

LOK SABHA

Monday, April 24, 1995/ Vaisakha 4, 1917 (Saka)

(The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock)

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

MEMBER SWORN

Shri Rajesh Ranjan *alias* Pappu Yadav (Purnea)

11.02 hrs.

OBITUARY REFERENCES

DEMISE OF SHRI MORARJI DESAI, FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA AND OTHERS.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, with profound sorrow and deep regret, I have to inform the House of the sad demise of the Former Prime Minister of India, Bharat Ratna Shri Morarji Desai and two former colleagues viz. S/Shri K.V. Ramakrishna Reddy and K.K. Singh.

A committed Gandhian with an uncompromising faith in the purity of means and ends, Shri Morarji Desai was born at Bhadeli in the Bulsar District of Gujarat on 29th February, 1896. After his studies in Bombay, he joined the Provincial Service in 1918.

The call of duty to the Motherland made him quit the Service in 1930 and join the Civil Disobedience Movement. He was in the thick of the freedom struggle all through and was imprisoned twice during 1930-34 and again during 1940-41 and 1942-45.

Shri Desai's legislative career began in 1937 when he became a Member of the then Bombay Legislative Assembly and he continued in that capacity till 1939. He had another prolonged tenure in the Assembly during 1946-56.

During the period 1937-39 and 1946-52, he served as Minister in the Bombay State. He was Chief Minister of Bombay from 1952 to 1956. As Minister and later as Chief Minister, he contributed substantially towards the toning up of the administration of the State.

Recognising his administrative acumen, Shri Desai was then invited to join the Union Government. During the next two decades and more, he remained a central figure in national politics, occupying high positions.

Shri Desai was elected to the Second Lok Sabha in 1957 and remained a member of the House till 1979. During his long innings in national life, he held key portfolios in the Union Cabinet, including Finance, Commerce, Industry, Shipping and Transport and Home Affairs. He was Deputy Prime Minister from 1967 to 1969. Shri Desai became the Prime Minister of India in 1977 and served the country till 1979.

Shri Desai was endowed with an indomitable will and tried to consolidate the freedom of India. His administrative astuteness was recognised and appreciated by one and all. Shri Desai's seminal contribution as the Chairman of the Administrative Reforms Commission won him encomiums and accolades. His parliamentary career was equally remarkable and in the highest traditions of parliamentary democracy.

A widely travelled person, Shri Desai attended many international conferences, including the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit and espoused the nation's cause. Shri Desai deeply cherished and ably nourished India's rich and diverse cultural heritage. He had an abiding interest in the field of education, agriculture and cooperatives. His literary achievements include *Discourses on the Gita*, *The Story of My Life* and *A Book on Nature Cure*.

Shri Desai championed the cause of adult literacy and inculcation of finer values in the educational system. He was associated with the Gujarat Vidyapeeth and remained its Chancellor till the very end. He was also President of the Lok Bharati Rural University of Gujarat, Bharatiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh, Rajgir Buddha Vihar Society, Akhil Bharatiya Prakritik Chikitsa Parishad, Hindustani Prachar Sabha and various other organisations. He was conferred Honorary Degrees by several prominent Universities and Institutions.

Shri Desai also served on the Executive Boards of several Trusts, including the Navajivan Trust and the Trusts in the name of Mahatma Gandhi, Kasturba Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, Pandit Gobind Ballabh Pant and Maulana Azad.

Shri Desai strove hard to lead by example. A devoted Gandhian, he led a simple and virtuous life.

Shri Morarji Desai passed away on 10th April 1995 following a brief illness. In his death, the nation has lost a great patriotic leader, a fine human being and a vital link with the Gandhian era.

Shri Desai is no more with us, but his qualities will continue to lead us on our path towards the goals of our duties, in the years to come.

Shri K.V. Ramakrishna Reddy was a Member of Second and Third Lok Sabha representing Hindupur Parliamentary constituency of Andhra Pradesh. An active political worker, he suffered imprisonment in 1941 for staging Satyagraha. In 1942, he gave up his legal profession as a protest against the incarceration of national leaders.

An agriculturist, he was closely associated with many organisations connected with development of agriculture. He also took active interest in promoting adult education among the rural people by conducting classes at many places in his State.

Shri Reddy authored two publications in Telugu namely *Youth League Movement* and *Kisan Mazdoor Raj*.

