my hon. friend Sardar A. S. Saigal visited the different towns of Punjab in connection

6. [Shri Ajit Singh Sarhadi.]

with this very Bill, he had a right royal welcome and was garlanded wherever he went. Though he comes from outside Punjab,—and the Sikhs are concentrated in Punjab—yet, the welcome that he had is itself conclusive proof of the abundant support that he has got, the blessings that he has got and the unanimity which is behind the Bill sponsored by him.

I support the Bill.

पंडित राज नारायण ब्रजेश (शिवपुरी):  
सभापति महोदय, सदन के समक्ष समस्त भारतवर्ष में फैले हुए गुरुद्वारों को संगठित करने के लिए और सिख जाति और सिख मजहब को सुचारु रूप से चलाने के लिए जो यह बिल प्रस्तुत किया गया है मैं इसका हार्दिक स्वागत करता हूँ। "सिख" शब्द का प्रयोग मुझे करना पड़ेगा किन्तु मैं सिखों को हिन्दुओं से पृथक नहीं मानता। हिन्दु और सिख दो नहीं हैं एक ही हैं। विशाल हिन्दु जाति के अन्तर्गत सिख भी आ जाते हैं जैसे कि और दूसरे आते हैं। अस्तु मैं एक तो इस बिल में बँटी हुई इस भावना का स्वागत करता हूँ कि जिसके अन्तर्गत प्रत्येक हिन्दु को गुरुद्वारों में अपने मत का प्रयोग करने का और उसको सुसंगठित और सुचारु रूप से चलाने का अधिकार प्राप्त होगा। इस समय जो सब से बड़ा दोष देश में व्याप्त है वह यह है कि प्रत्येक सम्प्रदाय अलग बन गया है और पृथक रूप में अपने आप को संगठित करने का प्रयत्न कर रहा है जिसके कारण राष्ट्रीयता पर एक भयानक छाया पड़ रही है। इस बिल से वह दोष दूर हो जायेगा और हम एक साथ बैठ कर यह सोच और समझ सकेंगे कि हम में कोई पृथक्ता नहीं है।

साथ-ही साथ यह भी निर्विवाद है कि दस हिन्दुस्तान की स्वतंत्रता के लिए, भारत-वर्ष के संरक्षण के लिए इस सिख जाति का निर्माण हुआ है। गुरु नानक साहब ने प्राध्या-

त्मिक दृष्टि से हिन्दुओं को जगाया और काम-क्रोध, लोभ, मोह, मद, मत्सर आदि से ऊपर उठने की चेतना पैदा की। किन्तु इस हिन्दू जाति को जीवित और जाग्रत करने का श्रेय गुरु गोविन्द सिंह को प्राप्त है जिनके द्वारा अनुप्राणित होने के कारण ही सिख भारत-वर्ष में सजीविता के साथ जीवित हैं। गुरु गोविन्द सिंह के ये शब्द आज भी हमारे कानों में गूँजते हैं :

अखिल हिन्द में खालसा पन्त राजे,  
जगो धर्म हिन्दू सकल भंड भाजे ।  
न दीखे कहुँ दुष्ट तुर्कन निशानी,  
चले सब जगत में धर्म की कहानी ॥

मैं समझता हूँ कि आज भारतवर्ष में जो स्थिति निर्माण हो रही है उसके कारण हमारे पड़ोसी हमारी सज्जनता, हमारी उदारता, और हमारी नैतिकता का दुरुपयोग करते हुए हमारे नाश के लिए तैयार चढ़ाये हुए हैं। ऐसी स्थिति में गुरुद्वारों को और उनके द्वारा सिख जाति को संगठित करने की अनिवार्य आवश्यकता है।

एक बात देश में जो भयानक दिखाई पड़ती है वह यह है कि लोग आज धर्म के लिए धार्मिक लोगों द्वारा दिये गये पैसे का उपयोग राजनीति में करने लगे हैं। और इसका परिणाम यह हो रहा है कि लोगों के हृदयों में से धार्मिक भावना के प्रति अनादर और अश्रद्धा उत्पन्न हो रही है। प्रकारान्तर से धार्मिक लोग ही धर्म के नाश का कारण बन रहे हैं। अस्तु यदि गुरुद्वारों का ठीक प्रकार से संगठन हो जाये और जैसा इस बिल में प्रकट किया गया है उस सम्पत्ति का ठीक प्रकार से उद्धार होता है, उसकी ठीक प्रकार से देख रेख होती है, और उसका उपयोग धार्मिक कार्यों के लिये ही होता है, तो फिर इस प्रकार के संघर्ष और इस प्रकार के दोष और जो विषाक्त वायुमंडल का देश में निर्माण हो

रहा है यह बन्द हो जायेगा। इस दृष्टि से भी मैं इस बिल का स्वागत करता हूँ।

इसी के साथ साथ समूचे भारत वर्ष में जोगुहदारे हैं लोगों को उनके सम्पर्क में आने का भ्रवसर मिलेगा और सिख जो यह समझते हैं कि हम पंजाब के हैं और पंजाब हमारा है उन में भी यह भावना पैदा होगी कि सारा देश उनका है और वे सारे हिन्दुस्तान के हैं और वह हिन्दुओं से कन्धे से कन्धा मिलाकर देश का निर्माण करें। इस में किसी हिन्दू को आपत्ति नहीं हो सकती। इसी भावना का प्रचार और प्रसार हम करते रहे हैं और वह भावना इस बिल से पूरी होगी, इस दृष्टि से भी मैं इस बिल का स्वागत करता हूँ और साथ ही अपने मित्र श्री सहगल जी को यह बिल लाने के लिए बधाई देता हूँ और समझता हूँ कि जिस भावना से उन्होंने इस बिल को रखा है उसका इस कानून द्वारा प्रचार होगा और आज जो पंजाब में वायुमंडल पैदा हो रहा है अगर उसको भी इस बिल के द्वारा दफना दिया जाये तो बहुत अच्छा होगा। इसके साथ अन्त में मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि पंजाब को सुसंगठित और सुव्यवस्थित रखने की भावना से जो सहगल साहब ने यह बिल रखा है मैं उसका समर्थन करता हूँ।

