

में अन्त में एक बात कह कर समाप्त करता हूँ और वह इस नाते में कि इस हाउस में और फिर राज्य सभा में भी संसदीय राज सभा समिति की रिपोर्ट पर विचार हो चुका है। कल मध्य प्रदेश के हमारे मित्र श्री खादीवाला ने भी इस और संकेत किया था, और हमारा विश्वास था कि हमारे राष्ट्रपति जी बजट अधिवेशन को जब आरम्भ करेंगे तो अपने भाषण में संसदीय राजभाषा समिति के प्रतिवेदन पर, जिस पर दोनों सदनों में चर्चा हो चुकी है, कुछ संकेत देंगे। लेकिन राष्ट्रपति के भाषण में इस प्रकार का संकेत न पा कर हमें बहुत निराशा हुई। अब भारतीय संविधान को लागू हुए दस वर्ष समाप्त होने वाले हैं। हम ने सन् १९६५ तक हिन्दी को राजभाषा बनाने की स्थिति रक्खी है। मेरा निवेदन है कि अगर राष्ट्रपति के भाषण में इस प्रकार की चीज नहीं आई तो शीघ्र ही इस प्रकार की व्यवस्था की जानी चाहिये कि सन् १९६५ तक जो हम ने प्रतिज्ञा तिथि निर्धारित की है, उस समय में हम अपने लक्ष्य को पूरा कर सकें।

इन शब्दों के साथ मैं अपने भाषण को समाप्त करता हूँ।

17.03 hrs.

*SUICIDE COMMITTED BY DR.
JOSEPH OF IARI

Mr. Speaker: We will now take up the half-an-hour discussion. Shri Malhotra. The hon. Member may have ten minutes. The hon. Minister will have ten to fifteen minutes. With regard to the balance of five or ten minutes, if any hon. Member wants, he cannot make a speech but can only raise a point and put a question; I will allow one or two, whoever have given notice.

*Half-an-hour discussion

Shri Inder J. Malhotra (Jammu and Kashmir): In answer to Question No. 47 which was answered on the 10th February regarding the suicide committed by Dr. Joseph of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, a statement was laid on the Table of the House. In that statement some portions from the reports of the enquiry conducted by the Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture were also included.

At the very beginning I want to submit that if we look to the letter of Dr. Joseph which he wrote on 2nd January, 1960 before he committed suicide, he had clearly stated that "the authorities at IARI and the Ministry are responsible for this tragedy". Now, when this was Dr. Joseph's feeling, the question is how an enquiry conducted by the Deputy Secretary of the same Ministry can have any meaning or can be an impartial enquiry.

Further, I understand that the same person who held this enquiry has long been connected with the IARI affairs and at some time he has been representing the Ministry in the UPSC interview boards where Dr. Joseph had been appearing as a candidate. Under these circumstances I really doubt very much whether the person who held this enquiry might not have had his own personal whims and prejudice against Dr. Joseph. Therefore, in his report he has tried to build up a theory of "average ability" of a Ph. D. graduate.

I would like to submit this, that a person of average ability and who had a Ph. D. degree from a foreign university certainly required some kind of good treatment, encouragement and good working conditions from our Government so that he would have been able to contribute something good.

Now, going a little further into this theory of average ability, I would like

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to submit that in his report he has also pointed out that Dr. Joseph was a third class graduate. If we make a little effort and look into the life histories of eminent scientists and great men of the world, I am sure, we would find so many who were only third-class graduates. So, as far as I am concerned, on this very plea I cannot accept this that a third-class graduate cannot rise in his life or cannot contribute any good in his sphere of work.

I want to submit one more point, and that is this. I understand that when Dr. Joseph's applications were forwarded to the UPSC or to other sources where he applied for employment, certain remarks had been made on his applications by his superior technical officers, but these have not been brought out in this report. I would request the hon. Minister to kindly see those remarks on his applications and find out the opinion held about Dr. Joseph by his superior technical officers. And if he likes he may also place those remarks of the superior technical officers on the Table of the House for our information also. When Dr. Joseph was promoted as a Teaching Assistant, his superior technical officers recommended his case for the grant of four advance increments. In my opinion, the superior technical officers are certainly better qualified and in a better position to judge the real worth of the technical people working under them. When it was recommended by Dr. Joseph's superior technical officers that in view of his 13 years research experience and his high qualifications he should be given four advance increments in this Teaching Assistant's post then why these were not granted when this recommendation reached the Secretariat, the interpretation of the service rules came in the way. Those rules were interpreted against Dr. Joseph's interests. The result we have seen and the whole nation has seen, that the poor fellow had to commit suicide. I am glad that the hon. Minister has said that Government is considering