Shri Reddy passed away on 27th March 1995 at Kadiiri in Anantpur District of Andhra Pradesh at the age of 88 years.

Shri K.K. Singh was a Member of Third Lok Sabha during 1962-67 representing Maharajganj Parliamentary constituency of Bihar. Earlier, he had been a Member of Bihar Legislative Assembly during 1952-62 and also served as the Deputy Minister of Education from 1957-61 in the State Government of Bihar.

An agriculturist by profession, he also worked as a journalist. An active social worker, he was closely associated with Bharat Sevak Samaj. He was the President of the governing bodies of several colleges and was associated with many educational and cultural institutions. He also served as Member of Senates of Bihar University and of Patna University.

Shri Singh passed away on 1st April, 1995 at Goreakothi, Maharajganj District at the age of 76 years.

We deeply mourn the loss of these friends and I am sure the House will join me in conveying our condolences to the bereaved families.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is with a heavy heart that I rise to pay my respectful homage to one of the devoted disciples of Mahatma Gandhi, freedom fighter, able administrator and a great son of India, Shri Morarji Desai, former Prime Minister of India. In him, we have lost one of the stalwarts of the Gandhian era.

We are all very sad that only next February we were preparing to celebrate his hundredth birthday. Only recently I had gone to wish him and to inform him about the celebrations, which he had consented to with great reluctance. Even at that time he was fully alert and remembered the days of the freedom movement, Bapuji, Sardar Patel, Nehruji and his experiences in life. Within that short time that I was with him, he enlightened me and those who were present there on all these matters. In his long life he went through many ups and downs. While I was talking to him I felt that I was talking to a *sthitapragya*, who accepted life as God has ordained.

Morarjibhai faced hardships early in his life since he lost his father when he was in his teens. The early struggles and Spartan upbringings helped him in standing up to adversity for his principles. Earning many scholarships, he entered the Provincial Civil Service. He soon realised that he could not follow his principles and at the same time serve the British Government. He soon came under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi and decided to resign from the service. He became an ardent disciple of Bapu and joined the freedom struggle and spent several years in jail leaving a promising career of the Civil Service. He truly inculcated the ideals of Bapu and tried to strictly adhere to them in letter and spirit throughout his life.

All through his life, he remained steadfast on his principles. He was never willing to compromise his principles and beliefs for expediency. In service, he incurred the displeasure of his superiors and in life, he was willing to stand up even alone for his principles. He was always forthright and straight and would never hesitate to speak the truth even if it were bitter.

Shri Morarjibhai had great faith in the Indian democracy. He stood for the unity of India and in various capacities as the Chief Minister of Bombay, as Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, as Union Finance Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and finally as Prime Minister, he always worked towards strengthening this unity. His in-depth Report on Administrative Reforms reflects his deep commitment in improving the quality of governance of the country.

Shri Morarji was a great nationalist and a strong supporter of education based on our cultural heritage. He was closely associated with the Gujarat Vidyapeeth and Lok Bharati Rural University in Gujarat. He was also associated with a large number of social, cultural and philanthropic societies and trusts, which was a major source of inspiration for all of them.

Sir, we will not be able to celebrate the occasion of his hundred years as we wanted to. But there are certain decisions taken by the Committee which was appointed in this connection and I would like to inform the House that some of the decisions, we would still go along with and implement. First one is the establishment of the Morarji Desai Institute of Gandhian Studies and the second one is Morarji Desai Institute of Naturopathy and Indian Medicine. Apart from these two, we will see how many more we can implement but these two come uppermost in my mind. So I am placing them before the House.

I am also grieved at the demise of Shri K.V. Ramakrishna Reddy. He is no longer with us. He was a valued colleague who worked relentlessly to promote education amongst the rural folks. He was deeply committed to the upliftment of the farmers and implementation of the Panchayati Raj.

I would also like to pay my condolences on the passing away of Shri K.K. Singh, Member, Third Lok Sabha. Shri Singh took a keen interest in the field of education and was also associated with many cultural organizations and institutions.

I wish to place on record the deep sense of personal loss and grief felt by the nation and by all of us on the death of these illustrious Members. May their souls rest in peace.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Lucknow) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the vedic desire of Shri Morarji Desai living hundred autums seemed to be fulfilled but he could not complete the century of his life. All of a sudden

the death snatched him away forever. When we were celebrating his 99th birthday it seems that, at that time he was afflicted by an evil eye. Otherwise, he could have lived a few month's more.

