

Mr. Speaker: I will consider it. I requested Secretary to inform Shri Kamath that today it will be at the fog end. After 16.30 hours, we have 2½ hours for non-official business. Originally, it was to be discussed after 19.00 hours till 20.00 hours. So we put it off till tomorrow. But Shri Kamath might have mentioned this to me when I adjourned it to tomorrow.

Shri Kamath: I only urge that it should be the penultimate item of tomorrow, if that is acceptable to my hon. colleagues.

Mr. Speaker: We shall consider.

Some Hon. Members: There is no objection.

Shri Kamath: They do not object.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Mr. Speaker: So far as leave of absence of Rt. Rev. John Richardson is concerned, we held over consideration till today. Now I want to place this matter before the House.

In their Nineteenth Report, the Committee on Absence of Members from the Sittings of the House recommended leave of absence to certain Members, including Rt. Rev. John Richardson. The consideration of the case of Shri Richardson was held over as certain objections were raised in the House.

The facts of the case are that Shri Richardson has so far been granted leave of absence for 393 days from time to time on various grounds, for example, illness of wife and family circumstances, transport difficulties and pressure of work in the Diocese.

He has actually been present in the House for 361 days. He attended the last session of the House from 14th August 1956 to 13th September 1956, that is, up to the last day of the session.

Article 101(4) of the Constitution provides that if for a period of sixty days a Member of either House of

Parliament is without permission of the House absent from all meetings thereof, the House may declare his seat vacant.

His present application for leave of absence relates to the whole period of the current session amounting to 19 days.

In his application for leave of absence, Shri Richardson mentioned as follows:

"Under the Community Project our islanders had built a wooden bridge over a river. It was washed away by a flood of heavy rain in the months of August and September, 1953. Again another attempt was made in 1954 and it met the same fate and on the same months.

Materials are now collected and also cement has been imported for the construction of a pucca bridge with concrete supports and span with iron. Our people have very little knowledge of masonry, hence my presence is badly needed to supervise the construction. The work is to commence now or else the cement will be spoiled by the damp climate of the place. The bridge is very important to connect the villages on the west of the island which are cut away from the only one hospital situated 15 miles away on the east coast.

I therefore beg to House to excuse my absence this session."

While recommending leave to the Member, the Committee observed that the Member may be informed that work in Community Project in the constituency of the Member was not a sufficiently valid ground for asking leave for the entire period of the session. The relevant minutes of the sitting of the Committee containing these observations were also laid on the Table on 19th December 1956

The views of the Committee will be communicated to the Member in due course.

[Mr. Speaker]

Having regard to all the circumstances of the case, I take it that the House agrees with the recommendation of the Committee that leave be granted to Rt. Rev. John Richardson.

He was absent not in the previous session. Even if he would be absent for the entire session now, it will only be 39 days, and therefore about 21 days will be remaining in the next session, which may last for four or five days, I think. If perchance, he absents himself for the next session, what will happen to him? Even if he loses his seat, he can stand for the next election.

Shri Kamath (Hoshangabad): He is nominated.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, he can be nominated. Let us consider this point. These are islands from which it is difficult for people to come. There may be no other suitable person there who is available for our purpose. These are all the difficulties. Until a choice is made between allowing these islands to go without representation, nominated or not nominated, and allowing this gentleman to come as and when it is possible for him to do so, I do not think the House will be hard upon this hon. Member.

Shri K. K. Basu (Diamond Harbour): As you said, there are difficulties, and from the statistics given, he has been absent for more than 50 per cent. of the sittings of the House. At least the Government will so advise the President that in the matter of selection of a person from those islands, a younger man who is free from all those other difficulties and who will be able to attend the House should be chosen. These difficulties of transport etc. are there, and how can you change the topographic character of the islands? If a person is absent for more than 50 per cent of the sittings, what is the point of having such representation?