the question of revising the rules. But here I want to submit this, that at that time when a sub-committee or some persons are asked to go into the existing service rules and make recommendations to revise these rules, the persons of the same Ministry should not be there to revise those rules; impartial persons should see how those rules can be revised by which our young technicians in all the research institutes of our country may get better working conditions. While revising these rules I would also suggest that thorough enquiry and complete consultation should be held, with all the technical authorities of research institutes in the country.

An attempt should also be made to know the opinion and the facilities which the people who work in the scientific institutes want. Then, keeping in view these observations, rules should be revised.

It cannot be conceded that Dr. Joseph was a man of average ability. There are at this very moment hundreds of our young men studying in foreign countries, some of them pursuing their studies for M.Sc., some for Ph.D. I won't hesitate to submit this, that all of them may not be people of excellent ability. Therefore, we should not unnecessarily lay more emphasis on this fact that Dr. Joseph was a man of average ability, a "Ph.D." What impression will those young people get who are pursuing their studies in foreign countries? As I have already said, all of them may not be persons with excellent ability. In those conditions, they would certainly hesitate very much to come back to their own country and then struggle for a job on a very low pay. If at all they come and take up any job on a very low pay, and when they feel dissatisfied something unfortunate and tragic happens, there comes a report, in the end, from the Government that the man concerned was of average ability and, therefore, the Government could not do much for him.

There is another point brought out in this very report, that Dr. Joseph got a loan from the Education Ministry for his studies in America and he was made to sign a bond. My submission in this respect is this, that when any student is given a loan by the Central Government, I do not say that bonds should not be executed, but I only submit, that after finishing his studies he should not be restricted to serve only as a Central Government servant but he may be allowed to serve in any other State Government or in any other semi-government organisation in the country.

In the end, Sir, I am glad to note that Government has taken some note of this. But I would again submit that the enquiry conducted in this matter is not the required one or the perfect type of enquiry. An impartial enquiry should be conducted so that more things can come to light immediately. Every effort should be made to raise the morale of the people, the low-paid technicians and scientists who are working in our institutes so that they can feel satisfied and really contribute something good. From our research institutes we want something good to come out for our people; we do not want such news that a Ph.D. committed suicide.

Shri Tangamani (Madurai): Sir, in the Rajya Sabha, in reply to one of the supplementaries to Starred Question No. 43 on 10th February, 1960 the Prime Minister was pleased to state that the Government of India are revising their procedures over promotions to improve fairness and prevent delays. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister will disclose when it will be completed.

In the statement which was laid on the Table of the House in reply to the question referred to here, it was mentioned that his application for the post of an Assistant Entomologist on Rs. 250-500 in the Haffkine Institute was delayed, the application which was sent to the Bombay Government was delayed and the delay was avoidable.

the interview was fixed only for 10th January, 1960 and unfortunately, on 5th January, 1960 Dr. Joseph committed suicide. I would like to know what action the Government propose to take against the officer or officers who were responsible for this delay.

My third point is this. It was stated in the statement that Dr. Joseph is a scientist of average abilities. But in the statement itself it is mentioned that when he was to get the master's degree, he was able to get the M.Sc. without much delay. I would like to know how, when he had completed the M.Sc. and immediately proceeded to the foreign country, an impression has been gathered that he was a man of average ability.

My last question is this. In view of the importance attached to this, and the editorial which has appeared in *The Statesman* of 12th February, 1960 in which it has been stated that prompt action should be taken in institutions like the medical institutions and colleges where there are professors undergoing the same type of hardship, what action the Government will take and what direction they will give to the various State Governments?

With your permission, I shall put one more question. I would like to know how, when Dr. Joseph proceeded to the foreign country on his own initiative and stayed there for four years and when he returned, he was re-entertained on the old scale of Rs. 80-220.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the contention of hon. Members that except in cases where agreements are taken from persons and their special training, etc., are paid for by the Government, in all other cases their applications should be forwarded to others for employment? That seems to be the argument.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon (Mukandapuram): My question, in the first place, is whether any of the Ministers in this Ministry came to know about the peculiar position in

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which Dr. Joseph was placed and if they came to know it, what was the earliest point of time when they came to know it.

