

per family are being given for the construction of temporary huts. Foodgrains are being distributed at the rate of three quarters of a seer per adult and half a seer per child to villagers in the affected areas. To facilitate the expeditious distribution of relief, four Committees have been set up for the town of Anjar, the villages in the Anjar Taluqa, villages in the Bhuj Taluqa and villages in the Bachau Taluqa. A Central Committee consisting of officials and non-officials is being formed to supervise the entire work of relief and rehabilitation. Instructions have been issued by the Government of India to the Chief Commissioner for taking such other relief measures as may be necessary and to report what further assistance, if any, is required.

I am sure the House would like to express its heart-felt sympathy for all those who have suffered as a result of this sudden calamity.

STATEMENT BY SHRI C. D.  
DESHMUKH RE RESIGNATION  
FROM OFFICE OF MINISTER

Shri C. D. Deshmukh (Kolaba):  
Mr. Speaker, for some time past my resignation of my office of Minister has been pending. Yesterday the President's office issued a Press Note to the effect that the President has been pleased to accept the resignation. I consider it necessary to make a statement in explanation of my resignation, and proceed to do so in accordance with rule 218 of the Rules of Procedure of the Lok Sabha.

I have resigned because I do not wish to share the responsibility for Government's decision to separate the city of Bombay from Maharashtra, as embodied in the States Reorganisation Bill, 1956, and because I wish to protest generally against the manner in which this issue, so vitally important to the interests of my constituency of Kolaba in particular, and of Maharashtra as well as India in general, has been handled by the Prime Minister.

My protest has special reference to (i) the inability or unwillingness of the Government of India to persuade the Bombay Government to hold a judicial enquiry into the police firings of November, 1955 and January, 1956 in the course of which about 80 persons were killed and about 450 injured; and (ii) to the impropriety of the Prime Minister's announcement in early June in regard to the future of Bombay while the States Reorganisation Bill was before the Lok Sabha and had been referred to the Select Committee. I had in vain pleaded for an enquiry in regard to the former. In regard to the latter I have had no discussion with the Prime Minister, as obviously a discussion after the event was useless and as on the day the Prime Minister returned from Bombay after the A.I.C.C. meeting, I asked him to make my pending resignation effective. It was at his suggestion that I agreed that the acceptance of my resignation might await his return from his tour abroad.

I accepted the office of Finance Minister in May 1950 at the repeated requests of the Prime Minister. The House may be interested to know, as some little proof of my disinterestedness, that I had declined a similar offer made previously by Lord Wavell in May 1946 on the ground that neither by training nor by tradition was I qualified to take on the role of a politician. Before I accepted the Prime Minister's offer, I warned him that I was apt to prove difficult where principles were involved and that I would have to resign if there was a major disagreement on matters of principle. His reply, if he will recall it, was: "In that event it will not be a case of your walking out alone." Although the question was never explicitly discussed between us, this remark and assurance formed an unspoken pact between us to pursue and promote a progressive economic policy as a sound foundation for plans for the country's economic development. It is for him to say if he is satisfied or not with the nature and quality of

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my collaboration with him. On my part, I should like to take this opportunity for acknowledging his constant and understanding support in the discharge of my duties, not to speak of his irreproachable courtesy, unlimited patience and unfailing consideration. We have had our differences of opinion, acute sometimes as in the matter of relaxation of financial control but we have up till now always been able to reconcile them as a result of personal discussion.

I have never been a member of the Congress Party, and I am inclined to believe that this freedom from a formal party affiliation has helped me to discharge a little more effectively my role as a supposed expert in economic, financial, fiscal and monetary matters. Had the General Elections not broken into the tenure of my office and had it not been constitutionally almost ineluctable for the Finance Minister to be a Member of the Lok Sabha, the present situation in which I feel it incumbent to resign on an issue not strictly financial or not of an all-India character would not have arisen; because I have had no serious differences of opinion with my colleagues in the Cabinet and the Prime Minister continued to extend his support to me in all essential matters concerning the Finance Ministry. I consider it only fair to all concerned to add that irrespective of the SRC report and for many months past I had been informing the Prime Minister that I did not intend to take part in the coming elections and that it was my firm view that the time had arrived for someone from the Congress Party to take charge of the office of Finance Minister. It was with a view to bringing about a greater association of the concerned members of the Cabinet with the handling of the problems of the Finance Ministry, especially in regard to raising resources for the Second Five Year Plan that on my advice the Prime Minister has constituted a Resources Committee of the Cabinet.

My election as a representative of Colaba District and as one among the Bombay representatives in the Lok Sabha could not but affect the political aloofness of my role as a non-party financial expert (supposed to be an expert, according to one of my very able colleagues). The constituency and the State concerned called upon me from time to time to take on an interest in some local problem and I have always been able to do so without being untrue to my responsibility to the country at large. The matters involved were not matters of grave principle. But I am not one of those who hold that the Central Government Ministers should be like disembodied spirits, concerned with only their central responsibilities and not at all concerned with the affairs, politics and interests of their constituencies or States.