Shri Punnoose (Alleppey): Once he applied for leave because he had

to discharge the duties as a priest and now he seems to be having engineering preoccupations. Andamans is really under the Government of India, who can supply the necessary help and relieve this gentleman so that he may attend the House. Anyway, a deputation was here a few months back from Andamans and I hope they interviewed the Minister also. They were complaining that their demands were not looked into favourably by this House. Therefore, we may grant this application now, but something must be done in the matter.

Shri K.K. Basu: They should have real representation.

Shri Punnoose: This gentleman's excuse is sometimes spiritual and at other times material.

Dr. Rama Rao (Kakinada): If we refuse leave now, it will not affect him materially in any way. But this hon. House must set a standard for granting leave. That cement will be spoiled or something else will be spoiled is not sufficient justification for his continued absence, particularly from an area, which is not otherwise represented here. Without materially affecting or harming him in any way, we must maintain the dignity of this House by refusing his leave.

Shri Mathew (Kottayam): Now this question does not arise because he is absent only for 39 days at a stretch. Therefore, I fail to see how the whole question of cement or spoiling of cement and other things are relevant, and how all those points raised by my good friends of the Communist Party are relevant to the present issue. There is no need now to raise the question of grant of leave.

Shri Punnoose: There is no question of communism here. It is a question of leave being asked for, and even if it be for one day, we can have our say in the matter. That is why it came to us.

An Hon. Member: That is a professorial dissertation.

Shri Barrow (Nominated-Anglo-Indians): I would like to say this. All Members of this House have the opportunity of going to their constituencies and coming back without anybody being aware of it because they have the transport facilities, but this particular Member does not have those facilities and, therefore, he is taking part in this project in all good faith, and being honest he has applied to the House in good faith for this leave. Any attempt on our part to make insinuations on him does not, I think, savour of good manners or grace. Considering the peculiar circumstances of his case, had he not said anything, the 39 days absence now would not have affected his position. But because of the transport difficulties he is not able to come and go and he has applied for leave in all good faith. He does not want to flout the authority of the House. In fact, he is coming to this House for permission, and I would request the House to grant permission.

Shri Raghavachari (Penukonda):
rose—

Mr. Speaker: Enough has been said. I would request Shri Raghavachari to sit down. Let us proceed with the other work. What I would urge upon the hon. Minister is that in case they are able to get another suitable person for the next nomination, they will do so. But if a suitable person is not available—suppose one is available who will be able to attend only 25 per cent of the sittings—you would prefer the man who is able to be here for 50 per cent of the days. In that case, the same man may continue, because that is a choice between persons who are not available here. I think that the general sense of the House is to grant this leave.

Leave was granted.

BANKING COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) BILL—concl'd.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now resume further consideration of the following motion moved by Shri T. T. Krishnamachari on the 20th December 1956:

“That the Bill further to amend the Banking Companies Act, 1949, be taken into consideration.”

Out of the total time allotted of 5 hours, there is a balance of 3 hours and 58 minutes. Now it is 12-30 and so this Bill should conclude by 4-30—all stages of the Bill. Were any arrangements made regarding the stages?

Shri N. R. Muniswamy (Wandiwash): 3½ hours for the first stage.

Mr. Speaker: One hour is already over, that is, yesterday, and we have 2½ hours left for the consideration stage, that is, at 3 o'clock the consideration stage will be over. How much time will the hon. Minister require?

The Minister of Revenue and Defence Expenditure (Shri A. C. Guha): Half an hour or 40 minutes.

Mr. Speaker: Let him have just half an hour. I will call the hon. Minister at 2-30 P.M. to reply to the debate. The consideration stage should be over at 3 P.M. and the whole Bill must be disposed of at 4-30 P.M.

Shri Moitra, who was on his legs, might now continue his speech.

Shri M. K. Moitra (Calcutta North-West): Mr. Speaker, Sir, when the discussion had closed yesterday.....

Shri C. R. Iyyunni (Trichur): I request that time may be allotted for each speaker; otherwise, there are people who are interested in this matter and they cannot get a chance to speak.

Mr. Speaker: 10 to 15 minutes for any ordinary Member. The group leader will have 20 minutes.