Secondly, I want to know whether the hon. Minister is even now aware that in one of the months preceding his suicide, Dr. Joseph had to draw a net amount of Rs. 7 as his monthly salary to feed his family, wife and five children.

Thirdly, how many third class B.Sc.'s are now working in the departments of the hon. Minister and who are drawing more than Rs. 500 with lesser years of service than that of Dr. Joseph.

Finally, how long did it take to dispose of the application made by Dr. Joseph that the deduction from his salary may be reduced from Rs. 100 to Rs. 50.

Shri Punnoose (Ambalapuzha): I would like to know why it was mentioned in the statement that he was a third class graduate when he had taken his doctorate? Was it mentioned just to insinuate that he was mediocre and did not deserve any particular attention?

Secondly, news items have appeared that the Minister himself has organised some voluntary contribution or collection for the family of Dr. Joseph. Is it real and may I know whether Government are going to give them any help in the form of money or other facilities and, if so, when.

Thirdly, I would like to know if the Government will take this case of Dr. Joseph as a symbol or a sign of a disease and whether they will enter into the grievances of the employees and pay proper attention, or will they wait till these people hang themselves?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri S. K. Patil): Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the very outset, I must say that it is a very unfortunate incident

on which the House is called upon to say something. In the background of a suicide, we are considering these matters. If this incident was not there and the question was discussed independently, I would have been in a better position to say something. As it is, I am rather nonplussed because anything that I might say may sound harsh although God alone knows there is no harshness in my heart so far as this particular unfortunate incident is concerned. Let us divide this question into two parts as it must be divided. One is, the service conditions of our scientists: whether they are all right, whether they should be improved, whether rules should be liberalised. It is a question by itself, although it is now almost spearheaded by this unfortunate incident. That is a very important thing and we are discussing it. But let us not tag it on to this unfortunate incident of the suicide of Dr. Joseph.

Dr. Joseph's suicide is a very regrettable incident indeed. He wrote a letter to me which, unfortunately, I got from the police after everything was over. Not that I would have done any miracle, but surely, if he had approached the Minister—I am told he had approached several other persons, as Shri Menon suggested—I would have at least got a chance to know that these things are there. Possibly, who knows, sometimes even little incidents change the current of life. I would have inspired a little self-confidence in him, if not anything else. I am not saying it merely as an excuse, but it is my peculiar misfortune that a man serving in my Ministry, knowing generally what the Minister is, should not have taken that opportunity. But there it is; I am not going into that, because it is not really material to a discussion like this.

When I ordered that enquiry and when that enquiry was made, it was not a judicial enquiry or anything like that to find out if somebody was

guilty. I wanted to know the facts, as I said in the Rajya Sabha. If I feel any doubt that the facts are wrong, surely I might order one or two enquiries or I might go into it myself. So, I really wanted to know what exactly happened. Shri Malhotra stated that I said Dr. Joseph was a third class graduate. But the fact remains that he passed the examination in the third division. That was what came from the reports. It has been asked here as to why it had to be said.

Mr. Speaker: When a person takes the Ph.D., should the department go back to the original degree?

Shri S. K. Patil: It is very important indeed. This gentleman had served the department for 15 years. There is a character roll. Year after year entries are made there whether he is outstanding or average, rightly or wrongly. A wrong entry might have been made, but ultimately the Minister or the Ministry has to go by something and that is his record. Not that I had the good fortune of knowing this man or anything like that. Whenever there is an opportunity, we call for the records. The records showed that he had passed the examination in third division. I am not contending that because he got third division, he was necessarily a bad man. But the fact is, in its routine, according to the rules by which they are governed, the Ministry had done something.

