

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय (देवास) :
चुनाव जीतने में ?

श्रीमती सहोदराबाई राय : इस बिल की सपोर्ट तो मैं जरूर करती हूँ, लेकिन विरोध भी करती हूँ, क्योंकि जनता को और देहात की महिलाओं को भी बड़ी तकलीफ है और सोने के घंघे में लगे लोगों को भी बड़ी तकलीफ है। सुनार लोग रात-दिन हल्ला करते हैं। वे 1500 रुपये कलेक्टर से ले लेते हैं, कुछ तहसीलदार से ले लेते हैं और कुछ दूसरी जगह से ले लेते हैं। वे लेते भी जाते हैं और बदनाम भी करते जाते हैं। इस बिल से कोई फायदा नहीं है।

इसलिए सरकार को कोई दूसरा रास्ता निकालना चाहिए, जिस से राष्ट्र को मदद मिले, राष्ट्र का विकास हो, देश की रक्षा हो, हमारी महिलायें सोने से माला-माल हों, ताकि वे वक्त पर सरकार को दे सकें।

Shri Alvares (Panjim): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, one would have thought that the Bill after coming out of the consideration by the Joint Committee would have improved matters considerably. But I find that in spite of all the searchlight thrown on this Bill and the representations made by those who appeared before the Committee, the Bill has come out, in its main provisions almost as it was first presented and therefore my opposition to this Bill remains more than ever. Nobody could take objection to the objective of stopping smuggling. Smuggling of all types of goods must end and must be brought under control. But how is it possible for the Government to stop smuggling when circumstances are so favourable? If one looks at the bullion quotations at the newspapers, one finds that the price of gold was as it was before when the gold control order was introduced. Yesterday I had an occasion to look to the price list. There is a very cryptic sentence: the price of

gold has been rehabilitated because of the news of fresh arrivals. Any newspaper can with impunity print the price of gold in the black market and can also say that next week there will be more arrivals; this week there are less arrivals and according to that news, the prices fluctuate.

17 hrs.

It is my contention that the printing of these prices is an open invitation to smuggling. After all, if the price of gold is what it is today, in spite of the limitation put by Government to go by the international price, it is obvious that the people who want to hoard gold will go and buy gold. I find that the Joint Committee has not given any attention to the point as to how to stop smuggling. All that the Government thought fit to do is to impose control upon the poor goldsmith. Obviously, the goldsmith is at the third receiving end of this smuggling racket. The gold first comes to the sea customs, and then it passes to the traders and finally only a small proportion of the gold comes down to the goldsmith for the making of ornaments.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member may continue tomorrow.

17.01 hrs.

CONVERSION OF HINDUS IN PAKISTAN*

Shrimati Savitri Nigam (Banda): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I want to raise a discussion on points arising out of the answers given on the 14th December, 1964, to Starred Question No. 489 regarding conversion of Hindus in Pakistan.

Unfortunately, there has been a definite and very fast deterioration in the functioning of the External Affairs Ministry which is quite visible not only by the answers and replies given

[Shrimati Savitri Nigam]

but also by the statements made by its spokesmen from time to time. I am going to quote two or three glaring examples to prove the accuracy of my statement.

This morning, one hon. Member asked Shri Swaran Singh whether there has been a little contradiction between the statement made by him and the statement made by the hon. Prime Minister. He said he has not seen in what way the statement has been reported by the foreign journalists who are not very dependable. I would humbly submit to him that my one-man secretariat works perhaps more efficiently than the huge secretariat at the command of the External Affairs Ministry. I want to know why the hon. Minister did not see his own statement especially when it was reported in a wrong way, in a way which was contradictory to the statement made by the hon. Minister, and why the contradiction was not issued immediately after his arrival if it was really wrongly reported. The whole country is surprised and quite frustrated because of the contradictory statements made by the two different spokesmen of the External Affairs Ministry. The army of I.C.S., I.A.S., and I.F.S. officers is just busy doing the routine work.

