

[Shri Dinan Bhattacharyya]

he will explain this attitude of government to the country. Is it now becoming a practice of this government... about whom we became proud when they declared that they will take up the cause of the poorer sections?

MR. SPEAKER: Will you kindly give him a chance to reply to your question?

SHRI DINAN BHATTACHARYA: My apprehension is that hereafter, other wage boards will give recommendations in respect of the other employees. If this attitude is followed, what will be the result?

SHRI RAVINDRA VARMA: First of all, I would like to say that I do not take umbrage at any adjective that was used. I only expressed my surprise. As far as the question of the strike notice is concerned, it is not to the government that any strike notice has been served. On the government no strike notice has been served. On the employers, strike notice may have been served. (Interruptions) The resolution that the hon. Member refers to, was passed by one of the federations, in the month of May. The reasons why government did not call a conference of the working journalists' organizations as well as employers' organizations have already been stated by me. Mainly, the reason is that we wanted the notification to be implemented. I do not think that the hon. Member wants to suggest that the notification itself should become a matter of negotiations. That is not the attitude of the government. The government has announced its decision. It has been notified. If the hon. Member wants that the subject matter of the notification itself should become a matter of negotiations, he will be opening the flood-gates; and we would be creating a situation in which the workers themselves would find their position undermined. I hope, therefore, that that is not his intention.

As far as his reference to the modified notification is concerned, I am

afraid there is some misunderstanding in his mind. We have not modified any notification. There is only one notification that we have issued; and it is to that notification that I have referred.

Then, he has expressed his anger at the fact that for 10 years, nothing was done; the wage board's recommendation was there, and the government did not implement it, he said, for 20 months. We have not been in power for 20 months. It is known to the hon. Member as well as it is known to me that other gentlemen were in power; and if they had ignored it (Interruptions)... and the word gentlemen includes every body—we are not responsible for it. They have been punished for it and for other heinous crimes. As soon as we came, we issued the notification; and we intend to see that the notification is implemented.

12.40 hrs.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER
ON HIS PARTICIPATION IN COMMONWEALTH PRIME MINISTERS'
CONFERENCE IN LONDON

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI): Sir, as the House is aware, I returned this morning after attending the meeting of the Commonwealth Heads of Government. In this tour I also stopper off for a few hours in Tehran at the invitation of His Imperial Majesty Shahanshah and for a day in Paris as guest of the President of France. Both of them are old and valued friends with whom I was very happy to renew friendships. In my discussions we were able to advance the cause of mutual collaboration and cooperation in matters of common concern and we found a great deal of similarity of approach to world problems particularly those pertaining to energy.

This was my first trip abroad after the assumption of office by our Government. It was a matter of great satisfaction to find that following our

democratic elections and the orderly change of Government, the esteem and prestige of India had not only been restored but demonstrably enhanced in the international community. In my talks not only with the Shahanshah, the leaders of the British Government and those of France, but also with other Heads of Government attending the Commonwealth Conference, in the contacts with the Press media and indeed with people in all walks of life, there was admiration for the maturity of the Indian people in their dedication and commitment to the democratic system of Government. When questioned, on various occasions, I pointed out that the tradition of democracy was rooted in the ancient civilization of India. Foreign rule and such aberrations like the period of emergency, were contrary to our values and our national ethos. The elections have shown that in the final instance the Indian people have an inherent moral courage to judge and elect their own rulers without fear. Privately and publicly, I assured all concerned that the new Government of India, buoyed by the trust of the Indian people are totally dedicated to the principles of democracy and would ensure that our constitutional principles can never again be perverted. In turn, I was told that the extraordinary courage and sagacity of the Indian people was an asset and an encouragement to like-minded people all over the world. I, therefore, regard whatever success I achieved and attention and respect I received, as a tribute to our people who proclaimed to the whole world through their verdict their faith in democratic values, their disapproval of authoritarianism, and their judgment and capacity to choose a Government which they could trust to serve them.

The Conference of Heads of Government of the Commonwealth was held in London after a lapse of eight years. The Commonwealth is, I would emphasise, an association of independent States, entirely free in their internal and external policies, some

still owing allegiance to the British Crown, others with monarchies of their own and some like ourselves with a purely republican constitution, but all free to express themselves as suits the interests of their own country and motivated by securing a consensus on problems of their common concern.