With the sad demise of Shri Morarji Desai, an epoch has come to an end. A potential personality linking the past with the present is no more among us. The life of a century in a way, was itself a history of modern India. This period was full of freedom struggle. There was the joy of achieving independence, sufferings in prisons, the agony of partition and the challenge to march ahead on the path of progress by knitting together a disintegrated nation. The contemporary leaders tried their best to discharge their individual duties properly during this period. Shri Morarjibhai was also one of them. He had a magnetic personality. He had certain characteristics in his nature which sometimes reflected wrong impression about his personality in the minds of those who could not understand him well. He was steadfast on his concepts. Sometimes it seemed as if this steadfastness is taking the form of obstinacy. Perhaps, its reason was that morality was deep-rooted in his heart. He had strong faith in God and the outcome of one's deeds. Morarjibhai seemed to believe in the theory of discharging one's duty and accepting the reward as its natural outcome. He adorned various offices and discharged his responsibilities diligently. He had the privilege to become the Prime Minister of India. I was a witness to that day when he assumed the office of Prime Minister and also when he stepped down from this post. He had no doubt, made successful attempt to control his sentiments. He was never drifted by the passion of triumph. While relinquishing his office, he did not seem to be filled with grief. His endeavours to improve relations with neighbouring countries had fructified that time. He was an the lone political leader who was conferred with highest civilian award both from India and Pakistan. He was an outspoken person. I had differences with him on various important issues. For instance, he did not like liberation of Goa through army. He was also critical of the manner in which Sikkim was annexed with India. But we differed with him. We asserted that the annexation of Sikkim was a right step, otherwise, Sikkim would become a den of conspiracy. So, its annexation was very desirable. But Morarjibhai was not convinced. There were similar other issues also. Due to lack of time, I do not want to go into those details. But, he used to express his opinion in a very authentic manner. Once a decision was taken, he used to abide by that. He himself was a disciplinarian and expected others also to be in strict discipline. I observed that as a Prime Minister whenever we sought an appointment with him, he never kept us waiting. In peculiar circumstances, he kept us waiting not more than five, ten or fifteen minutes. When asked to reveal the secret of it, he replied that he wakes up very early in the morning and disposes of all the files then. Thereafter, he is available for meeting his visitors, He had wide contacts with the people. His death has no doubt caused an irreparable loss in public life. I also

express my condolence over the death of our other hon. colleagues Shri Reddy and Shri Singh. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I associate myself and my party with the views expressed by yourself the hon. Prime Minister and other hon. colleagues on the death of our colleagues. I pray to God that the departed soul may rest in peace. Kindly convey our condolence messages to the bereaved families.

SHRI SHARAD YADAV (Madhepura) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the late Shri Morarjibhai Desai was the pride of the politicians of today in the country. The people of our country remember late Morarji Desai with great respect and reverence.

As we had been a witnesses to his life. He had extraordinary boldness. He had the capacity and strength to endure even peculiar sufferings for his principles. His insistence throughout his life for following ideals of Mahatma Gandhi even in limited numbers was unparalleled. He had raised very limited issues. His insistence on national language, handicrafts, prohibition and naturopathy manifested the ideals of his life.

I did not find such a disciplined person in my life. He was not only disciplined in his public life but was psychologically strong too. His inner discipline was par-excellence. When I was young and used to come to Lok Sabha, I saw him sitting for years on back benches. By his active personality one could never guess that he was so old. He never hankered for publicity as is seen these days. There was hardly any other person who was criticised so much. But I never found Shri Morarji Desai becoming nervous by such criticism. Even after seeing his life for years, I was also under the impression that he was a very strict person and not a good person. But whenever I met him, he used to advise me not to lose temper and what I was thinking was not correct. He further advised that one should speak about others only after serious thinking.

Mr Speaker, Sir, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee has seen Shri Desai very closely. But the persons like me have seen him so closely. I have not seen such a miraculou courage anywhere in the country or the world which he showed during the plane-crash. Had the plane crashed to ground nobody would have survived. The pilots were experienced ones and they discharged their duties diligently. Shri Desai came out of the crashed plane unnerved and the very next day, he started attending to his office work.