**Shri V. P. Nayar (Quilon):** Sir, I do not know what right I have to thrust myself to speak on such a Bill as this, all the more so as I happen to come from a State which does not, to my knowledge, so far have an institution of the kind which the hon. Member has referred to. But I must congratulate Sardar Saigal for having taken such enormous pains, which is obvious from the Bill, in drafting such a comprehensive measure. My task has been lessened because he was kind enough to give me an indication of the lines on which he was speaking. I am not worried about that question, nor do I want to trek on holy grounds; but, I would like the House to go into some of the provisions of this Bill.

As I submitted earlier, I am not competent to express any opinion on the religious aspect of it, although for sometime now I have been trying to understand the growth of Sikhism in India. As we all know, there are religious institutions amongst the Hindus, the Muslims, Christians, etc., and we want to keep them beyond the reach of corruption. I agree that it must be so, but unfortunately, in the present context, what we find is that in the management of most of these institutions, there are many undesirable persons and many acts which we would not like to see in such institutions. I myself have had experience of some instances of gross mismanagement in religious institutions, which have been put down by legislation.

There is another aspect of it. Some of these religious institutions—I am not confining myself to gurdwaras—have tons of money at their disposal, which they do not invest in any profitable endeavour. So, all these aspects have to be gone into. I am very glad that as he was concluding his speech, Sardar Saigal suggested that a portion—if I heard him correctly, it was 40 per cent—should be compulsorily invested in industries for the betterment of the people belonging to that particular religion. I would certainly desire that other religious institutions also follow this. Because, I find that they have money and most of these religious institutions—when I say this, I do not mean any particular religious institution—are selling moksha to the rich especially and in doing so, they get enormous amounts which are either squandered or kept idle without any advantage either to the nation or to the people for whom they function as religious institutions.

**Shri Ranga (Tenali):** Moksha is obtained.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** Bought sometimes at a heavy price. The richer you are, the higher the price you pay for moksha.

[Shri V. P. Nayar]

Therefore, I would welcome such a provision. But, I am inclined to think that in the present context, it may not be necessary to have a legislation for one religion, a different set of laws for another religion and a third set for a third. We should think whether it is not possible, especially when we say that ours is a secular State, to have a common law for all the religious institutions whether it be for Hindus, for Sikhs or for Muslims. To each such community, a religious institution is as dear as the religious institution of another is to that. Therefore, we must try to find out whether it is at time now to have a common set of rules and laws which will ensure that the funds at the disposal of that religious institution are used in the best possible manner. We have the Religious Endowments Act. Certainly, the passing of a legislation of this nature, being a special law, will create a position that the general law need not be followed. It will create some complication unless we try and evolve a comprehensive set of rules and laws to guide all the religious institutions in their activities. May be that we may require some particular change or a particular set of rules for the religious institutions of a particular community. But, as far as I understand, as far as I can think, it should not be impossible for this House to consider and evolve a set of rules which should, in common, be applied to all the institutions.

Coming to the Bill, I find that the Bill creates certain difficulties. I was hearing the hon. Mover with great attention. But, as he was trying to speak from a much wider plane than from the provisions of this Bill, probably, he did not have the time to explain the various provisions. As I submitted earlier, my anxiety is more about the provisions, because, I am sure, in other matters, my Sikh brothers will take care of the provisions in so far as their application to the religion is concerned. My

difficulty is this. I do not have the time to go through all the provisions. I shall just read clauses 33 and 35. In clause 33, the hon. Mover seeks to lay down the qualifications of members of the Board. What do we find? It says :

"A person shall be disqualified for being elected or co-opted to and for being a member of the Board if such person—

(a) has not attained the age of 35 years;"

I just do not know; I leave it to the judgment of my brothers of that community—

"(b) being a Keshadhari Sikh is not an Amritdhari;"

That also I leave to them,

"(c) is a Patit;"

As far as I understand, Patit is only a person who has trimmed his hair just like our friend Dr. Anup Singh of the other House.

**Sardar Iqbal Singh (Ferozepur):** I may say for the information of my hon. friend that a Patit is only a person who has taken the Amrit and after taking Amrit, shaved his hair. Then, he becomes a Patit. There are Sikhs who are not Keshadhari Sikhs, such are called Sahajdharis.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** I do not know I was relying on the definition of the word as is seen in the Bill. Here, the definition is:

"patit" means a person who being a Keshadhari Sikh trims or shaves his beard or Keshas or who after taking amrit....

**Sardar Iqbal Singh:** After taking Amrit.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** That is precisely the reason why I submitted that it would be better that you gentlemen discuss between yourselves and find

out, because it is not "and". Here, it is said:

"...or shaves his beard or keshas or who after taking amrit commits any one or more of the four Kurahits."

It is certainly not a matter on which I am entitled to comment, but so far as clause 33 is concerned, I find that it is absolutely impossible to insist upon such qualifications by any stretch of the imagination, because if the person takes alcoholic drinks, how is it possible for any electorate that is formed, or any member of it, to qualify in such a way, that taking a casual drink once in a way should be made to disqualify. It is a question of practical difficulty. It is not the case that everybody who takes a drink takes it in public. What is the evidence if he takes it in private, and how will it disqualify him? Significantly enough I find there is an omission here. I do not know whether it is inadvertent or there is some special reason for it. I find smoking is left out in this clause. In clause 35 it is clearly stated:

"Provided that no person shall be registered as an elector who—

(a) cannot read or write Gurmukhi;...."

In the present context I wonder whether even that can be insisted upon, because Punjab cannot claim to have 100 per cent literacy.