The Commonwealth, as the House is aware, is a multi-racial and multi-continental community of nations representing one quarter of mankind, some rich and strong, others small and weak. But all recognise the logic of inter-dependence and commonality of interests. In population, India represents more than half of its total number of inhabitants. Unlike the United Nations, the Commonwealth is not structured or governed by elaborate procedures. It mirrors the diversity of the entire community of nations, but has a character of informality and tradition of cooperation which is perhaps unique. The Commonwealth as it is now constituted, thus provides the kind of balance which we want to see in the world and is an institution which can in course of time set the pattern for a Commonwealth of the whole world.

The Conference met under the Chairmanship of my old friend and Prime Minister of U.K. Mr. James Callaghan. He proved an admirable Chairman whose bonhomie, cheerful disposition, balance approach to the various issues that came up were contributory to the evolution of a common outlook and approach that underlie the decisions that were reached. I found in him and all the other Heads of Government or leaders of the various countries a keen desire to take a constructive attitude and come together, rather than drift apart. The problems discussed were such sensitive subjects as those of Human Rights, Southern Africa, Indian Ocean, North-South economic relationship, the problems of developing countries, in all of which there could have been valid reasons for differences of opinion. But as the result of the deliberations en-

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bodied in the communique which was issued at the end would show, all of us showed willingness to reach a consensus without sacrifice of the national viewpoints.

We participated actively in the discussions on all subjects, particularly the review of the international situation, Southern Africa and world economic problems. In the socio-economic context, we highlighted the relevance and significance of evolving and adopting technologies appropriate to the social and economic conditions obtaining in the developing countries. We emphasised that the role of machines was to assist man in increasing his productivity and not make him their slave. We pointed out that development effort and economic progress should focus on the small and the poor and not go astray by the lure of the big and the grandiose. The crucial need for solving the problems of food production, storage and distribution and implementing our integrated programme of rural development and industrialisation were effectively brought out in our statements.

The communique issued in London day-before-yesterday which must have received the attention of Honourable Members already, reflects the range of subjects and the depth of discussions, and the broad consensus reached at the conference. It covers all major international problems like Southern Africa, the Middle East, Indian Ocean, Cyprus, and the widening gap between rich, and poor nations and makes practical recommendations on economic, trade and functional cooperation within the commonwealth.

A number of Commonwealth countries were greatly concerned over the question of Human Rights in relation to Uganda. The Singapore Declaration of Principles adopted by the Commonwealth Heads of Government in 1971, affirmed the belief of all Commonwealth Government in fundamental rights and respect for human dignity and equality. As the House is only too well aware, we are fully

committed to these principles. While the discussions on this subject at the conference were not without differences of opinion, a broadly acceptable formulation was eventually worked out in keeping with the Commonwealth traditions.

It would, I think, be appropriate at this stage to pay tribute to the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat, now under the able leadership of Mr. Ramphal, formerly Foreign Minister of Guyana. Apart from the many activities of the Secretariat to maintain the diverse professional and institutional links among Commonwealth countries and its innovative role in expanding intra-Commonwealth cooperation, the Secretariat has taken very creditable initiatives in the field of economic cooperation among the Commonwealth countries. By international standards, the Commonwealth Secretariat's efforts to promote such cooperation have shown beneficial results at comparatively low cost. We in India have been glad not only to contribute to this cooperative programme, but have also benefited from it, especially in our trade promotion efforts.

Besides the deliberations of the conference, the great value of the gathering was that it provided an opportunity for informal and bilateral contacts with so many distinguished leaders of Commonwealth Governments. Apart from renewing my friendship with the British Prime Minister, Mr. Callaghan, I had purposeful discussions with the President of Bangladesh about our regional and bilateral problems. Both President Zia and I agreed that it was in our national and common interests that our relations should be built on the logic of good neighbourly cooperation. With the Canadian Prime Minister, we reviewed the problems which had come up in the way of our harmonious relations and agreed that within the framework of our respective national policies, efforts should be made so that beneficial cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of

nuclear science and technology can be resumed and the old tradition of Indo-Canadian friendship revived. The Prime Minister of Australia and I felt that from their respective geographic vantage points the Commonwealth Governments of Asia and the Pacific might with advantage establish closer contacts in a region where they share common interests. Similarly, from my conversations with President Kaunda of Zambia, Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam of Mauritius, and other leaders of African nations on the one hand and the Prime Minister of Jamaica and the leaders of the Carribean on the other, I sensed that the Commonwealth countries cherished their relationships with India and expressed a firm desire to intensify and enlarge the established avenues of our cooperation. The Foreign Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, separately met many of his colleagues, and like myself came away with the impression that every Commonwealth partner sought not merely to maintain but to strengthen its relations with the new Government of India. In his conversations he also covered many important issues concerning our bilateral relations with various Commonwealth countries.

