

12 hrs.

RE. REMARKS OF A MEMBER

डा० राम मनोहर लोहिया (फर्रुख़ाबाद) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मेरा ब्यवस्था का प्रश्न है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : एक काम खत्म हुआ है और दूसरा शुरू नहीं हुआ।

डा० राम मनोहर लोहिया : जो चल रहा है उसी के सम्बन्ध में मुझे कहना है नियम 40 के अन्तर्गत। कल एक गैर-सरकारी सदस्य ने यहां पर गलत बयानी की। उस वक़्त मैं ने . . .

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप का नोटिस मुझे अभी मिला है। आप भ्रम इस को न उठाइये वैसे उस को पहले देख लूँ।

डा० राम मनोहर लोहिया : मैं सिर्फ़ यह बतला दूँ कि श्रीमती विजय लक्ष्मी पंडित ने जो कहा था . . .

अध्यक्ष महोदय : मुझे देख लेने दीजिये कि उन्होंने क्या कहा और क्या गलत है। इस के पहले उसे कंठे ले सकते हैं।

डा० राम मनोहर लोहिया : मैं यह कहता हूँ कि एक गलतफ़हमी फैली हुई है . . .

12.01 hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER
OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REPORTED LETTER FROM PRESIDENT OF
NORTH VIETNAM TO THE PRESIDENT
OF INDIA AND THE
REPLY THERETO.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now take up the Calling Attention Notice. Shri Indrajit Gupta.

Shri Indrajit Gupta (Calcutta South West): I do not see the Minister here.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath (Hoshangabad): What is Parliament coming to? The Minister of State is also absent.

Mr. Speaker: When an item is called, the Minister ought to be here. . . . (Interruptions).

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: The Government is disintegrating.

Shri Nath Pal (Rajapur): It is chaotic.

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh): On behalf of the Minister of External Affairs I will read the statement when the question is raised. . . . (Interruptions).

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Communications (Shri Satya Narayan Sinha): I see the objection raised today. I appreciate the feelings of the hon. Members. I hope in future such things will not happen.

Mr. Speaker: Then, I will take up the next item.

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: It is very bad.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Barackpore): We are not going to tolerate it. . . . (Interruptions).

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. All hon. Members will resume their seats. I have said that when an item is on the agenda the concerned Minister ought to be present here and that this should not happen. The Leader of the House has assured us that this would not recur. What else is required?

Shri H. N. Mukerjee (Calcutta Central): Now the Minister of State has come, it should be taken up. When an item is put down in the agenda, it should be taken up.

श्री हुकम चन्द कल्लवाय (देवास) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, जब हमारे भूतपूर्व प्रधान मंत्री शास्त्री जी थे, और वे समय पर यहां नहीं थे तब आप ने सरकार को चेतावनी दी थी कि जब तक यहां कार्य चलना है, मंत्री लोगों को उपस्थित रहना चाहिये। उस समय आपने जो कुछ कहा था उसे सब लोग जानते हैं। आप के कहने के बावजूद भी उनकी धरमना की जाती है और यह बार बार होता है। हम

[श्री हुकम चन्द कठवाय]

ने कल भी देखा और आज भी देखा। कल ला मिनिस्टर अनुपस्थित थे और आज विदेश मंत्री अनुपस्थित हैं। यह जो बार बार अनियमितता होती है इस को हम बर्दाश्त नहीं कर सकते।

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: I can understand the Government telling you that for certain reasons one of their spokesmen was held up somewhere and that is why there was a little delay in his arrival. But I cannot understand how Government can, without assigning any ascertainable reason, ask for postponement of answer to a question in regard to a matter which has been put on the agenda by yourself. When we come here with this agenda paper in our hands we are entitled to have answers on whatever matter is here unless we are told on sufficient reasons that Government is not in a position to give an answer. When you put down this matter on the order paper, it is incumbent on the Government to give an answer. We suspect that the answer is being withheld on account of the presence at the moment in this country of a foreign dignitary. We take a very serious view of the matter. Parliament is inhibited from expressing its views and Government does not give a factual answer to a question asked because some foreign dignitary is in this country at this moment. Then we better quit and shut up shop as far as Parliament is concerned.