**Shri Ranga:** They can have Gurmukhi.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** I said literacy. An illiterate can be as much of a believer as any other person. That is my difficulty.

Then in 1(e) of clause 35 you find that smoking is included, and rightly so. In the electorate, a man who is qualified to vote cannot smoke, but a member whose qualifications have been described is not prohibited from smoking. I just cannot understand this laughter.

**Ch. Ranbir Singh (Rohtak):** That is right, we agree with you.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** There are other difficulties, so that I would request my friends to sit with our colleagues here who know....

**Sardar A. S. Saigal:** This is being sent for eliciting public opinion.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** I see that also, but in doing so it will be well that these omissions are rectified, because I do not think that this is a wilful omission. This seems to be a casual omission.

About the other points I do not want to take more time, because I am anxious we should hear our Sikh friends. Therefore, I submit that some rule should be provided whereby not merely in this Gurdwaras Bill, but in laws which regulate the functioning of religious institutions there must be a very rigorous provision to punish offenders; also there must be a provision whereby the savings made from such institutions can be pooled together for the betterment of not merely the community to which the institution belongs, but to the whole nation.

**Mr. Chairman:** Shri Khadilkar.

**Shri Ajit Singh rose—**

**Mr. Chairman:** I am coming. He need not be impatient. There are other Members also who want to speak. It is a Bill before the House.

**Shri Khadilkar (Ahmednagar):** I am speaking because some of the hon. Members requested that I should also participate in this debate.

At the outset, let me confess that, I am not an atheist like my hon. friend Shri V. P. Nayar. I am agnostic. As an agnostic I welcome this measure from a different angle, and I welcome particularly the move that

[Shri Khadilkar]

my hon. friend Sardar A. S. Saigal has made. Now, what is the purpose of this Bill? The primary purpose is to broaden the vision of the Sikh community and make them conscious that they do not belong to that small area known as the Punjab. Gurdwaras are all over India. Let the Sikh community realise that they are not confined to a particular area or a particular region, but they are there in the whole of India. The Gurdwaras are rooted in every part of this country, and wherever their place of worship known as Gurdwara is there, the management of such Gurdwara should be made in such a way that politics from outside is not imported into the management. This is very important.

From the constitutional viewpoint, we have got to take this measure very seriously. Though this is a piecemeal measure, as suggested by my hon. friend, because we shall have to look at the religious endowments all over the country, yet, let us make a beginning somewhere. We call ourselves a secular State. By secularism, we do not mean that ours is a non-religious State. Let us understand that perfectly clearly. At the same time, in a secular State, an attempt must be made by legislation to 'depoliticise' all the religious institutions. That is a primary necessity for the healthy growth of a secular democratic life.

I congratulate my hon. friend for this reason that the object behind the Bill is consistent with the object as laid down in the Constitution. If we are to live up to that objective, then not only in regard to the Gurdwaras of the Sikh community, but in regard to the churches, or the big temples or the Jain Mandirs or other Mandirs where black money is made into white by a person by handing over some portion of it so that he can have all the prestige of being religious and the other social advantages that he could get, this state of affairs must be looked into.

Though there is an attempt to make a small beginning by this measure before the House, yet we must remember that this move comes from the most militant community in the country; whatever opinions they may hold, I respect them, because they are not anaemic; they do not have opinions just for the sake of opinions; they have a back-bone, and they are very firm. Such a community comes forward and says, look here, we are prepared to regularise our religious institutions, consistent with our Constitution, and 'depoliticise' them. All the troubles in this country will at least be partly lessened if only the churches, the big temple estates as well as the Gurdwaras are rid of politics. As one of the previous speakers from the Sikh community has said, the persons in charge of the management of these Gurdwaras, leaving aside the other religious qualifications, real or pseudo, which they are supposed to have, should have nothing to do with politics. He said that no one who had active interest in politics should be elected for any office in such religious institutions or endowments or their managements. This was one thing that I also wanted to bring to the notice of the House, and I congratulate the hon. Mover for having brought this to the notice of the House, by introducing this Bill.

There is another thing which is equally important. The time has come in this country to ask whether we are going to divide always on the basis of religion, when religion has to be looked upon as a personal matter. Whether it be Sikhism, whether it be the Muslim religion, or Christianity or Hinduism, all these religions are roads leading to Heaven. Instead of there being a division, let religion remain as a personal matter. Let the course of legislation in this country be such that ultimately every individual will look upon religion as a personal matter. That means secularising the religious approach to the extent that it is necessary to keep

politics outside. That is absolutely essential not only for the sake of democracy, as I said earlier, but for the sake of the unity of this country.

Today, what do we find? Every religion and its temple of worship become really the centres where seeds of disunity are sown. This is my experience. I do not think any churches or any other religious institutions can be allowed to have international approaches, connections or links. It is very dangerous for the unity of the country, for the freedom of our country, to allow things to go on in a silent manner in the name of religion, to allow them to function in a way contrary to the interests of the country. I have no objection even if they go to Church, instead of once, every Sunday, every day. I do not object to any person belonging to any religion observing his religious rights according to his understanding of religion. But one thing must be made very clear, that is, they should depoliticise religion.

Therefore, while circulating this measure for eliciting public opinion and when it comes back after circulation, let the Sikh community be the pioneer in this, that they are ready to depoliticise the Sikh religion and have that broad vision that 'we belong to India; though we reside in Punjab in large numbers, we do not consider Punjab to be the motherland of the Sikh religion; the whole of India is the motherland of the Sikh religion'. That concept must be brought out at every moment and at every step. If I have understood my hon. friend correctly, this is a right approach in this Bill.