This visit also provided me with opportunities to meet a large number of representatives of the Indian community resident in the United Kingdom and also of the world press and media. Everywhere a new kind of interest in India was now evident. Whether it was the Indian community or the media, there is a feeling of renewed faith and expectation from democratic India. In the largely attended meeting of the Indian community which was held in London on 12th June, on behalf of our people I responded with warmth to the dedicated and emotional interest which they have in the land of their birth. At the same time, I called upon them to be worthy of the traditions of this ancient land by winning respect through genuinely motivated efforts

towards social adjustmet with the people of the country of their present domicile.

Sir, this visit vividly conveyed to me that almost every country sought not only the friendship of our country, but would, I believe, rejoice at our political triumph and our economic achievements. There was no Commonwealth country which, after understanding the policies to which the present Government is pledged, looks upon India with malice or indulges in any unwarranted criticism towards our national objectives. It is recognised that the policy of true non-alignment as enunciated and practised by us not only serves our interests but makes India a coveted partner in their own network of relationships and their view of a stable world order. However, we know only too well that the role we can play in the international forums will ultimately depend on our domestic strength and the progress we make towards economic, scientific and technological self-reliance.

As mentioned earlier, I met His Imperial Majesty the Shahanshah of Iran in Tehran. During the discussions, the Foreign Minister and I had the pleasure of meeting Prime Minister Hoveyda and Foreign Minister Khalatbari. Our discussions were wide ranging in scope and gave abundant proof of Iran's goodwill and the abiding vitality and potential of our collaboration. Moreover we agreed that our countries have shared interest in the stability and progress of the region to which we both belong.

Similarly, the stopover in Paris on the way back at the request of the President of France afforded to me another opportunity to discuss a number of issues of common interest. My conversations with President Giscard d'Estaing and Prime Minister Barre were extremely friendly and reinforced the prospects of our close and beneficial relations with France.

Questions relating to the use of nuclear energy in the context of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons were

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raised with me in many conversations. I had the opportunity of re-affirming our position, which had been made clear on many occasions, both in this country and outside, that we are interested in developing nuclear energy for peaceful purposes only.

Sir, we have wider options to develop beneficial relations with the community of nations than ever in the past. In the last three months since we assumed office, within the framework of the positive thrust of non-alignment, we have assured old friends of our abiding commitments and repaired estranged relationships, both near and far. We can claim that our neighbours have greater trust in our friendship and the subcontinent as a whole is less disturbed by tensions and more inclined to cooperation. The Commonwealth Conference and this trip abroad provided me with an opportunity to affirm to the leaders from all parts of the world that this Government of India, sustained in the exhilaration of the trust of its people and inspired once again by the vision and idealism of Gandhiji, will be second to none in its commitment to a world at peace striving towards international social justice.

Altogether, this opportunity of meeting the Heads of more than thirty Commonwealth countries, the Shahanshah of Iran and the President and Prime Minister of France, proved that India commands great goodwill and respect in the international community.

12.58 hrs.

ANNOUNCEMENT RE RELINQUISHING OF OFFICE BY SHRI S. L. SHAKDHER, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF LOK SABHA AND APPOINTMENT OF SHRI AVTAR SINGH RIKHY AS SECRETARY, LOK SABHA.

MR. SPEAKER: I have to inform

the House that Shri S. L. Shakdher, Secretary-General of Lok Sabha is relinquishing his office tomorrow morning on his appointment as Chief Election Commissioner. He has been the Secretary-General of Lok Sabha for the last 13 years. He was in the Lok Sabha Secretariat as an officer of the House since 1950. His contribution in adaptation and changes in Parliamentary procedure with a view to help the efficient functioning of this House is commendable. I and my predecessors have always relied on his sound advice. His rich knowledge and wide experience in parliamentary field is symbolised by his treatise on "Practice and Procedure of Parliament", not to speak of his numerous other publications. His advice on matters of procedure was always available to Members, irrespective of their party affiliations.

Shri Shakdher is a familiar and much liked figure in the parliamentary circle the world over. He has been a member of several parliamentary delegations and has availed of every occasion to acquaint himself first-hand with the developments in parliamentary processes and procedures in different Parliaments of the world. He has been associated with international parliamentary bodies like Inter-Parliamentary Union, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, Association of Secretaries-General of Parliaments. His unanimous election in 1973 as President of the Association of Secretaries-General of Parliaments to which references were made in Lok Sabha on November, 12, 1973 is evidence of his popularity and standing among Secretaries-General of Parliaments of the world.

Shri Shakdher's appointment as Chief Election Commissioner comes as a fitting tribute to his distinguished service to the House as also the position he commands as an expert on constitutional matters and parlia-