Shri Ranga (Chittoor): Sir, there was such a lot of talk about the appointment of the Leader of the House and we do not know why and how they came to their decision after having mooted so many names. Now, the Leader of the House, unfortunately for himself, when he was functioning as Chief Whip, was a little more effective than he seems to be today as the Leader of the House. Earlier also, only today, the Finance Minister was not here and the Planning Minister was asked to deputise for

him. There was some dissatisfaction expressed over that matter also in this House. Then, this Minister of State comes in like a *prima donna* as if he is not conscious of his duties towards this House and that he should be rushing in here as Pandit Nehru, the late Prime Minister, used to rush in here from his chamber as soon as he found that the House needed his presence and he had his duties here. He used to have the decency of asking for your pardon for being late. This gentleman comes here and shows as if he is not responsible to this House and as if he is not the Minister of State. The poor Leader of the House was obliged to apologise—I do not know whether he has apologised to you. He only mentioned in his usual fashion that he was sorry that the Minister was not there and, therefore, this item may be postponed. This sort of non-chalant treatment that the new Prime Minister has come to allow her Ministers to mete out to this Parliament would only show as if they are anxious to denigrate the prestige of this House so that democracy can be weakened and they can come to enjoy more and more autocratic power.

An hon. Member: It is very dangerous. (Interruption).

Some hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: Nothing more.

I am glad that everyone is interested in upholding the dignity and prestige of this House. I am equally concerned about it and certainly, along with the cooperation of all Members, I shall see that it does not denigrate or degrade or go down. We will uphold it as far as we can.

Some observations have fallen from the lips of Mr. Mukerjee. Of course, I cannot agree with all of them and with such an agitated mind he ought not to have made them. I must repeat that when an item has been put on the agenda and if for some reason the Minister cannot be present at the time when it is expected to be called, then there ought to be some information conveyed to the House which I

should just communicate to the Members that that is the reason and that we shall take it up at some other time. Till that item was called, no information had come to me. Then too there is no Minister who can just answer that. There ought to be some arrangement made in this respect that either some other Minister should be briefed to answer that or some explanation might be sent to the House so that I can give it to the House and explain it and then we could proceed with the other business.

Shri Satya Narayan Sinha: I entirely agree with your suggestions. As I have said before, such things will not happen in future.

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy (Kendrapara): The Minister has come. Let us take it up.

श्री काशी राम गुप्त (अलवर): अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं आप का स्थान दिखाना चाहता हूँ कि मदन के नेता जो हैं वह अपने स्थान पर बैठे हैं, प्रधान मंत्री अपने स्थान पर बैठे हैं, लेकिन अभी श्री स्वर्ण सिंह जी आये, उन का स्थान पता नहीं कहा है।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : आप अपने स्थान पर बैठे रहिये।

Shri Indrajit Gupta: I call the attention of the Minister of External Affairs to the following matter of urgent public importance and I request that he may make a statement thereon:—

The reported letter from the President of North Vietnam to the President of India and the reply sent thereto.

The Minister of External Affairs (Shri Swaran Singh): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have first to apologize for having come late. I do not want to give any excuses. I fully agree that if one of us is not present, somebody else should be able to explain. This will be followed and I am sure that there would be no cause for complaint in future.

In regard to the Calling Attention Notice, may I say this?

A letter dated 24 January from President Ho Chi Minh addressed to the President of India was received through our Consul General in Hanoi. In this letter President Ho Chi Minh, besides reiterating the D.R.V.N. position, has expressed the hope that India as Chairman of the International Commission for Supervision and Control will fulfil its obligations under the Geneva Agreement. We have learnt that letters have also been sent by President Ho Chi Minh to other Heads of State.

In his reply to President Ho Chi Minh, the President of India has expressed sympathy for the sufferings of the people of Vietnam and for the aspirations of the Vietnamese people. The President has expressed disappointment that our hope that the stoppage of bombing would lead to a lowering of tensions and eventually to a negotiated peace in Vietnam has not materialised. He has reaffirmed India's objective to work for the reduction of tensions and elimination of conflict. The President has also reiterated India's resolve, as always in the past, to endeavour to secure the implementation of the provisions of the Geneva Agreement as far as it is possible in the present situation, impartially and with despatch.