One word more before I conclude. As my hon. friend has said, today we are really in the midst of some trouble because we are thinking of developing this country. We are really sorry for our backwardness. Round about us there are countries which are advancing rapidly and looking to their speed, we are ashamed. We are short of finance. Why not

every religious community come forward and say 'let us curtail or ration a little whatever *bhogas* we offer to the Gods in the temples, churches and other religious places and let us spare the funds at our command for the benefit of the development of the country.' I know of temples where they have funds running into crores which are locked up blindly, due to ignorance. I have not come across people who are so ignorant. If religion means good life, this sort of religious concept I say is 'far away from good life'. If those people who manage these funds are removed and all these funds are made available for the benefit of the development of the country, I think they will not only be serving the people but also meeting the requirements and emergent needs of our country at the present hour. They will serve their own community and inspire others belonging to other sects and religions.

We call ourselves Hindus. We are so divided. What is Hinduism. Nothing. I myself may be a Brahmin or an untouchable or somebody like that. Hinduism is nothing. It is absolutely a vague term, just like a mist. There is nothing tangible like 'here is a Hindu'. What is it? Nothing. In such a country, it is absolutely necessary for every individual belonging to every sect or religion to come forward and say, 'The time has come when we should leave aside these religious considerations of belonging to this particular line of thinking or that, but we must help to implement the main principles laid down by the Constitution and help the process of democracy for the removal of backwardness and attainment of a richer life'.

I again congratulate the Sikh community on this measure. Let this measure with all the amendments that are necessary, be passed and let the Sikh community take the lead in this reformation. Then I think they will be doing pioneering work, as the Founder of the religion did at a critical period

[Shri Khadilkar]

in Indian history; Sikhism did a pioneering work by raising a bulwark of a new faith when faith was shattered by the onslaught from the other side. With these words, I support the Motion.

श्री अजित सिंह : साहिबे सदन, सब से पहले मैं सरदार अ० सि० सहगल को मुबारक-बाद देता हूँ कि उन्होंने बड़ी मेहनत करने के बाद इस बिल का तैयार किया है और यहाँ रखा है ।

इसके साथ साथ मैं यह भी महसूस करता हूँ कि हमारे सिख लीडरों के साथ हमारी गवर्नमेंट ने जो मुधायदे सन् १९५६ में किये थे, उनको पूरा करने का वक्त आ गया है और उनको पूरा किया जाना चाहिये । जनाब वाला, इस बिल को लाने का मकसद यही है कि जितने 'ब' वारे हैं हिन्दुस्तान के उन सब को यूनीफारमिटी में लाया जाये । उनके फंड्स को और उनके ट्रेडीशन्स को बराबर देखा जाये और एक इलेक्टड बाडी हो जो उन पर पूरा कंट्रोल रखे । यह मैं सिर्फ आज ही नहीं चला हूँ यह मूव सन् १९२० से चल रहा है और सन् १९२५ में सिख गुड्डारा एक्ट बना । उस वक़्त यह एक्ट सिर्फ पंजाब पर ही लागू था । सारे हिन्दुस्तान पर इसका कोई असर नहीं था । अब सहगल साहब ने जो यह भूव चलाया है यह काबिले तारीफ़ है । इसी तरह का एक मूवमेंट चौदहवीं सदी में चला था जिसको विलियम आफ ओकम, जोहन प्राव पेरिस, मारसिलियो प्राव पडुआ और गिरसन ने चलाया था । इस मूवमेंट का भी यही मतलब था कि चर्चों में जो महन्त हैं उनको निकाल बाहर किया जाये जिस से कि वे अपने तौर पर कोई काम न कर पायें, चर्चों का इन्तिजाम इलेक्टड बाडी करे, और ज्यादा से ज्यादा एरिया उस बाडी में रिप्रेजेंटड हो । इसी भावना से सित्तों ने भी सन् १९२० में जद्दी-जहद की थी और गुरद्वारों से महन्तों को निकाला था । आपको मालूम होगा कि उस वक़्त ननकाना साहब का महन्त नरेनू न सिर्फ

गुड्डारे में रंडियां नचाता था बल्कि हुक्का भी वहाँ रखता था और भी बहुत से गलत काम करता था । जैसा कि मेरे दोस्त ने बतलाया उसको निकालने की कोशिश में सरदार लक्षमण सिंह और दिलीप सिंह को बड़े दरस्तों से बांधा गया, उनके हाथों में कीलें ठोकी गयीं और उनको मिट्टी का तेल डालकर जला दिया गया । इतना जुल्म और तशद्दद हुआ इस कौम पर । लेकिन हमने अपने गुड्डारों को आजाद कराने के लिए लड़ाई जारी रखी, और उसके साथ हमारे नेता पंडित जवाहरलाल नेहरू भी शामिल थे, महात्मा गांधी और देश के दूसरे नेताओं जैसे पंडित मदन मोहन मालवीय ने भी उस में हिस्सा लिया । इन लोगों के हिस्सा लेने से हिन्दुस्तान के लोगों के दिलों में एक आजादी की लहर पैदा हुई और फिर सब ने मिल कर हिन्दुस्तान को आजाद किया और हिन्दुस्तान को आजाद कराने में सिख गुड्डारों को इस लहर का भी बहुत बड़ा हिस्सा है ।

जैसा कि अभी हमारे भाई ने कहा, हिन्दुस्तान एक सिक्क्युलर स्टेट है । हमारा कांस्टीट्यूशन कहता है कि हर रिन्सिजन अपने ट्रेडीशन्स के मुताबिक रद्द उकता है । लेकिन पोलिटिक्स एक दूसरी चीज है । इन दोनों चीजों को अलग अलग रख कर हमको चलना चाहिए ।

