

LOK SABHA

Monday, November 25, 1963/Agrahayana 4, 1885 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair.]

OBITUARY REFERENCES

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs and Minister of Atomic Energy (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): Mr. Speaker, Sir, we meet here today under the shadow of shock and sorrow. To many of us it is a personal shock and grief. But the crime that has been committed was something more than a personal one. It was a crime against humanity. A man has been struck down in the prime of youth and achievement; a man of ideals, vision and courage, who sought to serve his own people as well as the larger causes of the world.

President Kennedy revived among his people the ideals enshrined in the American Constitution and in a changing world, sought to apply them to the problems of today. He endeavoured, not without success, to work for the removal of the tensions that burden and distract the world and to ensure an abiding peace. He devoted himself to the removal of injustice and inequalities among them. In his own great country, he laboured for civil liberty and worked so that Negroes might enjoy full freedom and opportunity without discrimination based on race or colour. In the wider world outside, a great part of which still suffers from poverty and lack of opportunities for growth, he threw his great energy and weight in favour of

the development of under-developed countries, so that people everywhere should have the blessings of freedom and the advantages that modern science and technology give.

Wealth and prosperity came to his own country. To these President Kennedy added a deeper human and moral outlook which embraced in its scope the peoples of the world.

To these great causes he dedicated himself, and the picture of a great President emerged which brought a measure of hope to the peoples of the world. To his high office he gave lustre and grace and people in distant parts of the world looked upon him with hope and affection. The memory of his great predecessor Abraham Lincoln, the Emancipator, was revived, and in the confusions and conflicts of the present day world came a vision of the "self-evident truths" that all men are created equal and have certain inalienable rights, and till these are fully achieved the vision of the founders of the American Republic will not be realised in its completeness.

The gracious lady, his wife, to whom our thought must turn today in deepest sympathy, came to India, we had the privilege to give her an affectionate welcome. It was our hope that President Kennedy would also pay us a visit and he had himself expressed a wish to do so. That will not take place now, and an assassin's hand has put an end to a life which had already flowered so well and which gave promise of greater achievement in the future.

A great President and a great man is dead, struck down by one of his own countrymen. We sorrow for this as indeed we must, but perhaps he

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

has served the causes he cherished by his death even as he laboured for them in his life. Let us all draw inspiration from his fragrant memory and pay our homage to it.

These words which I have said, I am sure, represent not only my sentiments but the sentiment of all the Members here and all the Parties that are represented in this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker: I associate myself completely with all the sentiments that have been expressed. It has been aptly said, I am sure, that these sentiments have been expressed on behalf of all the people of India as well as the Members of the House assembled together. As the news arrived about this assassination, of course, all of us felt shocked. Mr. Kennedy was the youngest and the first Roman Catholic President of the United States. Though originally, when he assumed office on account of his age and other factors, certain doubts were expressed, but, since the day he assumed office, he had been gaining in stature and popularity as a great leader. The world knew that he meant what he said and he said only what he meant. Mr. Kennedy was a man of fresh ideas and had the courage of his convictions to carry out those ideas into action. He was liberal-minded, with deep understanding and unusual courage. He had opened a new chapter in international relations and after his contribution to the agreement on the test ban treaty, the world tension had been lessened. There was hope and faith that something more would follow, to assure peace and prosperity for humanity. He worked for peace and freedom, helped the depressed sections and was very eager to assist the developing countries. For racial equality he worked as a missionary and he has died a martyr in that mission.

The whole world is much poorer by this loss, but India has special reasons to mourn this loss as destiny has removed from the scene a sincere friend who understood our difficulties and appreciated our aspirations. His prompt decision to rush to our aid during the crisis in 1962 and his steadfastness to stand by those convictions in spite of the hurdles would long be remembered here. The world has lost a great leader and India a sincere friend. We mourn his loss.

As a mark of respect, I would request the hon. Members to stand in silence for a minute.

The Members then stood in silence for a short while.

Mr. Speaker: I am sorry I have also inform the House of the sad demise of Shri M. S. Kannamwar, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, who passed away at Bombay on the 24th November, 1963, at the age 63. He was a Member of the Provisional Parliament during the years 1950—1952.

We deeply mourn the loss of this friend and I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolences to the bereaved family.

The House may stand in silence for a short while to express its sorrow.

The Members then stood in silence for a short while.

Mr. Speaker: As a mark of respect to the passing away, in this manner, of Mr. Kennedy, the House will now stand adjourned and meet again at 11 A.M. tomorrow.

11.10 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, November 26, 1963|Agrahayana 5, 1885 (Saka).