The Government of India have always been of the view that a peaceful solution should be found to the Vietnam problem within the framework of the Geneva Agreements of 1954. To this end, the Government have been in touch with other countries interested in seeing the establishment of peace in Vietnam. It must be admitted, however, that so far it has not been possible to help those principally concerned in the reconciliation of their views.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: Since the position of India in this matter cannot be equated with that of the other

[Shri Indrajit Gupta]

States to whom also President Ho Chi Minh had addressed a letter in view of the fact that India is the Chairman of the International Control Commission, and, therefore, has a special responsibility, may I know what specific steps or attempts Government has been making to bring about the convocation of a Geneva type Conference for settling the Vietnam question and whether it is a fact that such attempts are being obstructed by the stand of the United States Government to the effect that the United States was not a party to the Geneva Agreements of 1954 and if so, why is that not being made clear? Is it because of the fear of displeasing the Americans and losing their aid?

Shri Swaran Singh: It is true that India has a special position, being the Chairman of the International Control Commission and in that capacity, President Ho Chi Minh has rightly reminded us that India has to ensure that the functioning in the International Control Commission is in accordance with the Geneva Agreement and the Protocol and we have exactly reassured President Ho Chi Minh that we have always attempted and endeavoured to function in such a manner as to discharge our obligations under the Geneva Agreement and the Protocol.

About the second question that he asked as to what special steps we have taken for reconvening the Geneva type Conference, I would like to remind the hon. House that this is a matter in which we, as Government, would be very much interested if a Geneva type Conference could be reconvened. I would, however, like to add that the move for convening such a Conference does not exactly fall within the functioning of the International Control Commission as such under the Protocol and the Geneva Agreement. It is for the two Co-Chairmen to take an initiative in that respect. We have been in touch with the two Co-Chairmen also but at the present moment, it has not been possible

for a Geneva type Conference to be convened.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: The second part of my question which was most important has not been replied to. I wanted to know whether those attempts were really floundering against the stand of the United States Government that they were not a party to the Geneva Agreement, and, therefore, a Geneva type Conference could not be called obviously if the United States did not participate in it.

Shri Swaran Singh: I cannot speak on behalf of the US Government as to what their attitude on this is.

Shri Ranga: I hope not.

Shri Swaran Singh:..But I have no information that they are opposed to the convening of a Geneva type Conference. At any rate, they have never said to us that they are opposed to the convening of a Geneva type conference.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur (Ja-lore): In view of the real danger of escalation of trouble there and our immediate anxiety and special responsibility, and in view of the fact that one of the main objects of the visit of the Vice-President of the United States is to discuss this matter with the hon. Prime Minister—she might correct me if I am wrong—may I know whether she has given any special consideration to this matter and taken any initiative to see that this trouble is ended?

The Prime Minister and Minister of Atomic Energy (Shrimati Indira Gandhi): I have not yet met the Vice-President of the United States.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: It is not a question of not having met the

US Vice-President. I want to know whether the hon. Prime Minister has considered this matter in view of the real danger of escalation and the immediate danger to this country and our special responsibility and interest in the matter. It is not as if she will consider it only after she has seen the Vice-President of the United States. The Vice-President of the United States has come, and he has stated that one of the main objects is to discuss this. So, as a matter of fact, the hon. Prime Minister must have already considered this matter. I want to know whether she proposes to take any initiative in the matter.

Mr. Speaker: Would she disclose it to the House first and then discuss?

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: I want to know whether she wants to take initiative in the matter. I do not want her to tell us what steps she is going to take. I want to know whether she has considered this and whether she will take the initiative and whether she realises the danger of escalation of trouble there.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: I think everyone is very acutely aware of the dangers of escalation of this conflict, and we are all deeply concerned also in trying to establish peace in the area. But, as we know from our own experience, it is not always easy to get or to find common ground for people to meet. If any propositions are made, we shall certainly consider them.

Shri Tridib Kumar Chaudhuri (Berhampur): In the context of the visit of the US Vice-President, may I know whether the US Government have made any specific proposals on their behalf in regard to the solution of the Viet Nam problem? Is it also a fact that the US Vice-President wants India to send a medical mission on humanitarian grounds to South Viet Nam to help the South Viet Nam Government there?