Nevertheless, I can truthfully claim that I have concerned myself less with local matters than any of my colleagues, barring the Prime Minister, owing to my lack of party affiliation and the technical nature of the matters, dealt with in the Finance Ministry.

In the matter of the Government's decision in regard to the separation of Bombay State from Maharashtra however, my conscience will not permit me to remain aloof or unconcerned as I hold strongly that the decision, with its latest modification, is grossly unjust and unfair to the people of Maharashtra and against even the interests of the country. I can find no single valid argument in justification of it. I hope I shall have an opportunity of elaborating this—and this is particularly addressed to you, Sir,—during the course of the coming general discussion on the S.R.C. Bill as reported by the Select Committee. I hope I shall catch your eye sometime.

Mr. Speaker: I look this side more.

**Shri C. D. Deshmukh:** But even in this matter, following my rôle as a non-party financial expert, I did not take up a strong personal attitude until I became convinced that the announced decision was unacceptable to the people of Kolaba in particular and Maharashtra in general and involved grave risk of economic ruination to them. I also anticipated the difficulties likely to arise over Bombay City and the lengths to which Congress-devoted Maharashtra leaders were prepared to go and used my influence in an attempt to secure acceptance for the bigger bilingual Bombay State, that is, including both Saurashtra and Vidarbha, which was the only genuine bilingual State arrangement in my view. Unfortunately, this was rejected in turn by the Congress Working Committee, the Gujarat and Bombay Pradesh Congress Committees and finally by the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee themselves by implication. Although I am certain that the Maharashtra and the Gujarat public will even now favour such a solution, with the present leadership being what it is, I fear this solution will not be feasible.

Even before the Prime Minister made his announcement about Bombay in January last, I had informed him and the Cabinet of my view that if the bigger bilingual Bombay State was not possible, then the only alternative was the formation of a separate Gujarat and a separate Maharashtra including Bombay City and that the separation of Bombay City from Maharashtra would be a grave economic and political blunder, besides being unjust to Maharashtra.

I refrained from protesting against the Government decision of January last, which was not taken in the full Cabinet, until I became seized of the reactions of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee and was satisfied that the decision was unacceptable to Maharashtra in general and my constituency in particular. On being satisfied on this point, I tendered my resignation to the Prime Minister. In

reply he referred to the desirability of doing everything possible to discourage violence, as also to interesting possibilities of the formation of big bilingual units such as Dakshina Pradesh, Purva Pradesh, etc. At about the same time, a few friendly fellow Members of Parliament advised me not to precipitate matters until Parliament had had an opportunity of considering the question. It was in view of these considerations that I refrained from pressing my resignation in January last.

Although the S.R.C. Bill as introduced made no change for the better, from my point of view I was content to await the report of the Select Committee. But discussions in this respect were in my opinion gravely prejudiced by the extraordinary action of the Prime Minister in making his announcement in Bombay early last June. His later explanation that he was always free to announce Government's decisions is not valid as in no sense was the decision a decision of Government. There was no consideration of the proposal in the Cabinet or even by circulation. There was no individual consultation with members of the Cabinet known to be specially interested, as for instance, myself. There is no record even of a meeting of a Committee of the Cabinet, and to this day no authoritative text of the so-called decision is available to the members of the Cabinet.

**Shri Kamath (Hoshangabad):** A one-man Government.

**Shri C. D. Deshmukh:** This instance is typical of the cavalier and unconstitutional manner in which decisions have been taken and announced on behalf of the Cabinet by certain unauthorised members of the Cabinet including the Prime Minister in matters concerning the reorganisation of the States. The separation of Andhra from Tamil Nad was decided upon and announced by the Prime Minister without reference to the Cabinet. The decision of last January in regard to placing Bombay City

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under Central administration, was, again, without prior reference to the Cabinet, whose previous decision was, Bombay should be made a City State. Nor did that decision represent a solution agreed upon by all concerned, including the Maharashtra leaders, since their proposal to that effect was conditional on (i) Bombay City being retained as the capital of Maharashtra, and (ii) a provision for later merger of the City with Maharashtra at the discretion of the Prime Minister. It is true that a Committee of the Cabinet was constituted to decide boundary matters, but it was never the intention that that Committee should decide the fate of Maharashtra and Bombay City on behalf of the Cabinet. In any case, I have a grievance in that I was not consulted in regard to the specific decisions announced, although as a Minister specially interested territorially and electorally at least common courtesy demanded that I should have been. My complaint is that the Prime Minister and the Committee of three have arrogated to themselves powers not delegated to them by the Cabinet as a whole.