A few months ago, when one senior officer of Pakistan was caught red-handed for indulging in espionage activities, the Pakistan Government wanted 24 hours from us for making the declaration. When that was given, the result was that first Pakistan announced the deportation of one of our senior officers of the same rank, showing to the whole world that in fact the Indian officer was turned out for espionage activities and we have just revengefully turned out their officer. At that time we thought that the honest and decent stand of our Ministry has been exploited by them, but this time, again, exactly the same thing has happened and exactly the same thing has been repeated. This

shows clearly that the Ministry of External Affairs has failed in its diplomacy and failed miserably. It can be fooled by the Pakistan Government any time. This is a matter of great concern to us all.

I would like to mention another point which is a matter of great concern. All the newspapers were full of the news of the forcible conversion and when the question was asked in this House, the Ministry showed its utter ignorance and inability to find out the exact position and the correct situation. The reply which was given was not only unconvincing, but misleading also. The reply was:

"Government is aware of this news item. Government of India have from time to time seen reports of forcible conversion of minorities; and they are aware of the persecution of minorities which has led to a sense on insecurity and continued migrations into India. This, of course is in violation of the Nehru-Liaquat Pact of 1950 and the attention of the Pakistan Government has been brought to this."

Further replies which were given to the supplementaries have a sort of a note of helplessness too. While it was accepted that forcible conversion was there, when the number was enquired, there was no reply. They said, "We do not have the number of people who have been converted so far." When asked why the correct position has not been found out through the Embassy, the reply was that the Embassy did not have any information. So, it is quite obvious that the Ministry and the Embassy have not attached any importance to this. Both of them have neglected and failed in their duty which is expected of both of them to protect the interests of the minorities in the other country.

It is high time the External Affairs Ministry realised this fact that when any such sensational news item appears in the newspapers, there are

very many chances of very dangerous reactions and repercussions. So, immediately some very authentic categorical and definite reply must be given by the External Affairs Ministry. They must also suggest the remedies which have been adopted to protect the interests of the minority community. If the news is wrong, it should be contradicted in such a categorical and firm way that there may not be an iota of doubt in anybody's mind and especially in the minds of those unfortunate relations of those minorities here. But nothing was done. The spokesmen of the External Affairs Ministry may not be so religious-minded; they may be very cosmopolitan. But they must not forget the fact that those people who are quite helpless and who are suffering a lot of torture attach great importance and they have got great religious sentiments to their own religion. So, if the news was correct, we must find out some solution. If our protest has not proved successful, we must approach through the various international organisations like the World Court or the UN. There are many other ways to find out remedies and give protection to these unfortunate minorities who are being forcibly converted. In this 20th century, this is a most inhuman thing to convert people in a forcible way.

I would also like to make it clear in the end that all my criticisms have been motivated by the desire to improve matters in the External Affairs Ministry, as this Ministry has great responsibilities. Secondly, I do not know whether I should mention it or not, this Ministry is full of friends and everybody wants the best thing for his friends. I also want the best for this Ministry and I want to pull them up, so that they may come up to the mark.

With these words, I want to know from the Minister what remedies they are going to adopt to give protection to the unfortunate minorities in that country and what steps they have taken to find out the accurate position.

Shri B. K. Das (Contai): It appears that no serious attempt has so far been made to ascertain or at least have a right guess about the exact position regarding the conversion. May I know if it was done through any agency or any international agency like the Red Cross? May I know whether the help of such agencies was sought for?

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): May I know whether it is a fact that there are several letters from those who have been forcibly converted, addressed to the Prime Minister and the Home Minister of this country, requesting them to see that the Nehru-Liaquat Ali Pact, as far as the protection of minorities is concerned, is respected, and to take up the matter at the highest level in Pakistan?

श्री प्रकाशवीर शास्त्री (विजनीर) : पूर्वी पाकिस्तान में विभाजन के बाद जो हिन्दू रह गये थे उनके सम्बन्ध में क्या इन पिछले सतरह वर्षों में सरकार ने यह जानने का यत्न किया कि जो सन् 1961 के आवासी के आंकड़े हैं उनके हिसाब से उनकी संख्या बढ़ कर कितनी बनी चाहिये और उन में से कितने भारत आ गये। शेष जितने वहाँ होने चाहिये थे बढ़े हुए अनुपात से, उनकी संख्या में क्या पर्याप्त कमी हुई है? और इसका बहुत बड़ा कारण यह है कि उन में जो विशेषकर छोटे वर्ग के लोग थे उनका धर्म-परिवर्तन कर लिया गया है। यदि हाँ, तो क्या भारत सरकार ने अपने हाई कमिश्नर के द्वारा या अन्य एजेन्सियों के द्वारा यह पता लगाने का यत्न किया कि कितने लोगों का धर्म परिवर्तन किया गया है?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs (Shrimati Lakshmi Menon): Sir, I have listened, I would not say with interest, with rather despair at the way the hon. Member who opened the debate made an attack on the Ministry rather than on the subject, namely, the question of forcible conversion. The complaint is unnecessary, because the answer