After being elected first time, when I went to meet him, he did not talk to me. He did not pay attention to what I was speaking. After 10-20 minutes when I was about to move, he told me to remember one thing in life that one should maintain reputation in politics and have patience. I think that I had no contacts with the big people but I had a very limited contact with Morarji Bhai. Even after having held such a big post, he lived in a rented flat in Bombay and later on shifted to a Government accommodation. He proved the saying of

Kabir "Das Kabir Jatan Se Odhi Jas Ki Tas Rakh Dini Chadaria" i.e. the human body should be devoted to the service of humanity and it should be speckless. I know that many controversies were raised against him but his life remained speckless. His public life and political life is a matter of pride for us. His name enhances our reputation and respect. He died at a ripe age. As the hon. Prime Minister and Atal ji have said and I too feel that it had been better if we would have celebrated his 100th birthday. The country would have also rejoiced over it and felt satisfied. But we have lost that opportunity. He had strengthened his conduct in his long inning. We learn this lesson from his life that the health is the divine blessing. The politicians earn criticism in various ways in the country. He too was criticised but when we remember, we realise it.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I myself also on behalf of my party pay tribute to him. I would like to submit one thing that for a man like him there should not be any controversy over construction of a memorial, as such a controversy will prick the heart. I would not like to speak much on it.

I myself and on behalf of my party also pay tributes to the late Shri Reddy and Shri K.K. Singh.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of my party and myself I express our deep sorrow at the passing away of our former Prime Minister, Shri Morarjibhai Desai and our colleagues, Shri K.V. Ramakrishna Reddy and Shri K.K. Singh.

Sir, I associate myself with whatever has been said in this House. Shri Morarjibhai Desai was a statesman and he made significant contributions to our freedom movement. He had acquired vast experience as a legislator, as a Chief Minister, as a Central Minister and also as Prime Minister. Whatever office he held, he discharged his duties and functions with great ability and distinction. He is known for his great administrative ability. His report as the Chairman of the Administrative Reforms Commission has been a signal contribution towards bringing about administrative reforms in this country. Whatever we have seen him, we have seen him to be a man of simple living and of high principles. He used to say and he said very clearly what he believed to be correct, whether the issue was popular or not.

Sir, I know it is very difficult to fill up the void that is created at the passing away of our distinguished leaders like Shri Morarjibhai Desai and as such we are extremely sorry. Shall I request you, Sir, to convey to the members of the bereaved families our sincere sense of sorrow?

I pay our respects to the memory of Shri Morarji Desai and other friends and I hope you will convey the same to the members of the bereaved families.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Midnapore) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, though I remember Shri Morarji Desai very vividly and clearly in this House, but I too knew him for a relatively short period of time and my personal contacts with him were not very deep or intimate because, apart from political differences, there was a vast difference in our ages and I did not expect a person of his eminence or his seniority to bother about junior Members at that time. But I must say—I agree with Shri Vajpayee—that on some occasions when it was necessary to meet him in his room when he was Prime Minister, there was never any difficulty in meeting him at all. His table was always clear. I remember very clearly that the table at which he was sitting, hardly had any paper on it at all. He had organised his routine and his life in such a disciplined way that he could dispose of all his paper work and be free to meet people who wanted to meet him.

He was one of the titans, I should say, of post-independent India, an outstanding statesman. About his administrative abilities, even his worst political opponent cannot say anything but praise. He used to be very forthright, outspoken, standing firmly on his principles with which everybody did not always agree. He was a man whose convictions led him to uphold his principles without any kind of hesitation.

I am told - and now that is very important for us in these days when, unfortunately, in our public life very undesirable things are happening including charges of corruption and so on in high places - that such charges, as far as I can recall, were never brought against him, nor were the charges possible to be brought against him. He was so outspoken and transparent in his behaviour and in his activity. Those who had served as Ministers under him when he was the Prime Minister, I have heard some of them saying that one of his greatest qualities was that he never interfered in the functioning and the working of the Ministers under him. He never interfered in the jobs which were assigned to them.