अभी कुछ बातें सहगल साहब ने अपने बिल में रेश की हैं । मैं उनको मुताल्लिक कुछ कहना चाहता हूँ । उन्होंने आर्टिकल ३३ में कहा है कि जो मेम्बरों के लिए उम्मीदवार हो उसकी उम्र ३५ साल हो । मुझे इस पर एतराज है । और वह एतराज इसलिये है कि हमारे कांस्टीट्यूशन में ३५ साल की उम्र सिर्फ प्रेसीडेंट के लिए रखी गयी है, पर पार्लियामेंट के मेम्बर के लिए २५ साल की ही उम्र रखी गयी है । मैं समझता हूँ कि पार्लियामेंट से बढ़कर और कोई बाडी नहीं हो सकती । इसलिए मैं चाहता हूँ कि हमारी गुड्डारा



प्रबन्धक कमेटी के लिए भी वह २५ साल की उम्र मंजूर करें।

उसके बाद उन्होंने वोटर की उम्र २५ साल रखी है। यह उम्र भी मुझे बहुत ज्यादा मालूम देती है। अगर यह उम्र रखी गयी तो बहुत से नौजवान इसके बाहर रह जायेंगे। वह नौजवान जिनके अन्दर मजहब का बड़ा जज्बा है, जिन्होंने मजहब की किताबें पढ़ी हैं और किताबें लिखी हैं वोट नहीं दे सकेंगे मैं समझता हूँ कि उनको वोट का हक होना चाहिए। इसलिए मैं चाहता हूँ कि वोटर को उम्र १८ से २१ के बीच में रखी जाये।

तीसरी बात उन्होंने यह कही है, वही सिख मेम्बर बन सकेगा जो जपजी साहब जानता हो। वैसे जपजी साहब को पढ़ना आसान है। उसमें २० या २२ पीड़ियाँ हैं जिनको कोई भी याद कर सकता है मगर देहातों में बहुत से लोग ऐसे हैं जो कि ऐसा नहीं कर सकते हालाँकि वे शहर वालों से ज्यादा अच्छे सिख हैं। वे लोग ज्यादा तर खेतीबाड़ी और दूसरे काम धंधों में लगे रहते हैं और उन से यह उम्मीद नहीं की जा सकती कि वे जपजी साहब को जबानी याद कर पायें। तो मेरी प्रार्थना है कि इस शर्त को भी कमजोर किया जाये।

आगे चल कर उन्होंने सहजधारी की डेफीनीशन दी है। हमें खुशी है कि सहजधारी सिख हम में ज्यादा गुरुओं के उषूनों को मानते हैं और गुरुद्वारों में ज्यादा जाते हैं। लेकिन सहजधारियों का मतलब यह नहीं होना चाहिए कि अखिख्वासतीर पर पोलिटिकल परपज के लिए गुरुद्वारों के इन्तिजाम में घुस जायें और अपने पोलिटिकल परपज को आगे बढ़ायें। इसलिए मेरी प्रार्थना है कि सहजधारी की डेफीनीशन सिख धर्म के अनुकूल हो। सिखों ने जो उनकी डेफीनीशन की है वह इस बिल में लायी जानी चाहिए।

एक बात आखिर में मैं और अर्ज करना चाहता हूँ कि नाइट्स पंजाब में यह कनवेंशन था कि सिख मेम्बर ही इस काम में पार्टिसिपेट कर सकते हैं। वही इस तरह के बिल को बनाने में हिस्सा लें। मैं इस हाउस के कामपिटेंस को चैलेंज नहीं करता। सब को हक है बोलने का। लेकिन इसका यह नतीजा होगा कि बाहर जो कम्युनल फोर्स हैं वे यह कहेंगी कि हिन्दुओं की मंजारिटी ने मिल कर यह बिल पास कर दिया। तो मैं अर्ज करूँगा कि इस हाउस को कोई अहमियत घटती नहीं अगर मैं सिख मेम्बर इसमें हिस्सा न लें। सिख मेम्बरों को ही इस में ज्यादा से ज्यादा हिस्सा लेने का मौका दिया जाना चाहिये।

**Shri Khadilkar:** We are not sitting here under the Constitution as Hindus. It is a wrong statement.

**श्री अजित सिंह :** मैं किसी के राइट को चैलेंज नहीं करता। मैंने तो यह सजेशन दिया है क्योंकि पंजाब में ऐसी फोर्स हैं जो यह ऐतराज कर सकती हैं कि हिन्दुओं ने मिलकर यह बिल पास कर दिया है।

आगे चल कर मैं मोहतरिम सरदार अजित सिंह सरहदी की स्पीच के बारे में कुछ कहना चाहता हूँ। वह कहते हैं कि हम डिमाक्रटिक तरीके से इस बिल को पास करें। इसको पबलिक ओपीनियन जानने के लिये भेजें मगर मैं यह नहीं मानता हूँ कि कोई डिमाक्रटिक तरीके से अमेंडमेंट पंजाब की रीजनल कमेटी ने पास कर दिये हैं तो वह सही है। वह उसको अग्रोज करते हैं।

दूसरी बात मुझे इस सिलसिले में यह कहनी है कि सरदार साहब ने यह तजवीज रखी है कि कोई पोलिटिकल आदमी शिरोमणि गुरुद्वारा प्रबन्धक कमेटी का मेम्बर न बने। मैं इस भूव को बेलकम करता हूँ। और उन से प्रार्थना करता हूँ कि वह खुद

6 [श्री अजित सिंह]

भी उस कमेटी से इस्तीफा दे दे तो बहुत से लोग उन से सबक सीख सकते हैं। वह एक एग्जाम्पल सेंट करें, ताकि दूसरे लोग उस से सबक हासिल करें। डा० राम सुभग सिंह ने अपनी स्पीच में यह कहा कि गुरुद्वारे सिखों के साथ साथ हिन्दुओं और मुसलमानों के लिए भी हैं। यह बात सच है। हमारे ग्रन्थ साहब में लिखा है कि—

