

**Mr. Speaker:** There is no meaning in continuing like this. The hon. Minister has only got what he has stated to the House—nothing more. There is no point in going on probing into it.

It is rather unfortunate that this accident should have happened involving the death of 24 persons. Of course, the House expresses its deep sense of sorrow at this unfortunate accident and our condolences and sympathies will go forth to the members of the families of the deceased. I am sure a thorough investigation will be made into this matter, and all available information, as soon as it is obtained, will be placed before the House.

In view of what the Minister has stated, I do not give my consent to this adjournment motion.

ASSISTANCE TO FAMILIES RENDERED HOMELESS IN DUST AND THUNDERSTORM IN DELHI

**Mr. Speaker:** There is notice of another adjournment motion from Shri S. M. Banerjee, regarding:

"Need for immediate financial assistance to all families who are rendered homeless as a result of severe dust and thunderstorm in Delhi on the 29th March, 1959...."

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** I want to make a submission. I know the Government are prepared to give them assistance. But those residents of Purana Quila have been declared as squatters. So I do not know what will be the attitude of the Government towards these displaced persons in Purana Quila. They have suffered more. I want an assurance from Government in this connection. That was the purpose of my adjournment motion.

**The Minister of Home Affairs (Shri G. B. Pant):** So far as the sufferings of these people go, everyone, including every Member of Government, will

have sympathy with them. I understand the matter is being looked into. Whatever can reasonably be done by way of relief will, I think, be arranged. The storm was altogether unexpected, and it has caused suffering to these people. We will look into the matter and see what can be done.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** About the residents of Purana Quila also.

**Mr. Speaker:** In view of this, I decline to give my consent to the adjournment motion.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

THIRTY-NINTH REPORT

**Shri B. G. Mehta (Gohilwad):** I beg to present the Thirty-ninth Report of the Estimates Committee on the Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs)—India Security Press, Nasik.

12.04 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

FIRING BY PORTUGUESE SOLDIERS ON INDIAN CONSTABLES

**Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur):** As regards this matter, we thought that a Short Notice Question would be admitted in which case we would have been able to ask questions. Unfortunately, that is not possible in respect of a Calling Attention notice. So we should be permitted to ask some questions.

**Mr. Speaker:** I will allow one or two questions by hon. Members who come from that area.

**Shri Vajpayee (Bairampur):** Under Rule 197, I beg to call the attention of the Prime Minister to the following matter of urgent public importance—

[Shri Vajpayee]

and I request that he may make a statement thereon:

"The firing by Portuguese soldiers on Indian constables on the Banda border and violation of Indian territory on the 26th March 1959."

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): What the hon. Member has stated is true. On the 26th morning, at about 10 o'clock, some of our customs people were about to stop some smugglers at the Banda border on a hill-top. At the sight of the customs police, the smugglers fled, although one headload was dropped. Soon afterwards, some 6 men of the Portuguese Army, some in *wafti* and some in uniform, opened fire on our customs police. At this region, the border is not clearly demarcated; although there are some border pillars, the actual line is not marked on the ground. As a result of Portuguese firing, one customs officer, Kalbhor, was injured on the thigh. Another man, Rane, was hit at the ankle. The Portuguese took Kalbhor with his rifle away with them. Another rifle was also taken away by them. When the Portuguese opened fire, the customs men who were not actually hit ran down the hill and escaped. Later, we understood that Kalbhor, that is, our man who was hit, was taken by the Portuguese to their hospital in Panjim. The customs police man, Rane, was taken to the hospital at the Indian side.

This is a brief narration of the events. I must say that it is exceedingly distressing that such incidents should occur, that Portuguese Army men should come across the border and shoot at our customs people or any people. We are still trying to get a little further information on this subject, so far as we can, and to take some more effective steps to stop this kind of thing, and to follow it up when it occurs.

Shri Nath Pai (Rajapur): In view of the fact that this is not the first time that the Portuguese have ventured to violate our border on this part, and in the light of the fact that wherever we have a border—be it with Pakistan or be it with little Portugal—everybody thinks that the Indian border can be used as a practising range and our soldiers as firing targets, may we know whether Government will take adequate steps to prevent recurrence of these, and whether the border posts on the Banda border—I know the distance is about 100 yards, and it is marked, but they are very arrogant. . . .

Mr. Speaker: What is the question?

Shri Nath Pai (Rajapur): The question is whether steps will be taken to strengthen this border so that there is no recurrence of this.

Shri Vajpayee (Balrampur): According to Press reports, the Portuguese soldiers used machine guns. May I know what our soldiers have? Are they in a position to meet machine gun firing?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Our own information is also that they had light machine guns. I do not quite know, but I hardly imagine that customs people carry big weapons with them.

Shri Nath Pai: Are they being reinforced because they are often the targets?

Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: I can tell the hon. Member that steps will be taken to be able to deal with such incidents as soon as they arise. One cannot blame the poor customs people because they could not face this kind of thing.

Mr. Speaker: This is only for the future. The hon. Prime Minister has said that all precautions will be taken.