Sir, once he told me that he never tasted a cup of tea in his life and never tasted a cup of coffee. He was a man who also could indulge in some amount of light-hearted jocularities. I should say, with people much younger than him. Once - I forget the occasion - he said: "You are not a vegetarian, I suppose." I said: "No, Sir." Then he said: "You come to my house one day. I will give you such vegetarian food that you will never believe that it is vegetarian." He invited me to come and have dinner with him in his house. Then I was the only guest and there was nobody else. Then, he said: "This food which you see is the food I served to Khrushchev and Bulganin when they came here on their visit and they could not believe either that it was vegetarian food." He had a special cook who knew how to make these dishes so tasty and delicious.

Anyway, Sir, I would have been happy if he had completed a century of his life. It would have been a

record of its own kind and gone down in the annals of our public history. But that was not to be unfortunately, though he came very close to it with all possible honours that a man could achieve in his public life. He was a man of strict principles, as I have said, of Gandhian standards and norms which he adhered to.

I must say that we had differences with him politically, of course. I am reminded particularly of the days when the agitation was going on for the linguistic State of Maharashtra. He was in charge of the affairs in Bombay and that was his prerogative either to be in favour of or opposed to a particular demand or agitation. But anyway, he never hid his feelings or ideas. He stood by them firmly and, I think, such men are very rare now-a-days. We do not get such transparent political leaders now-a-days as he was, whether you agree with all his views or not. Therefore, I am really sorry today that he has passed away. On behalf of my party and myself I convey my sincere sorrow and condolences to his large family.

We saw from the photographs after his death that he had a large family. He had a large number of grand children and, perhaps, great grand children and he, in his old days, seemed to be very much devoted to them and they were very affectionately disposed towards him. It was very touchy to see those photographs of the family together.

Sir, two other friends of ours have departed, Mr. Reddy and Mr. K.K. Singh. I take this opportunity to pay my condolences to them also. I request you to convey our feelings to the bereaved families.

[Translation]

SHRI CHANDRA JEET YADAV (Azamgarh) : Mr. Speaker Sir, the death of the former Prime Minister has created a vacuum in our national life. He was really a man of propriety. When he decided to leave the foreign job and plunge in the freedom struggle, he made the aim of his life clear in two sentences. He had said, "I will not do anything to earn money. Whatever dis-service or disrespect I have done to the nation by serving in the foreign Government service I will repent on it in the remaining part of my life by doing public service and the service of the nation. I will not do anything for self interest." With these two sentences he guided those persons who are in public life. Morarji Bhai lived a life based on belief, self control and discipline. Out spokenness and truth were the aims of his life.

I was close to him and on many occasions, I had got opportunities to discuss with him many issues. I will not like to discuss them here. I am citing two examples only. At that time, we were launching a movement to bring an end to the privy-purse system and nationalisation of banks. In that connection we had gone to meet him. Shri Chandra Shekhar and Shri Mohan Dharia were also with us. After listening to us

continuously for an hour, he said only two things—nationalisation of banks is not going to benefit the economy of the country. It will create problems. As far as abolishing privy-purse of the kings was concerned, we should not backtrack from the promise made to them and implement it on moral grounds. We were not in agreement with him, but he completed his views in just two sentences.

Just now, Indrajeet ji has said that when he was the Prime Minister he did not like interference in any department. However, he did not like interference of anyone in his own department also. I remember that once a youth delegation was going to take part in an international conference in Moscow and for this purpose a chartered plane was hired. He refused for it by saying that when there is a shortage of foreign exchange in our country, there is no need at all to take such a big delegation by a chartered plane. The youth delegation met me. On behalf of them, I went to meet the then Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi and asked her to intervene in this matter, since the youth have made all the preparations and the cancellation of their programme at this juncture will not have good impact. Indira ji said that I should myself go and talk to him. When I went to meet him on her advice he reiterated two things. He said that there was no need at all to take such a large delegation but when you have come to me to make the request, I give the permission. It showed his magnanimity, greatness, love and respect for the people. Today he is not among us. The country, and particularly those people who are in public life should follow his ideals.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I associate myself and my party with the views expressed by you and the hon. Prime Minister. I am happy that the hon. Prime Minister has made a declaration of two big memorials, in which he had deep faith. It will be a good memorial and will benefit the country.

Shri K.V. Ramkrishana Reddy and Shri K.K. Singh, the two senior social workers and the hon. Members, have also passed away. I request you to kindly convey our condolences to the members of the bereaved families.