जे दर आवत जात है, हट के नाहो कोये,  
सो दर कैसे छोड़िये, जो दर ऐसा होये।

वह तो गुरु का द्वार है। उस पर सब का बराबर का हक है, उसमें सब आ जा सकते हैं, बै सका है और बन्दगी कर सकते हैं। उन्होंने यह भी कहा है कि दूसरे मजहब के लोग सिखों से डरें नहीं और उन की आत्मिक विद्या और गुरुओं की शिक्षा प्राप्त करने से गुरेज न करें। जनाबे बाला, मैं अर्ज करना चाहता हूँ कि सिख धर्म में ऐसी कोई बात नहीं है कि सिख किसी को डरावें या किसी से डरें। सिख गुरु साहबान के बताए हुए असूलों पर चलते हैं—उन गुरु साहबान के जिन्होंने चांदनी चौक में अपना सीस—अपना सिर—दे दिया और उन की याद में सीसगंज गुरुद्वारा बना हुआ है। उन्होंने अपनी बाणी में कहा है कि—

भय काहु को देत नह, नह भय मानत भ्रान

न हम किसी से डरते हैं और न हम किसी को डराते हैं। सिख इस असूल को मद्देनजर रखते हैं। सिख किसी हिन्दू या मुसलमान को नहीं डराते हैं। वे तो इस बात पर विश्वास करते हैं कि—

अब्वल अल्लाह नूर उपाया, कुदरत के सब बन्दे,  
एक नूर ते सब जग उपजया, कौन भले को मन्दे।

हम इस बिल को पब्लिक ओपीनियन जानते के लिए भेज रहे हैं। मैं इस मूव को बैलकम

करता हूँ। यह बहुत अच्छी बात है, क्योंकि इट कनसन्स मैनी पीपल इन पंजाब। खासकर सिख कम्यूनिटी से इस का बहुत ताल्लुक है। मैं सुझाव दूंगा कि एस० जी० पी० सी० की जेनरल बाडो बैठे और सरदार सहगल साहब वहां उस के साथ मशविरा करें और जो बात यहां तय पाये, उस को मद्देनजर रखा जाये।

इस के अलावा मैं सजेश्चन देना चाहता हूँ कि सिख कौम के नेताओं, सरदार प्रताप सिंह, मास्टर तारा सिंह, ज्ञानी करतार सिंह से सरदार अमर सिंह सहगल मिलें। इस सिल-मिजमें में मेरी भी सर्विसिज हासिल हो सकती हैं।

**श्री० रणबीर सिंह :** सरदार स्वर्ण सिंह।

**श्री अजित सिंह :** सरदार स्वर्ण सिंह मिनिस्टर हैं। उनको मैं नहीं लेना चाहता हूँ। पांच आदमियों की कमेटी इस बिल पर विचार करे और इस बारे में जो उस की विचार-धारा हो, उगको कनसिडर किया जाय।

आखिर मैं एक इम्पाटेंट पायट की तरफ ध्यान दिलाना चाहता हूँ। सहगल साहब से मेरी बात हुई है और वह मेरे सुझाव को मानते हैं। जब पंजाब में गुरुद्वारा एकट बना था, तो शिड्यूल्ड कास्ट लोगों के लिये रिजर्वेशन नहीं थीं। इसलिये शिड्यूल्ड कास्ट सिखों को, जो कि अमृतधारी सिख हैं, एजीटेशन करनी पड़ी। लाठियां चलीं, गोलियां चलीं, मारपीट हुई। उसके बाद सिखों को यह मानना पड़ा कि शिड्यूल्ड कास्ट सिखों की रिजर्वेशन होनी चाहिये, भी हमारे सिख भाई हैं। सहगल साहब ने यह बात कूल की है कि अगर शिड्यूल्ड कास्ट सिखों के लिये रिजर्वेशन नहीं होगा तो उनको गुरुद्वारों के एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन में कभी भी चान्स नहीं मिलेगा। उन्होंने माना है कि

हम इसको कर देंगे। पंजाब में सिख्रूल्ड कास्ट सिखों की आबादी पच्चीस परसेंट है। उसके मुताबिक उनकी रिजर्वेशन पच्चीस परसेंट हो।

आखिर में मैं आपका शुक्रिया अदा करता हूँ कि आपने मुझे टाइम दिया। थैंक यू।

**सभापति महोदय :** सरदार इकबाल-सिंह।

**सरदार इकबाल सिंह :** वाजपेयी जी बोलना चाहते हैं। मैं बाद में बोल लूंगा।

**श्री वाजपेयी :** चौबरो रणबीर सिंह भी बोलना चाहते हैं। वही पहले बोलें।

**श्री० रणबीर सिंह :** सभापति महोदय, गुहड़ारे पवित्र स्थान हैं और यह सही है कि सिखों के लिये वे और भी आदरणीय स्थान हैं, लेकिन हर हिन्दुस्तानी के लिये, जो कि हिन्दुस्तान के बुजुर्गों में विश्वास रखता है, वे आदरणीय स्थान हैं और उनका इन्तजाम सही हाथों में हो, यह हर हिन्दुस्तानी चाहेगा और चाहता है और उसी ध्येय को हासिल करने के लिये आज से पच्चीस तीस साल पहले पंजाब के गुरबीरों ने लड़ाई लड़ी थी, ताकि पंजाब में गुहड़ारों का इन्तजाम जलत हाथों से निकले और सही हाथों में आये। लेकिन उसके बाद का एक इतिहास है। मैं डाक्टर खाडिल्कर साहब से सहमत हूँ कि हिन्दुस्तान में हमने एक विधान बनाया है और उसके तहत हम चाहते हैं कि देश में संकुलरिज्म बड़े और यहां एक संकुलर स्टेट कायम हो। लेकिन गुहड़ारों प्रेबेंडिकमेटी का जो बिल पंजाब में ला है, उसका जो नतीजा हुआ, वह सारे हिन्दुस्तान के सामने है। पच्चीस तीस साल के इतिहास ने यह साबित किया है कि अगर उसी ढंग से कोई कानून बनाया जायेगा, तो शायद वह देश के लिये और गुहड़ारों के लिये खास तौर पर अच्छा साबित न हो। गुहड़ारे पंजाब के हिन्दुओं के लिये

