

12.01 hrs

RE: MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

## HAPPENINGS IN SOUTH AFRICA

**Mr. Speaker:** Papers to be laid on the Table.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Basi-rhat):** May I ask with reference to my motion for adjournment....

**Mr. Speaker:** I have disallowed it.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartty:** May we beg of you to let us submit that this matter, the terrible, inhuman butchering that has taken place in South Africa, has roused the conscience of the entire Asian-African people as well as of the whole world? It is necessary, South Africa being one of the members of the Commonwealth, of which we are also a member, that we should make our position clear and say that we also hate this and protest against this. That is why I make an appeal to you to allow this motion so that at least a statement may be made clearing the position of our Government.

**Shri Braj Raj Singh (Firozabad):** With regard to the interpretation of Rule 377, I want to make a submission. I had given notice seeking your permission for raising this matter of South Africa. Rule 377 says:

"A member who wishes to bring to the notice of the House any matter which is not a point of order shall give notice to the Secretary in writing stating briefly the point which he wishes to raise, in the House together with reasons for wishing to raise it, and he shall be permitted to raise it only after the Speaker has given his consent and at such time and date as the Speaker may fix".

I had this morning requested you to give me permission to raise this matter in the House. I had also given the reasons. Not only the State Department in Washington but even the House of Commons debated this matter yesterday. Certain Mem-

bers there raised this question. Britain is also a member of the Commonwealth of Nations of which we are also a Member and South Africa also happens to be a member.

Now, mass killings have taken place. The Pan-African movement is being crushed by the Government of South Africa. My point is this: We do not want to interfere in the internal affairs of any country; we have got no intention to do it. But at least we have got the right—this House has got the right—as representatives of this country to express our opinion. I suggest that our Government should protest to the Government of South Africa against these happenings and say that these things should not happen. Government should also direct our representative at the U.N.O. to raise this matter in the U.N.O. We must do something for these people, at least by way of expression of our opinion.

**Shri A. C. Guha (Barasat):** May I say something?

**Mr. Speaker:** No, no.

**Shri A. C. Guha:** This House should be given an opportunity to express its opinion.

**Mr. Speaker:** No, no. There are a number of countries in the Commonwealth. What happens if some other things happen in some other countries of the Commonwealth? Of course, I agree that this is a rare case, so far as South Africa is concerned. From that point of view, I felt that it would not be convenient or desirable that we should allow a discussion of this matter, however shocking it might be.

As regards the point raised by Shri Braj Raj Singh, Rule 377 does not apply to this case. Any matter over which we have jurisdiction but which is not specifically provided for may be raised under this rule. That is only if we have jurisdiction, not otherwise. Therefore, that rule does

[Mr. Speaker]

not apply so far as this matter is concerned.

But while disallowing this motion, I wanted to request the hon. Prime Minister to make a statement if he thought it necessary or useful. Otherwise, there is no meaning in allowing this. I do not want to create a precedent. The matter is, of course, very shocking. Therefore, I am requesting the hon. Prime Minister to make a statement, if he would like to.

**The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru):** Mr. Speaker, this motion or two motions raise rather difficult issues. Normally, as you have been pleased to say, this is not a matter which this House should discuss, I mean some internal matter within the internal jurisdiction of some other country. Therefore, if I may respectfully say so, what you have said about these motions is the only right approach to them.

Nevertheless, quite apart from these motions, something has happened at the Langa township near Cape Town which has shocked the conscience of the world, and more particularly of course of us here in India and perhaps in other countries of Asia and Africa; but I would not like to exclude Europe or America, because this is, as far as we know, one of those very special happenings that almost affect the course of history. Here is Africa at the present moment—resurgent, proud and in a defiant mood, after long centuries of suppression. Many countries are becoming independent; they have become independent and they will become independent. On the other side, there is this picture of people of practically a whole nation, excepting some groups who came from Europe, who have settled down and who are, of course, fully entitled to full citizenship and rights and privileges, but nevertheless a minority; these people of the minority are passing all manner of laws, segregation, apartheid and all that,

which we well know, and finally asking every African not to move about without a pass or ticket—a prisoner-like thing—converting the great majority of the population of South Africa into a kind of semi-prisoners. This is an extraordinary thing. And when these people, so far as I know, peacefully protested by not taking out those passes, there was a conflict and there was this large-scale killing.