[English]

SHRI P.G. NARAYANAN (Gobichettipalayam) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the death of the former Prime Minister Shri Morarji Desai is a great loss to the country. He lived for hundred years as a disciplinarian and as a person who was very strict and steadfast to his principles. His life is an example and a source of inspiration for the younger generation. As a champion of the Gandhian principles, his valuable contribution in building a self-reliant nation is significant and unique. His dedicated service and sacrifice in the freedom struggle is also remarkable. In a nutshell, the life of Shri Morarji Desai is an embodiment of higher values. In his death, our nation has lost a great patriot and a selfless leader.

The service and contribution rendered by the other two former Member will also be remembered.

On behalf of AIADMK, I convey my condolence to the bereaved family.

SHRI SOBHANADREESWARA RAO VADDE (Vijayawada) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of the Telugu Desam Party, I wish to convey deep condolences over the death of Shri Morarji bhai Desai. The country has suffered a great loss in his death. As a person known for his outspokenness and administrative capabilities and courage and conviction, Mr. Speaker, Sir, he will be remembered for many decades to come by the people of this country. While he was the Prime Minister for a short term, he was able to contain the price rise during which period the common people of this country were able to receive the essential commodities at a very fair price. Sir, he was also the person who had restored democracy immediately after the end of emergency during which period several Constitutional amendments and laws were changed because of which the democratic spirit had suffered a temporary set back.

Shri Ramakrishna Reddy, a veteran leader from Rayalaseema, was a follower of Prof. N.G. Ranga, the great Kisan leader. During his tenure, he had done certain things in the drought-prone, backward Anantapur District and Rayalaseema in general.

On behalf of myself and on behalf of the Telugu Desam Party, I request you to convey our deep condolences to the members of the bereaved family. And I would appeal to the hon. Prime Minister to take necessary steps to instal the statue of Morarji bhai Desai in the Parliament House premises.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI LOVELY ANAND (Vaishali) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the whole country has suffered a tragic loss in the death of our former Prime Minister and a great freedom fighter, Shri Morarji Desai. This is an irreparable loss to the nation. He never compromised with his principles throughout his life. He symbolised simplicity and good moral character. He would always be a role model for the new generation in today's political scenario of chicanery, corruption and manoeuvre. He was the only Indian leader who had been awarded both Bharat Ratna and Shan-e-Pakistan. He was a true Gandhian. At the same time he was the only Prime Minister whose last rites were performed out of Delhi. So, I would like to say that his human-size statue should be installed at a proper place somewhere in Delhi and his portrait should be hung in the Central Hall to respect the feelings of crores of people who loved him.

Late Shri Morarji Bhai Desai strongly vouched for naturopathy. He called it the secret of his long life. It would be a real tribute to him if the Government promoted naturopathy and provided inexpensive medical facility to the poor people. On behalf of myself and my party, I express grief on his death. May God rest his soul in peace.

[English]

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I join you, the Leader of the House and the other distinguished colleagues in expressing my deep sense of sorrow, grief and agony on the sad demise of Shri Morarji bhai Desai, the former Prime Minister of our country.

Sir, as you know, Shri Morarji bhai Desai led a meaningful, a purposeful, a simple, a transparent and a value-based life. His was a life dedicated to the cause of serving the humanity. He was a true Gandhiite. He was an embodiment of Gandhiite values and ideals and he had a sense of ambition of life. He was an outstanding, a forthright person in expressing his views and opinion in all circumstances. He did not hesitate to give his views even at the risk of incurring displeasures from his very close colleagues, even in his party hierarchy. He could not be deflected from his duty by any lure of office or position in political life. Morarji bhai Desai remained Morarji bhai Desai, a man, a Gandhian in the Office and outside the Office. The Nation will do well, at this time of crisis, in emulating the precepts and practices of the late Shri Morarji bhai Desai.

Sir, I join you in expressing my condolences to the near and dear ones and the members of the family of the late Shri Morarji bhai Desai. On this occasion, I also pay my respectful homage to his memory.

Along with this, I also express my condolences on the demise of the two other distinguished Members of this House—Shri K.V. Ramakrishna Reddy and Shri K.K. Singh.