उतने ही पवित्र स्थान हैं, जितने कि सिखों के लिये। अगर आज से पच्चीस तीस साल पहले गुहड़ारों को देखा जाता, तो मालूम होता—और जिन्होंने देखा है, वे जानते हैं—कि वहां पूजा-पाठ के लिये जितने सिख जाते थे, गुह ग्रन्थ साहब की भाषी को सुनने के लिये तकरीबन उतने ही हिन्दू भी जाते थे और उतनी ही हिन्दू बहनें जाती थीं, जितनी कि सिख बहनें जाती थीं। लेकिन अगर आज का नक्शा उससे मिलाया जाय, तो वह बिल्कुल उलट है।

**सरदार इकबाल सिंह :** आज भी उतनी ही जाती हैं। आज भी दरबार साहब में हिन्दू ज्यादा जाते हैं।

**श्री वाजपेयी :** कम हो रहे हैं।

**श्री० रणबीर सिंह :** मुझे खुशी हो अगर सरदार इकबाल सिंह की बात सही साबित हो, लेकिन मुझे खदशा है कि यह बात सच नहीं है। सरदार इकबाल सिंह की जो इच्छा है, वही मेरी इच्छा है। मेरे में सरदार इकबाल सिंह और सरदार अमर सिंह सहगल में कोई फर्क नहीं है, लेकिन यह बात सदाकत की है। यह सदाकत है कि पिछले पच्चीस साल में—और खास तौर पर पिछले पांच सात साल में—जिन भाइयों के हाथों में गुहड़ारों की बागडोर रही, उन्होंने पंजाब में फिरकेदारी फैलाने की कोशिश की और फिरकेदारी को फैलाया। इस बात का इतिहास शाहिद है। पंजाब में सच्चर फारमूले के तहत हर एक विद्यार्थी को पंजाबी पढ़ना लाजिमी है, लेकिन पंजाबी और पंजाबी सूबे के नाम पर गुहड़ारों से भूवर्द्धस चलाई गई। जैसा कि मेरे साथी ने अभी कहा है, इस बारे में कानून बनाते वक्त हमारा मुद्दा यह होना चाहिये कि इससे जरिये कहीं हन देश में फिरकेदारी को बढ़ावा तो नहीं दे रहे हैं। हमारी सरकार और इस सदन पर यह जिम्मेदारी है कि हमने फिरकेदारी की हवा को रोकना है। जिस वक्त

## [बौ० रणबीर सिंह]

हम इस सभा के सदस्य बने तो हम ने कसम ली थी कि हमने कांस्टीचुएण्ट प्रसेम्बली द्वारा बनाये गये विधान को चालू रखना है और एक वैकुण्ठ गंग का समाज बनाना है। मे कोई बहुत दिनों की बात नहीं है। यह पिछले तीन चार साल पहले का इतिहास है। अमृतसर में क्या कुछ हुआ, यह किसी से छिपा नहीं है। उसके पीछे कौन सी शक्तियाँ थीं, यह भी किसी से छिपा नहीं है। मुझे ख़ुशी है कि शिरोमणि गुरुद्वारा प्रबंधक कमेटी के मौजूदा प्रधान में—सरदार प्रेम सिंह सालपुरा ने—सुरंत की है और ऐनाम किया है कि हम गुरुद्वारों की सियासी लड़ाई का मदान नहीं बनने देना चाहते हैं और नहीं बनने देगे। दरअसल यही हमारा मुद्दा होना चाहिये। कुछ समय पहले भी कुछ बोसों ने यह राय जाहिर की थी कि गुरुद्वारों में जिस ढंग से चुनाव होते हैं, उन से न तो गुरुद्वारों का इतना प्रच्छन्न होता है और न ही गुरुद्वारों का जो रक्षा है, वह मन्शा हो पूरा होता है। जो लोग गुरुद्वारों का काम करते हैं, वे फिरकादारी को हवा देते हैं और वे स्यासी लड़ाई के लिये मैदान और भड़ाई बनाते हैं। मुझे पक्का नहीं मानूँ लेकिन यह बताया गया है कि वहाँ पर जो नारा लगाया गया था और बड़े जोर के साथ लगाया गया था उन चन्द साधियों को तरफ से उनके खिलाफ जो सिखों में सब से बड़े क्रम परस्त हैं यह था कि पहले तो हिन्दुओं के हाथ में हकूमत दे दी गई है और अब गुरुद्वारों की कुंजी भी हिन्दुओं के हाथ में देना चाहते हैं। इस तरह के नारे उन लोगों ने लगाये जो कि उस वक्त इस गुरुद्वारा प्रबंधक कमेटी के इंचार्ज थे और इस तरह से गजत फिजा रैदा करबे की कोशिश की गई है। ये बातें जो अच्छे अच्छे हमारे सिख साथी हैं जैसे सरदार उद्धम सिंह नागोके जी तथा भागों गुरुमुख सिंह मुत्ताफिर और दूसरे साथियों जिन्होंने