Even more summary and discourteous has been the rejection by the Prime Minister and the Home Minister of my request that they promote an enquiry into the Bombay firings of November 1955 and January 1956. I am convinced that they are being false to their principles in regard to the safeguarding of civil liberties in helping to hush up the matter. Since the Prime Minister has at a later date argued that the question of Bombay City cannot be reconsidered just now because Bombay has misbehaved, he cannot argue that the matter is one concerning the Bombay Government alone. His view that such an enquiry will only exacerbate public feelings further is not valid, since truth can never embitter and what is alleged, with a great deal of *prima facie* evidence, is that the police showed lack of fire-control and

grossly exceeded their legal powers. There is evidence to show that they were instructed by the Chief Minister to shoot at sight and to shoot to kill, that the deliberate use of tear gas before intended firing brought out women and children from their rooms choking for breath, only to be shot down by the indiscriminate firing of the police, using tommy guns, firing several rounds to the second, that there were 2,500 rounds fired, resulting in 80 persons dead and 450 injured, that the police injuries through stones and acid bulbs were insignificant and not contemporaneous with the firing episodes. That the ruling party should have thought it fit to order an enquiry into the Hoshiarpur lathi charge when they resolutely refused to order an enquiry into the Bombay firings to my mind shows an animus against Maharashtra with which I refuse to associate myself. I drew the attention of the Prime Minister to many of these matters and informed him that I was thoroughly dissatisfied with the apathy with which this matter has been viewed by him. I pointed out to him that in any other country calling itself civilized with such a carnage, a judicial enquiry would have been compulsory by law. Even now when the coroner has held in several cases that the firing of November 1955 was unjustified, there seems to be no intention to enquire into the matter on the part of the police because they themselves have caused the deaths.

These matters, viz., the usurpation of the powers of the Cabinet by an inner circle and the denial of civil liberties by giving a *carte blanche* to the Bombay Police, have a bearing on public interest going far beyond the range of the dispute over Bombay City. Violence can only be curbed by justice and rational behaviour. The aggressive non-violence of many men responsible for the Bombay decision will do far more to disrupt the unity of the country than outbursts of violence, which no sane man will

condone and which must be dealt with firmly, but not brutally especially where hundreds of palpably innocent citizens are involved.

The Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs and Finance (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is with deep regret that I have listened to the statement made by my hon. friend and my colleague in Government till yesterday. I regret having to part company in the work of Government from a valuable colleague. I regret also that on this occasion an element of controversy has been introduced.

I am not referring to the merits of the questions raised by my friend; these will no doubt be dealt with in the course of the subsequent discussions in this House. The hon. Member has criticised various actions for which I am responsible. I accept that responsibility fully as indeed I must, in my capacity as Prime Minister. But I am reluctant to enter into a controversy, which to some extent has a personal character. Since we are ending our close association as members of Government, I should like this parting to be with goodwill.

I shall only mention here two or three matters to which reference has been made. The account that the hon. Member has given of various developments is not in my opinion quite correct in all its particulars. It is incomplete and hence may give a wrong impression as to what happened.

Reference has been made to the proceedings of the Cabinet. It is not usual to do so and it is a little difficult to deal with this matter without a full account of what Cabinet considered at various times. I do not think it would be proper for me to deal fully with the proceedings of the Cabinet. This matter has been under consideration, in various ways, for many months and it has always been our desire to have the largest measure of consultation and agreement not only in the Government but in Parliament and elsewhere. We discussed this in the Cabinet on many

occasions and when the Cabinet appointed a Sub-committee, we kept the Cabinet informed of its work.

The hon. Member has said that my announcement early in June in regard to the future of Bombay was lacking in propriety as the States Reorganisation Bill was before the Lok Sabha and had been referred to a Select Committee. I am wholly unable to appreciate this argument. What I announced then was the Government's policy which had already been included in the draft Bill before the Parliament. The only additional statement I made was that the future of Bombay might be decided 5 years later by Bombay, a fact which had been referred to repeatedly. There is considerable speculation and uncertainty about this which call for clarification. In such circumstances, it is necessary to state the position clearly. Apart from this, it is the business of Government to declare its policy and to place it before Parliament. It is of course open to the Select Committee and Parliament to accept it, vary it or reject it. I had, in fact, stated in Bombay that it would naturally be for the Select Committee and Parliament to decide what they thought proper.

A reference has also been made to the decision not to hold a judicial enquiry into the incidents in Bombay in November, 1955 and January, 1956. Those incidents were serious. But, after the most careful consideration and in consultation with many colleague and others we felt that our principle aim of developing normal and good relations in Bombay between various communities and groups would be jeopardised by such a prolonged enquiry at that stage. We felt that our chief effort should be to establish good relations again.

I should like to express again, Sir, my deep regret at this parting of the ways.

Shri S. S. More (Sholapur): Sir, will the two statements.....

Mr. Speaker: We will go to the next item of business.