[Translation]

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (Bombay South Central) : Shri Morarji Desai is no more amongst us. His wish to live for hundred years could not be fulfilled. He had a tremendous will power and he never compromised with facts. On behalf of Shiv Sena I pay tribute to this respected freedom fighter. At the same time I would like to say that it is a tradition of our country that when a big personality passes away, our normal life in a way comes to a standstill for a couple of days. The same thing happened when Shri Morarji Desai passed away. But does it rest his soul in peace? We should think about that. I submit to the hon. Prime Minister and the August House to consider it.

SHRI PIUS TIRKEY (Alipurduars) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Morarji Bhai is no more amongst us but the works undertaken by him would always be remembered. He created a history of a kind. He lived a unique life and had an equally unique character and way of doing things.

12.00 hrs.

I remember when I had been elected in 1977 to this House for the first time, he was then the Prime Minister. He used to invite us quite frequently to discuss the problems facing our country. Despite being a great man

himself, he would be always willing to have discussions with us. We also used to have long talks with him.

On behalf of my party RSP, I join you, the Hon. Prime Minister and others in paying tribute to him and hope that our condolences would be conveyed to his family.

[English]

SHRI E. AHAMED (MANJERI) : Sir, on behalf of my Party, the Indian Union Muslim League, I associate myself with the sentiments expressed by you, the hon. Prime Minister and the distinguished leaders.

SHRI MORARJIBHAI DESAI was a towering personality in Indian politics over the years. And even those who may not agree with many of his views, would agree with him on certain points - with his strong moral fabric, his stand on prohibition, his Gandhian philosophy on which he had unflinching faith. And whatever he said, he was trying to implement that in his life.

SHRI MORARJIBHAI DESAI will be remembered by future generations for his spirit of patriotism and nationalism that he has inculcated in the minds of people of this county.

Sir, on behalf of my party the Indian Union Muslim League, I once again join you in conveying our grief and condolences to the bereaved family of Shri Morarji Desai and other distinguished Members who left us in the recent past.

[Translation]

SHRI RAMSAGAR (Barabanki) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, whatever, the former Prime Minister late Shri Morarji Desai did for the freedom of our country and all he did for the people of this country as the Prime Minister, is commendable. He lived a simple life with high morals. He managed to live a long life without being riddled with diseases. He carved a place for himself in the hearts of the people of our country and become popular. On behalf of my party and myself, I join the hon. Prime Minister, the leader of the opposition and leaders of all other parties in expressing my sorrow on his demise.

Sir, I request you to convey our condolences to the bereaved family.

[English]

SHRI INDER JIT (Darjeeling) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am grateful to you for giving me a chance to join the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and other friends in paying my respectful homage to Shri Morarjibhai. It was my privilege to have known him closely for 42 years and enjoyed his affection.

I first met him when he was the Chief Minister of Bombay, way back in 1953 when I was introduced to him by my late father. From that day onwards, as I have said, I had close association with him and I found him standing up very firmly in regard to basic principles. As

you were good enough to point out and as also mentioned by the Leader of the House, he stood for purity of means and ends in his case never justified the means.

He also put the country before self and was ruthless in this manner. I recall the fateful day of 1979 when he lost his majority. I was with him early in the morning that day I was again with him in the afternoon and later in the evening. I remember vividly how several friends came to him and told him about the various devices and various ways in which he could continue to be the Prime Minister of this country.

He was urged by several people to pay the "price" by calling certain leaders and persuading them to support him. He was firm. He said that he was not going to compromise with his basic principles and he refused to do so. I was there with him when he called Tonpe his trusted lieutenant and said, "Go along and draft the letter." And the letter was brought about half an hour later, which he signed notwithstanding the strong feelings and urges of several Members around him, who still thought that he could continue as the Prime Minister, if only he was prepared to compromise with his principles.

Sir, he never indulged in double talk or deception. He said what he meant, and he meant what he said. Institutions were infinitely more important for him than any individual. That was very important. As you pointed out, he was very very keen to tone up the administration as the Chairman of the Administrative Reforms Commission. He made various recommendations, and I am very pleased to recall that he particularly implemented, as Prime Minister, the recommendation in regard to giving a fixed tenure to the Cabinet Secretary's post. He believed that the Civil Services had to function impartially and independently. He felt that the Cabinet Secretary, as the head of the Civil Service, must have a fixed tenure. As a journalist I asked him in reasons. He turned around and said "I want the Civil Services to be independent, If at any point of time, there is a clash or disagreement between the Cabinet Secretary in terms of upholding the finest tradition of the Civil Services and the Prime Minister, the Cabinet Secretary would then have the right to turn in his papers. The country would then have the right to know as to why the Cabinet Secretary had resigned. Thus he stood strongly for strengthening institutions and particularly, the administration.