[Shrimati Lakshmi Menon]

that I gave to the House completely covers the whole question. It is very difficult to find out the exact number of persons converted because this conversion is taking place all the time not only in Pakistan but all over the world. People are changing religion and getting converted, may be out of fear, may be out of poverty, may be out of temptations that are offered by the preachers. There is nothing in the Constitution, neither in ours nor in the Constitutions of other countries nor even in the Declaration of Human Rights, which prevents a person or persons preaching or propagating his or their religion. It is very difficult to find out whether a conversion is forcible or not. It comes to our notice when large numbers of people are converted together. Then we suspect that there was force. This force may not be physical force, it may be out of sheer fear because minorities living in a dominant majority group feel that it will be better for them to accept the religion of the majority, even if it is against conviction, because it may mean a certain sense of security.

Two such cases have come to our notice with regard to West Pakistan and which I mentioned on that occasion. One group of 600 Hindu Bheels of a village embraced Islam. In another case 200 Bazigars embraced Islam. Whenever news of conversion reaches us we point out to the Pakistan Government that it is in violation of the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement which guaranteed safeguarding the interest of the minorities.

The hon. Member opposite has raised a very vital issue. This is a point which can be settled only at the highest level, by promoting communal harmony, by making the Government realise that the minorities have a right not only to exist but also to follow their own faith. Everything in that direction is being done. At every conference this matter is being taken up, that the rights of minorities should be safeguarded and the Nehru-Liaquat

Pact should be implemented and observed.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Will it be taken up at the Home Ministers' Conference?

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: The Agenda for the Home Ministers' Conference has not been finalised. Certainly, if this is a matter which has to be taken up, it will be included in the Agenda. I cannot give a guarantee now whether it will be taken up or not.

Then, in East Pakistan, there has never been any mass conversion. There has been conversion, as I pointed out the other day in reply to a question, of kidnapped girls, minor girls, married women who are forcibly taken away, being converted to the religion of the kidnapper and so on. But when they are produced before the court, they simply say that they wanted to marry a particular person and so they changed their faith voluntarily.

We have been accused of omission, not taking any interest. The extent to which we can take any interest and investigate the matter is limited, because unless a person comes and tells you that a person has been forcibly converted and the use of force can be proved, nothing can be done. We may become very excited about it but these limitations we have to understand and appreciate.

Then the question is asked why we do not take it up through some international agency or why we do not refer it to the United Nations. This is a funny situation in this House . . . in the morning they say "why did you refer it to the United Nations?" and in the afternoon they say "why don't you refer it to the United Nations?". Only today morning, when there were questions about Kashmir, we saw that Members wanted to withdraw the question from the United Nations, as they felt that the United Nations has become ineffective and cannot do anything.

Shri Sivamurthi Swamy (Koppal): Sir on a point of order.

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: There is no point of order.

Shri Sivamurthi Swamy: That is not for the Minister to decide.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: What is the point of order?

Shri Sivamurthi Swamy: The Minister of State for External Affairs says here that in this House funny things are going on, something is said in the morning and it is reversed in the afternoon. I think it is an insult to the House.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Anyway, there is no point of order.

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: I am sorry, I did not mean any insult to the House. Members do not have a very clear idea as to the capacity or the responsibility of an international organisation in these matters. Because, as I pointed out earlier, religious conversions are taking place all the time. In Pakistan, not only Hindus but even Christians are converted to Islam. In Africa, it will be noticed, that many Africans are first converted to Christianity and then converted back to Islam again.