Normally nobody is allowed to go in for the M.Sc. unless he has got some division higher than the third, i.e. first or second division. But he was specially allowed to do so. He took sometime, naturally because he was serving in the office. I do not attach much importance to this. At the same time, he got an assistantship of 1,000 dollars per annum and he went to Fordham University. There also the office helped him. If it is really contended that everybody was against him, these things would not have happened. He had to be

given leave; he had to be given some money. In the total it came to Rs. 2,500 and odd. He was also given a loan of Rs. 2,000 from the Education Ministry. So, he got Rs. 4,500 from Government. That means, Government did whatever they could within the rules. For taking his Ph.D. also he took a little more time—four years. There the question does come—his being average or extraordinary, because he had no office work then. Anyway, after he came, the Ministry itself, or the department concerned, was not really competent by themselves, of their own record to do anything. Because, it must be very clearly understood that when an officer, who is serving in a Ministry, is really given these kind of facilities, it is expected that in nine cases out of ten his services will be absorbed by the Government department itself. That is exactly the reason why this was done in this case. This is not a kind of scholarship given to an outsider. It is something that is given to a man who is serving, so that he could be useful to the institution. Therefore, this kind of contract is always made. So, if he has to serve the institution for a period of three years, there are reasons for it. That period of three years could be utilized in order to collect the money that the Government has given, because Government is not a kind of charitable institution from which anybody could take money and need not pay it back. That is No. 1. Secondly, within these three years he could be found a better and higher job through the U.P.S.C. These are the reasons why the period of three years is insisted upon.

Then, as the statement says—and I did not go through the whole thing at all—unfortunately, Dr. Joseph did appear four or five times before the U.P.S.C. and four times out of five, he was not rated competent. There may be many reasons, I am merely saying that it is a fact.

One thing that I have not really liked, and which really is causing me a lot of embarrassment is this, that

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once a decision was taken that he should be allowed to find employment outside, this sort of thing should not have occurred, and there should not have been any delay in forwarding his applications. This delay possibly was, to a certain extent, responsible for a little exasperation on his part. But could anyone have expected that this will lead to suicide?

Delays sometimes occur. Of course, they are bad. Therefore, the Government of India, Cabinet, everybody is considering those delays. Here we have passed resolutions after resolutions about delays and short-circuiting correspondence. Something has got to be done so that the administration could be toned up and the delays could be avoided. But, surely this misfortune of a particular case should not be tacked on to the general delays and to say that it was the intentional delay which lead to this would be stretching the imagination far far away. That should not be done. I would appeal to the House that howsoever regrettable the incident may be, we should not take some kind of basis or inference from that that it was purposely done. It was not purposely done. Of course, delays should not occur anywhere, not particularly in this case, and that is why we are now thinking how delays could be avoided and how the rules could be liberalised. That is a process we are engaged in continuously. With the background, as I said, of the suicide, it is very difficult for me to disclose things with that kind of clarity which I would have used if this unfortunate incident was not there.

Several questions are asked, and they are very pertinent indeed. My friend, Shri Tangamani, has said that the Prime Minister has suggested that these rules have got to be liberalised. That process is there and the Cabinet is very seriously thinking on that; not merely thinking, actually a committee has been appointed to see how far they could be libe-

ralised and the delays could be stopped. They are also considering what could be done for the scientists. It is being independently considered whether the scales of pay and other conditions of service could be made a little better and higher so that they would be sufficiently tempting for the scientists etc. But that, as I said, is a general question which does not necessarily arise out of this unfortunate incident.

Then it was said that several other Ministers knew it; I think, Shri Menon said that. May be; but I am that unfortunate Minister who really knew nothing about it. I had no knowledge of it, and possibly if I had some knowledge something, as I said in the beginning, would have been done.

There are other things, details of which I knew nothing. For instance, I do not know whether on a particular month he drew only Rs. 7. Perhaps, it may be so, and if so, it is very bad indeed. I find from the report that has been submitted that whenever it was not possible for Dr. Joseph to pay in instalments, there was no harshness shown to him. Generally, no harshness was shown to him. He himself was paying that money month after month, and surely he was discharging his responsibility in a manner in which any hon. gentleman would do.

Now, what is to be done for the future? So far as Dr. Joseph is concerned, I could say that we took one or two steps.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: May I ask one question? How many B.Sc.s (third division) are there in the department?

Shri S. K. Patil: That is not available with me now. If the hon. Member is so keen, I shall find out. Then, I was not objecting to the third division. That is merely a description that came from the report. I merely

used it, that is all. I did not say that getting third division is bad. I agree with the hon. Member that it is not so.

That is merely stating the case as it is, just as you say that he was Ph. D. and M.Sc. Unfortunately, in the results, when they are declared, the division is also given.