Shri Ranga: We should have sent it long ago.

Shri Swaran Singh: As the hon. Prime Minister has already said, the Vice-President of the USA has not yet met her. I did have a meeting with him, but it was not long enough, and this meeting might be continued in the afternoon. No proposal has yet been made to us for sending any medical mission.

Shri Ranga: We should have sent it on our own initiative.

Shri Swaran Singh: I am answering the question which has been put to me.

Shri Ranga: We had sent one to South Korea, and during the earlier days we had sent one to China also.

Shri Swaran Singh: The other part of the question was whether any specific proposal had been made for the settlement or the solution of the Viet Nam problem. We are not directly involved that any specific proposal should be put to us. The House is no doubt aware that the President of the USA did make some statements, and the other statesmen of the USA have also made statements on different occasions about their approach to this problem, and there is no specific solution which has been discussed with us on this issue.

Shri Ranga: We have a humanitarian mission; it was our responsibility to have sent the medical mission on our own initiative.

Shri N. Sreekantan Nair (Quilon): May I know whether, in view of the fact that there is danger of a greater intensification of the conflict in Vietnam, we have requested both sides and asked the North Vietnam and South Vietnam Governments to give better cooperation to the Control Commission so that we may achieve some amount of cessation of hostilities as a prelude to finding ways and means for a settlement?

Shri Swaran Singh: It has always been our endeavour to function in a correct way according to the Protocol in the discharge of our functions as

[Shri Swaran Singh]

Chairman of the International Control Commission. We have always been urging upon all the parties that they should fully cooperate with the International Control Commission. The International Commission for their part have been trying to discharge their obligations in a most impartial way; while discharging these functions, sometimes one side and sometimes the other have grounds of criticism against us.

12.22 hrs.

RE: MOTIONS FOR ADJOURNMENT

FOOD SITUATION IN WEST BENGAL

Mr. Speaker: I have received notices of three adjournment motions today also—the serious situation in West Bengal due to the Centre's failure to supply adequate rice, wheat and kerosene oil, and police firing in Basirhat resulting in serious injuries to 9 persons. . . .

May I know if the Minister has any statement to make?

The Minister of Food, Agriculture, Community Development and Co-operation (Shri C. Subramaniam): We have no information yet. We are trying to get information from Calcutta. As soon as it is available and it is adequate, I shall make a statement in the afternoon.

Mr. Speaker: Shall I keep it pending till afternoon?

Shri C. Subramaniam: I sha'll try my best to get information. But if it is not available by then, I would crave your indulgence. . . .

Mr. Speaker: Tomorrow?

Shri C. Subramaniam: On Monday it may be taken up. I shall try my best.

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय (देवास) :
यह बड़े महत्व का सवाल है इसलिए यह प्राज
शाम को ही लिया जाना चाहिए ।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : अब इनकॉर्रेशन तो
घा लेने दीजिये बाकी महत्व का सवाल समझा
है तभी तो उसे लिया है ।

Several hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker I can allow only one hon. Member at a time.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty (Barackpore): The situation in West Bengal is nothing new. We do not get more than 129 grammes of rice, and outside the rationed areas, in those modified ration areas where we are supposed to get rice and wheat, we are not able to get it at all for weeks and months now. All this has come in the papers. Why is the Government not aware of this situation without giving extolling reports that everything is all right?

Shri C. Subramaniam: According to the hon. lady Member, it is not a new situation. It is an old situation; therefore. . . .

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: Not that. Basirhat is a modified ration area. There is absolutely no kerosene, nothing at all in that area. Why has the Government failed to look into this situation and rectify this state of affairs? It has not done it. The result is that there has been agitation and shooting.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: (Kanpur): The reason why I tabled this adjournment motion was that according to the press information available to us, there is a clear indication of failure on the part of the Centre, because it says, 'It is reported that the crowd had collected in front of the . . . building demanding increased supplies of rice, wheat and kerosene. . . . This is the situation not in Calcutta—if it was in Coucutta, one could understand it—this is a situation 30 or 40 miles away from Calcutta where the modified rationing scheme is there. The hon. Minister says that he has no information.

Shri Ranga (Chittoor): He has said it is nothing new.