श्री प्रकाशवीर शास्त्री : सरकार ने लोगों को आश्वासन दिया था कलकत्ते में कि जो लोग पाकिस्तान में हैं उनकी रक्षा करने की जिम्मेदारी हमारी है ।

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: Yes, I know. The hon. Member need not remind me. I have referred to the Nehru-Liquat Pact.

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय (देवास) : हिन्दुओं का धर्म-परिवर्तन तो आपकी कमजोरी से हो रहा है ।

श्री बाल्मीकी (खुर्जा) : मैं एक मिनट के लिये इसमें इंटरवेंशन करना चाहता हूँ ।

हमारे हजारों बाल्मीकी भाई जो पश्चिमी पाकिस्तान में हैं सन् 1950 से बराबर उनका धर्म-परिवर्तन किया गया और बर-बर इस सरकार की ओर से उनकी तर्फ ध्यान नहीं दिया गया ।

Mr Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. He should resume his seat.

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: What the hon. Member says is quite correct. People are being converted. I am not denying what the hon. Member is saying. The hon. Member is correct, absolutely correct—hundreds of thousands of people are being converted to Islam. But the difficulty is, how can we prove that force was used. That is my point. I can say that they must have done it even out of fear. I can say that when there is a small minority professing a different faith in the midst of a majority professing another faith, in the interests of security they might have done it, they might have opted for that faith. Whether it is forcible or voluntary, it is not possible to prove.

The second point was about referring the issue to an international organisation. The only way in which we can bring this before the United Nations is to prove that this is a case of genocide, that a definite attempt has been made to eliminate or wipe out a minority community. Then, of course, it will attract the articles of the Genocide Convention. But for that we have to say and prove that whole people have been wiped out or there has been genocide. In all humility I say that conversion is not regarded as genocide. People may be deprived of their religion, people may be deprived of their way of living, but that is not regarded as genocide.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam: May I point out. . .

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: I am not yielding. I am sorry to say that the hon. lady Member does not understand anything.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam: May I submit.....

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. The hon. Minister is not yielding.

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: I repeat, conversion is not regarded as genocide. The only instance of genocide in history is when Hitler tried to eliminate the entire Jewish race by force, by various kinds of torture and force. Therefore, it is not possible for us to refer this to any agency, because there is no *raison d'être* by which we can prove that force was used and whole people were made to change their religion. It is happening in Tibet now. People have been made to change their religion. In fact....

श्री प्रकाशचर शारत्री : जबदंस्ती धर्म परिवर्तन होना तो जोवित मृत्यु के बराबर है ।

Dr. M. S. Aney (Nagpur): What do you mean by saying that there is no genocide? (Interruption).

श्री प्रकाशचर शारत्री : तिब्बत में जिस इंग से धर्म-परिवर्तन हो रहे हैं उसे आप उचित समझते हैं, यही तो शिकायत है ।

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: Nobody seems to listen to what I am saying.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: She is replying to the debate. You must listen to her.

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: The only way in which.....

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय : मंत्री महोदय बैठे हुए हैं उनसे उत्तर दिलवाया जाय । श्री स्वर्ण सिंह इससे ज्यादा घन्छी तरह उत्तर देंगे जिससे कि हमें सन्तोष भी हो सकता है ।

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order.

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: The only way in which this can be referred

to the united Nations is by attracting the articles of the Genocide Convention. But this does not attract the articles of the Genocide Convention because there is no question of exterminating the minority or a group of people. Therefore, there is no point in the short debate raised by the hon. Member on this side.....

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय : यह लाखों व्यक्तियों का सवाल है, बहुत से हिन्दुओं को ईसाई बनाया जा रहा है .

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order.

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय : उनसे सन्तोषजनक उत्तर तो मिल नहीं रहा है और उलटे हम से आप बराबर यह आर्डर, आर्डर कह रहे हैं ।

Shrimati Lakshmi Menon: Most of what she said was irrelevant.

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय . . .

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय : आर्डर, आर्डर । जो वह जवाब दे रही हैं उसे सुन लें ।

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय : यह कोई जवाब नहीं है । श्री स्वर्ण सिंह से जवाब दिलवाइये ।

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The House stands adjourned to meet against tomorrow at 11 O' Clock.

17.22 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, December 22, 1964/Pausa 1, 1886 (Saka).