कितनी ही इस बात की कोशिश की है कि शिरोमणि गुरुद्वारा प्रबंधक कमेटी का काम सही हाथों में जाये और जिन्होंने देश की खातिर कितने ही सारों की जेठें काटो हैं, उनके बारे में कही गई थीं। हमारा जो संविधान है, हम चाहते हैं कि उसके मुताबिक सब काम हो। हम यह भी चाहते हैं कि गुरुद्वारों का इन्तजाम सही हाथों में जाये। जब इन काम परस्त सिखों के द्वारा कुछ काम किये गये तो उनके खिलाफ आवाजें लगाई गईं और अब मुझे डर है कि जिस तरह से इस बिल को यहाँ रखा गया है और जिस तरह कि क्लाइजिङ इस्के प्रंदर है उनको देखते हुए कहीं वही फिजा सारे देश में न फैल जाये जो कि पंजाब में फैली। कहीं पंजाब में जिस तरह की रिफेदारी फैली हुई है, वह सारे हिन्दुस्तान में न फैल जाये। यह फिजा जो वहाँ फैली है पंजाब के गुरुद्वारों से रैदा हुई थी और अब इस बिल के बाद कहीं यह सारे हिन्दुस्तान के गुरुद्वारों में रैदा न हो जाये। यही मुझे सबसे ज्यादा डर है।

मैं जानता हूँ कि सरदार अ० सि० सहगल की जो भावना इस बिल के पीछे रही है वह बहुत ही अच्छी रही है और मेरी भावना से भिन्न उनकी भावना नहीं हो सकती है और न है। गुरुद्वारों के बारे में उनके जो खयालात हैं उनकी मैं कद्र करता हूँ, उनका आदर करता हूँ। लेकिन जैसे मैंने कहा मुझे लक्ष्मण यहाँ है कि पंजाब में जो फिरकादारी दम बन्त है कहीं वह हिन्दुस्तान के दूसरे सूबों में न फैल जाये, जहाँ इस समय वह नहीं है।

सभापति महोदय, आप जानते ही हैं कि सियासी बिना पर कितनी भी तरह का रिजर्वेशन हमने स्यासी फोल्ड में संविधान बनाते वक्त बात समाप्त करने की बात

कही थी और उसको समाप्त भी कर दिया गया है और इसका कारण यह था कि जो इस तरह से नुन कर प्रायेंगे वे सैक्युलर नहीं हो सकते और भ्राम तीर पर इस तरह से चुन कर घाने वाले वे लोग होंगे जो फिरका-परस्त होंगे या फिरकादाराना जहूनियत के होंगे। अगर यह चीज सियासी जीवन में सच हो सकती है तो मुझे पूरा विश्वास है कि यही चीज गुद्दारा के इतिजाम के बारे में भी सच हो सकती है और यह चीज पिछले तीस सालों के इतिहास से स्पष्ट हो गई है।

अगर चुनाव होते हैं और बिना किसी कटुता के होते हैं तो इससे मुझे बड़ी खुशी होगी है। सिख मजहब को भ्राम बढ़ाया जाये, इसके प्रसार किया जाये गुरु ग्रन्थ साहब का प्रचार हो, इसके बारे में कोई दो रायें नहीं हैं, सभी इसके हक में हैं।

मैं इसके खिलाफ नहीं हूँ कि इस बिल को लोगों की राय जानने के लिये प्रचारित न किया जाये और लोगों को इसके बारे में अपने विचार सामने रखने का अवसर न दिया जाये। मैं यह भी महसूस करता हूँ कि चुनाव के तरीके को हमें बदलना होगा। अगर मैं यह भी कहना चाहता हूँ कि ग्रेट-ब्रिटेनियन रिजॉम का मैं हामी नहीं हूँ, मैं डेमोक्रेटिक सिस्टम का, लैकशंस का हिमायती हूँ। लेकिन मैं यह भी मानता हूँ कि गुद्दारा के इतिजाम के लिये अगर डेमोक्रेटिक सिस्टम को रखा गया तो उससे फिरकादारी पैदा होगी और उसी तरह से पैदा होगी जिस तरह से रंजब में पैदा हुई है। इनको हमें बढ़ने नहीं देना चाहिये। चुनाव हों लेकिन उनमें इस तरह की बातें न हों, इसका हमें खास तौर पर खयाल रखना चाहिये।

कुछ दोस्तों का खयाल है कि ट्रस्ट होना चाहिये इस गुद्दारा प्रबन्धक कमेटी के लिये। वह ट्रस्ट किस तरह से फंक्शन करे और किस

को ट्रस्टी बनाया जाये, मैं इसके बारे में कोई प्रबोरीटी नहीं हूँ और न ही मैं कोई पक्की बात इस सिलसिले में कह सकता हूँ लेकिन मैं यह जरूर मानता हूँ कि उस ढंग से चुनाव नहीं होने चाहिये जिससे कि फिरकापरस्ती फैलने की सम्भावना हो।

सरदार भ्रजित सिंह सरहदी साहब ने पंजाब की पंजाबी रीजनल कमेटी के सिलसिले में भी जिदक किया है और जो नया गुद्दारा प्रबन्धक कमेटी के बिल बहन पेश किया गया है, उसका हवाला दिया है। जो सिफारिश उस बिल के बारे में रीजनल कमेटी ने की है वह मैं समझता हूँ सर्वसम्मति से की गई है और हो सकता है कि चार पांच मंम्बर उसके खिलाफ हों। उस सिफारिश से हमारे सरहदी साहब को इतिफाक नहीं है, ऐसा मालूम पड़ता है। लेकिन जैसा सरदार भ्रजित सिंह जी ने कहा और कौनसा दूसरा तरीका हो सकता है? जो हुमा ठीक हुमा और पंजाब एसेम्बली के अन्दर जो बिल इस वक्त पेश है और जो तरीका उदा बिल में अपनाया गया है, वह मैं समझता हूँ सही है और उसमें सरहदी साहब को कोई आपत्ति नहीं होनी चाहिये।

**The Deputy Minister of Law (Shri Hajarnavis):** We are accepting this motion for circulation though at this stage I am not in a position to say that we are committed either to the principle or the details of the Bill.

**Mr. Chairman:** The question is:

"That the Bill to provide for the better administration of Sikh Gurdwaras situated in different States of Indian Union and for inquiries into matters connected therewith be circulated for the purpose of eliciting opinion thereon by the 30th March, 1959."

The motion was adopted.