



Friday
6th March, 1953

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE OFFICIAL REPORT

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THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(Part II—Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)
OFFICIAL REPORT

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HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE

Friday, 6th March, 1953

The House met at Two of the Clock.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair]

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(No Questions: Part I not published)

DEATH OF MARSHAL STALIN

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): Sir, I crave your indulgence at the commencement of the proceedings to refer to an event of which the House is no doubt aware. In the early hours of this morning Marshal Stalin passed away. Only two days ago, we had heard of his serious illness; only a fortnight or three weeks ago, our Ambassador in Moscow had met him and it so happened that just a few hours before the news of Marshal Stalin's serious illness came to us, I was reading a long report from our Ambassador about his interview with him. When we think of Marshal Stalin, all kinds of thoughts come to our minds, at least to my mind, and the panorama of history for the last 35 years passes before our eyes. All of us here are children of this age and have been affected by it in many ways. We have grown up not only participating in our struggles in this country but participating in another way with the mighty struggles that have taken place in this world, and been affected by them. And so looking back at these 35 years or so, many figures stand out, but perhaps no single figure has moulded and affected and influenced the history of these years more than Marshal Stalin. He became gradually almost a legendary figure, sometimes a man of mystery, at other times a person who had an intimate bond not with a few

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but with vast numbers of persons. He proved himself great in peace and in war. He showed an indomitable will and courage which few possess, but perhaps when history comes to be written many things will be said about him and I do not know what opinions, what varying opinions, subsequent generations may record, but every one will agree that here was a man of giant stature, a man such as few who had moulded the destinies of his age, a man—although he succeeded greatly in war—who ultimately would be remembered by the way he built up his great country. Again, people may agree or disagree with many things that he did or said, but the fact remains of his building up that great country, which was a tremendous achievement, and in addition to that the remarkable fact, which can be said about very, very few persons, is that he was not only famous in his generation but as I referred to, he was in a sense 'intimate', if I may say so, with vast numbers of human beings, not only the vast numbers in the Soviet Union with whom he moved in an intimate way, in a friendly way, in an almost family way, if I may say so, but many others too outside who felt that way. I have known people who were associated with Marshal Stalin, who disagreed with him subsequently or who associated themselves with the work that Marshal Stalin did and then who subsequently disagreed with him and came and told me that while they disagreed with him, they felt a personal wrench because of a personal bond that has arisen between him and them, even though they had not come near him or had only seen him from a distance. So here was this man who created in his life-time this bond of affection and admiration among vast numbers of human beings, a man who has gone through this troubled period of history. He may in the opinion of some have made mistakes or succeeded—it is immaterial. But every one must necessarily agree about his giant stature and about his mighty achieve-

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

ments. So it is right that we should pay our tribute to him on this occasion because the occasion is not merely the passing away of a great figure but perhaps in a sense also a greater change, I mean in the sense of the ending of a certain era in history. Of course, history is continuous and it is rather absurd perhaps to divide it up in periods like this as historians and others seek to do; it goes on and on. Nevertheless there are periods which seem to end and take a fresh lease of life and undoubtedly when a very great man passes away who has embodied his age to a great extent, in a certain measure, there is the end of that particular period. I do not know what the future will hold, but undoubtedly even though Marshal Stalin has passed away, because of the great hold he had on peoples' minds and even hearts, his influence and memory will continue to exercise peoples' minds and inspire them. He has been described by many persons, including some who have been his great opponents in the world stage, and those descriptions vary and sometimes are contradictory. Some of them describe him as frank and even gentle person. Others describe him as hard and ruthless, and maybe he had all these features in him. Anyhow a very great figure has passed away. He was, I believe, technically not the head of the Soviet State—we make reference to the passing of high dignitaries and especially heads of State—but Marshal Stalin was something much more than the head of a State. He was great in his own right way, whether he occupied the office or not. I believe that his influence was exercised generally in favour of peace. When war came he proved himself a very great warrior, but from all the information that we have had, his influence has been in favour of peace. Even in these present days of trouble and conflict, I earnestly hope that his passing away will not mean that that influence which was exercised in favour of peace is no longer to be availed of. Perhaps, if I may express the hope, this event may loosen all our minds a little from their rigidity in all countries, and that we may view the present problems of the world, not in that rigid way which develops, when people are continually in conflict and argument with each other, but in a

somewhat more responsive and understanding way, so that his death may serve to bring us more to think of this troubled world, and to endeavour even more than before to secure peace in this world and to prevent any further disasters and catastrophes from occurring.

In fact, when our Ambassador saw Marshal Stalin three weeks ago or so, he expressed himself to him in favour of peace and his desire that peace might not be broken in the world. He expressed then also his goodwill for India and sent his good wishes to our country and to some of us. And it was interesting how he discussed with our Ambassador some of our cultural problems, showing a certain knowledge, which was slightly surprising. He discussed—and it may interest the House—the languages of India, their relationships, their parentage, their extent, and our Ambassador gave him such replies as he could on the subject.

So, I hope, Sir, while expressing our tribute on this occasion, we may also hope that the world will be excited by this event into thinking more in terms of peace. If I may suggest it to you, Sir, perhaps this tribute and our message of condolence might be conveyed, by you, Sir, on behalf of the House to the Government of the Soviet Union. May I also suggest, Sir, that the House might adjourn in memory of Marshal Stalin?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I am sure the House will fully associate itself with all the sentiments so ably expressed by the hon. Leader of the House, in connection with the passing away of Marshal Stalin. I shall convey, on behalf of the House, to the Government of U.S.S.R. the deep feelings of regret, and the message of condolence that has been passed in this House.

I would request hon. Members to stand in their seats for a couple of minutes.

In token of the memory of Marshal Stalin, I would adjourn this House for the day. The House will meet again on Monday, the 9th of March, 1953, at 2 P.M.

The House then adjourned till Two of the Clock on Monday, the 9th March, 1953.