Sir, he had a stern exterior. But inside, he was a warm and affectionate individual. An impression had gone around that he was anti-Press; that he was against the freedom of the Press; and that he wanted to dictate things to the Press. That was not true at all. I remember one particular incident. In 1977, he and Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who was then the Foreign Minister, did me the great honour of nominating me as a Member of the Indian Delegation to the United Nations General

Assembly. I called on him and said that he had done me great honour indeed. But I was not sure whether I should accept the great honour because as an independent journalist I did not want to compromise my independence. Any other Prime Minister, any other individual would have been angry. But he turned around, smiled and said, "Yes I want you to ensure and uphold your independence. I am sending you as a Member of the Delegation because this is a national delegation. I want you to go along in this Delegation. If you have any conscientious objection, I give you the right to disagree and uphold and assert your conscience."

I will not take more time of this House. But I will end by saying that the greatest tribute we all can pay to Morarjibhai is to uphold the Gandhian values for which he lived and died. These are the values which our India today needs more than ever before.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha) : On behalf of my party, I join all the hon. Members and the Leaders who have expressed sorrow on the death of Morarjibhai. He was a man of great conviction and true spirit of honesty and he was an able administrator. He was a good parliamentarian and he was able to face problems with a sense of stern mind and he succeeded in his life as a politician, as a social worker and as a person who had led the nation when India was going through very difficult period. I express my sorrow and deep sense of grief on his death.

I also join my friends in expressing sorrow on the death of other two hon. Members who have passed away recently.

MR. SPEAKER : The House may stand in silence for a short while as a mark of respect to the deceased.

12.08 hrs.

The Members then stood in silence for a short while

MR. SPEAKER : The House stands adjourned to meet again tomorrow, the 25th of April, 1995 at 11.00 a.m.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Deep Sea Fishing Policy

*281. SHRI SHIVLAL NAGJIBHAI VEKARIA :
SHRI HARISH NARAYAN PRABHU ZANTYE:

Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state :

(a) the total catch declared by the chartered and leased deep sea fishing vessel operators during 1993-94 and 1994-95;

(b) the share of Union Government on aid operation in terms of tonnage and value;

(c) whether large scale fish catch by foreign vessels has been reported;

(d) if so, the action taken thereon;

(e) whether there have been persistent representations to the Government against the policy of deep sea fishing by chartered and foreign vessels; and

(f) if so, the details of the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI TARUN GOGOI) : (a) The total catch declared by the chartered vessels and leased deep sea fishing vessels operators during 1993-94 and 1994-95 (tentative) was 8919 tonnes and 8550 tonnes respectively.

(b) Chartering and leasing of deep sea fishing vessels are allowed to Indian companies and there is no share of the Government of India in such operations. However, licence fee at the rate of Rs. 10,000/- per vessel per annum for charter and Rs. 25,000/- per vessel per annum for lease is paid by the Indian companies. Moreover, export cess at the rate of 1% of the total catch value is also paid by them.

(c) and (d). As against the total marine fish production of 26.88 lakh tonnes during 1993-94, the catch of leased and chartered fishing vessels was only 8919 tonnes which formed only 0.34% of the total catch.

(e) and (f). Representations have been received from some State Governments and Associations of fishermen in various Maritime States, and others against the Deep Sea Fishing Policy. The matter has been reviewed recently in consultation with the State Governments and through appointment of an Expert Committee for indepth study of the situation. However, no adverse impact of the operation of deep sea fishing vessels on coastal fishing was established. On the other hand, it was found that unchecked and unregulated increase in the coastal fishing effort had led to the increased competition between traditional fishing boats and mechanised fishing vessels for targetting a finite resource. However, in view of the persistent demand made by the State Government, Members of Parliament and the fishermen, it has been decided that no more applications for deep sea fishing will be processed till the entire matter is reviewed. Accordingly, the Government has constituted a Review Committee under the chairmanship of Shri P. Murari, former Secretary to the Government of India.

Privatisation of Transportation Sector

*282. SHRI CHITTA BASU : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

(a) whether decision has already been taken to allow private investments in ports, highways, ship