

[Shri Era Mohan]

empowered to apply this law as they like. I would like to know whether all the State Governments have used this law judiciously. You know that in Tamil Nadu there is AIADMK Government. This State Government is using this law to understand the political moves of the Opposition parties and the political programme of activities of the Opposition parties. This law is not being applied against smugglers and hoarders or against anti-national elements and anti-social elements. The telephones of Indira Party M.Ps. from Tamil Nadu are being tapped by the State Government. The telephones of D.M.K. Members of Parliament and also the telephones of high dignitaries in the D.M.K. are being tapped and tapped. Their mails are censored. For example, the telephone of a senior Indira Party M.P., Shri K. T. Kosalram, who is here just now, is being tapped by the AIADMK Government. His mail is censored and his telegrams are intercepted. You can imagine the extent to which this law can be utilised to serve the interests of the ruling party. The hon. Members of the ruling party should ponder over this problem because they may be in the Opposition at some future date. The hon. Minister should bestow his personal attention on this important issue. This Act is being used to undermine the democratic ethics which we have established over the years. It is being used to blackmail the Opposition.

It is not only that the Opposition Party members have become the victims of this vicious law. The Press has also been subjected to the oppressive provisions of this law. If the newspapers publish anything that discredits the ruling party either in the Centre or in the State immediately the telephones of the newspapers are tapped; their mail is censored and

their telegrams are censored. For example in Tamil Nadu, the telephones of Murosoli, and Ethiroli which are popular Tamil dailies, are being regularly tapped. Their mails are censored and their telegrams are intercepted. The Central Government should ensure that this Act is not a potent instrument to suppress Opposition Parties and the Press in the country.

17.55 hrs.

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

In Tiruchendur a murder has been committed and the murderers are scot-free. Their telephones are not being tapped or taped. But the telephone of our illustrious leader Dr. Kalaignar Karunanidhi who is on a long march of 130 miles demanding justice to the dependents of the victim and punishment to the murderers and the marauders of temple funds, is being tapped and taped. This sucocating and vicious grip of this Act should not breathe out the soul of Opposition in a big democracy like ours. The hon. Minister of Communication should realise these dangerous portends and accept this amending bill for nurturing democracy in our country. With these words I conclude my speech.

17.59 hrs.

ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES PRICE FIXATION BILL*

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: (Tumkur): I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to provide for the fixation on a permanent basis the prices of essential commodities.

(Interruptions)

AN HON. MEMBER: He was absent at that time.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE

(Rajapur): He was not only absent-minded, but he was absent also.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: I was in the other meeting. I can understand absent-minded Professors. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: The question is:

'That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to provide for the fixation on a permanent basis the prices of essential commodities.'

The motion was adopted.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: Also to introduce the Bill.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY (Calcutta South): He has been busy outside the House.

MR. SPEAKER: He was busy this morning also along with you.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA: I introduce the Bill.

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18 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. SUCCESSFUL LANDING OF THE FIRST INDIAN SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION TO ANTARCTICA

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI-MATI INDIRA GANDHI): I have immense pleasure in informing the House of the successful landing of our first Indian scientific expedition to Antarctica a 00.30 hrs. on the 9th January, 1982. Twenty-one scientists and technicians, drawn from different disciplines, participated.

The main objectives were to study the meteorological and other conditions of Antarctica, which are believed to control the monsoons. The team also carried out observations in glaciology, geo-magnetism, geology, and physical, chemical and biological oceanography. Their observations in-

cluded measurements of temperature, pressure, wind speed, humidity, surface ozone, could visibility, radiation, radio wave propagation etc., on the way out to Antarctica, on the continent itself and on the return journey.

Glaciology, geology and physical, chemical and biological conditions were observed on the Antarctic land mass. Some rock samples, which appeared to be similar to rocks found in the Deccan, were also collected. However, detailed analysis will be needed to establish whether the Deccan and Antarctica were joined together at any time.

The expedition team set up an unmanned weather station to collect meteorological data in Antarctica. Power is supplied to the station by solar panels fabricated in India. The continuous record on the cassette can be retrieved at the end of the year and replaced for further recording. The site of the station has been named 'Dakshin Gangotri' and a brass plaque commemorating the expedition has been put up.

The team successfully tested the quality and performance of Indian equipment and materials such as like watches, walkie-talkie sets, cement, dehydrated food, batteries and nylon ropes in subzero temperature conditions. The team spent about 11 days on the continent. The leader is back and the rest of the team is expected to return to Goa on or around the 20th of February, 1982.

The successful landing of the expedition on Antarctica is one more proof, if such be needed, that Indian scientists and technologists have the capability to undertake the most hazardous and complex tasks. I am sure Hon'ble Members will wish me to convey their congratulations to the entire team. We also acknowledge with appreciation the valuable supporting services provided by the Indian Navy. When the data are