It is an unfortunate thing that Dr. Joseph died leaving behind him his wife and five children. They have been orphaned. Therefore, something has got to be done. I do not know, because although I have been a Minister I am not yet conversant with all the rules, as to what exactly happens and how much he would get. But the case had such an impact on my mind that I thought that something has got to be very promptly done. Therefore, I said that I would collect Rs. 25,000 and give it to the family of the deceased Dr. Joseph. I am glad to say that I have collected that amount and I have got that money to be given to them.

Then, the *Free Press Journal* of Bombay is also collecting funds. The sum has gone to Rs. 40,000 and it might go to Rs. 45,000 or Rs. 50,000. That money and this money put together comes to about Rs. 70,000/- to Rs. 75,000. I have written to the *Free Press Journal* about having some kind of a trust. I am merely saying this because that is not of very great importance but just because when we have got this money it should not simply be handed over, as sometimes it is possible that the children are very young, they have got to grow and have got to go through their education etc., and some kind of a small trust should be there. I am not saying that Government should do it. Somebody, out of these donors, who have given money, some two or three people including Mrs. Joseph should administer that Trust and out of that money, whatever it

comes to should be given to them month after month, year after year.

So far as Government is concerned, it is again bound by rules. It is not a question of my generosity or anything of that sort. The rules must do it. Then the Finance also must agree and many things must happen. But I am trying to do something by which he should get another Rs. 5,000 from the Government of India and may perhaps get Rs. 50/-. I do not know I want to have it Rs. 100/-, month after month for several years until the children grow up.

There are also one or two charitably disposed friends of mine who have said that they would go on giving Rs. 100/- every month to the family. Some institution that gives scholarships for education etc. has said that it would look after the education of the children. Therefore, so far as that part of it is concerned, I think it can be solved to the satisfaction of everybody. There will be a sum nothing less than Rs. 70,000/- to Rs. 75,000.

Shri Tyagi (Dehra Dun): Would you give similar treatment to those who die a natural death?

Shri S. K. Patil: It is done spontaneously by people, because there are people who, out of generosity, do something. I have not done it as a Minister. I would have done that all the same, if I was not a Minister and if I were an ordinary citizen and I had the ability to do it. They would also get a couple of hundred rupees every month for several years so long as they get through their education. That part of it would be done.

So far as liberalisation of the rules and also the changing of the status of the scientists are concerned, that is a big question. It is not only confined to the scientists who are under my Ministry. There are somewhere about 500 of them. But there may be

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several thousand scientists. Apart from those there are scientists in other countries, who also are Indians. That is a big question which the Government is very seriously considering. With this I can say that beyond that now to go into that and have another enquiry and so on and so forth as if there is some guilty person who was purposely doing these things in order that it should lead to suicide etc. is a very far fetched thing. That kind of interpretation need not be put. The House should be generous to accept the explanation that I have given. We join in expressing our sympathy to the family and we wish them well.

Shri B. K. Galkwad (Nasik): I am not satisfied with the reply of the hon. Minister. It has been said by the hon. Minister that for some months he got only Rs. 7/. Does it mean that whatever he was getting the whole amount was recovered as recovery and only Rs. 7 was paid?

Shri S. K. Patil: I did not say that. I merely referred to what Shri Menon said that in a particular month, and not month after month, he got Rs. 7/. I am merely accepting that statement. It is not that I have verified it. He was getting somewhere about Rs. 100 after deducting some Rs. 80 or Rs. 90 as instalments etc. That is in the report that I have made.

Shri Narayanankutty Menon: Your own statement shows Rs. 100/- towards instalment for life insurance, provident fund and all those things.

Out of this Rs. 100 one month he got only Rs. 7/. It was in December or November.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: He cannot be given Rs. 7/-. It is against the rules.

Mr. Speaker: No doubt this a very unfortunate incident. We have had a full discussion on this and whatever could be done to the children of the deceased is being done.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): We are prepared to contribute.

Mr. Speaker: The *Free Press Journal* has started a subscription list. Hon. Members are free to contribute to it or send it even to the hon. Minister who has raised some money to be given to them. I am merely saying either the one or the other agency may be employed.

Shri S. K. Patil: As I said, I have written to the *Free Press Journal* which is the major party collecting the subscription, that I am thinking of a trust of three people consisting of one representative out of the donors from whom I have collected, one representative from the *Free Press Journal* and Mrs. Joseph herself, in the interest of both Mrs. Joseph and the children put together.

17.36 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, February 19, 1960/Magha 30, 1881 (Saka)