Now, killing is bad at any moment, but this kind of culmination of all these events leads to certain conclusions in the minds of people which point to this being not the end of an episode but the prelude to future conflicts; because I cannot understand the people of Africa submitting to this kind of thing. There can be no doubt that people in Asia, to whatever country, whatever party or group they might belong, will also give their fullest sympathy to them.

**Shri Braj Raj Singh:** We are one with them.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** That is the position. So that a situation arises when our normal approaches and even normal rules and procedures are not always adequate to deal with it.

I do admit that it would be wrong, at the present moment, to discuss this matter in a motion for adjournment or in any other way. But I am not clear in my mind how far it should not be permissible sometime or other later to find some way for this House to express its opinion.

**Some Hon. Members:** Yes, yes, we should express our opinion.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** I do not commit myself. But when there is a strong feeling in this matter in this country and in this House, surely, some way ought to be found for the expression of that feeling. That is the position.

Hon. Members said something about protesting to the South African Government. We have no relations with the South African Government of

protest or communication; and it would be rather a feeble thing for us to send a note of protest with regard to this matter. What the United Nations may do about it, I do not know. But, if any such thing is raised there our sympathies will be with it. How it will be raised and what the response might be I cannot say. If I am....

**Shri Braj Raj Singh:** At least our Prime Minister can refuse to sit with the Prime Minister of South Africa in the Commonwealth.

**Mr. Speaker:** Let there be no interruption. Let him be allowed to proceed.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** When I had of this episode I was reminded powerfully of something that occurred in India 41 years ago the Jallianwala Bagh massacre.

**Shri Braj Raj Singh:** More than that.

**Shri Jawaharlal Nehru:** That was followed, as everyone here knows by all manner of developments, upheavals, struggles and the like. And, I do not imagine that this thing, this large-scale killing, and even more so, the spirit behind it, the spirit of racial mastery, the spirit of authoritarianism, the spirit of not only segregation but treating the great majority of the people as an inferior race, as a sub-human species, that is a thing which, obviously, can never be accepted not only by them but by the hundreds of millions of Africa and Asia. And, therefore, we seem to be perhaps, on the verge of more serious happenings. Not in the immediate future, I mean, because nothing can be more serious in the world than vast racial conflicts. All these thoughts came to my mind.

Now, it is not necessary, if I may say so, for this House, at the present moment or later, to express formally its own reaction to these events. Because everyone knows how every single Member of this House and this country must feel about it and does

feel about it. I ventured, at your bidding, to express my own opinion on this subject because, as hon. Members do, I feel strongly about this. Normally, I must restrain myself as much as I could—a Member of the Government has to speak in restrained language. But lest that restraint might be mistaken for a lack of strong feeling, I thought I might take advantage of your invitation to express the views of myself and my Government.

**Shri Braj Raj Singh:** The Prime Minister has been pleased to agree to the holding of a discussion....

**Mr. Speaker:** Of course, I do not want to restrict the powers of the House. I may immediately say that I do not want to stand on technicalities, when a matter is of great concern to the whole of humanity. It is not a matter concerning any particular country. After all, our Parliament is supreme. Not only this Parliament, but all the State Legislatures and the whole nation are shocked at the news. And, I do not know, as the hon. Prime Minister said, if it is not a prelude to further conflicts which, as far as possible, must be avoided by an expression at any early stage. I shall discuss the matter with the Leader of the House and try to devise ways and means, as to how we should tackle this problem or express our views.

We will proceed to the next item.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur):** May I say....

**Mr. Speaker:** No.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** The discussion may be today or tommorrow. The British Parliament has expressed itself.

**Mr. Speaker:** That is different. I understand the views of the whole House. There is no single Member who is not in favour of this. I shall try to find out how best we can give an opportunity, if an opportunity is necessary.