

a copy of the Memorandum on the Sixth Report of the Public Accounts Committee on Hiraakud Dam Project. [See Appendix VII, Annexure No. 1.]

#### DEATH OF SHRI P. S. LAHOTI

MR. CHAIRMAN: Before we proceed further, it is my painful duty to draw your attention to the recent death of Mr. Lahoti who was a Member from Hyderabad. He was an industrialist and took a great deal of interest in education of boys and girls and we are very sorry that he passed away very recently. As a mark of respect to his memory I would request you to stand for a minute.

*(Hon. Members than stood in silence for a minute.)*

#### THE LUSHAI HILLS DISTRICT (CHANGE OF NAME) BILL, 1954

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI B. N. DATAR) : Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to change the name of the Lushai Hills District.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH (Madras): Before these matters are taken up by this House.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: It will be over *in* a minute. The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to change the name of the Lushai Hills District."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI B. N. DATAR: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

#### THE STATE ACQUISITION OF LANDS FOR UNION PURPOSES (VALIDATION) BILL, 1954

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (DR. P. S. DESHMUKH): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to 126 C.S.D.

validate the acquisition under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, of lands by certain State Governments for the purposes of the Union, and orders passed and proceedings held in connection therewith.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to validate the acquisition under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, of lands by certain State Governments for the purposes of the Union, and orders passed and proceedings held in connection therewith."

The motion was adopted.

DR. P. S. DESHMUKH: Sir, I introduce the Bill

#### THE KUMBH MELA TRAGEDY

SHRI H. D. RAJAH (Madras): Sir, I rise to a point of order. Before the Government business is taken up, I urge the Government spokesman to make a statement on the greatest tragedy which has taken place in the country.....

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Prime Minister is here.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH: Sir, we did not know. That should be told to us.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE (SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU): By your leave. Sir, I should like to say a few words. I do not propose to make a statement as the hon. Member just wanted, in regard to the Kumbh Mela tragedy, but I think it is right and fitting that we should, at the beginning of this session of the House, express our deep sympathy and sorrow and send our condolences to the relatives of the bereaved and in fact to the vast numbers of those who have felt the shock of this tragedy. It will not be fitting. I think for us at this stage to consider this matter in any detail and therefore I am not going into it for two major reasons apart from any others. One is that it

is under enquiry—a very competent enquiry—whose Chairman is a distinguished ex-Chief Justice.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA (Andhra): That is not enough.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: The second is that it is essentially a matter for the Uttar Pradesh Government and it is not normally the practice for any provincial matter to be discussed here in detail. But undoubtedly it is, in another sense, a very important national matter—a national Tragedy—a matter in which all of us are interested

SHRI H. D. RAJAH: That is exactly the point.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: The hon. Member will not help by his excitement or by his interruptions, because it is a tragedy which is felt by all of us—not, I take it, by the hon. Member himself more than others. I do not know if the hon. Member was there but some of us were present and much more about it than probably he does. Unfortunately, all of wrong accounts have been printed and all kinds of rumours have been spread about this matter. It would not lie proper for us to consider this matter in this way, but if at some other time it is considered desirable, so far as the Government is concerned, we would welcome it, although I do not personally see how, when a matter is under enquiry by a competent authority, we *can* say much about it. So far as I am concerned, I was present, not at the spot where the tragedy occurred, but not very far from it. I was there in the mela itself on the occasion and I can never forget that tremendous concourse of humanity, consisting of probably 40 lakhs of people, on either side of the river. I have never seen anything like it in my life before either at the Kumbh Mela or in any other function in this country or any where else. It was a matter of deep sorrow and a tragedy that in this vast multitude some people at a particular spot should have come to grief.

I do not wish to go into facts because one discusses the whole thing in great detail or one does not discuss it.

It will serve no useful purpose to refer to odd facts here and there which I could very well refer to either from my own knowledge or from such information as I have gathered. That would not help the House to consider it. I beg to submit, Sir, that anyhow when the matter is under a competent enquiry the right time for its consideration is hardly now. For the moment I would suggest that we should express the deep sympathy and sorrow of this House and convey it to the relatives of those who are bereaved.

SHRI C. G. K. REDDY (Mysore): May I ask a question, Sir? I should like to know if the hon. the Prime Minister was aware of the tragedy after 4 o'clock that day or before.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: I heard of the tragedy, I should imagine, at about five minutes to four for the first time. Although I was in the mela itself till long afterwards and not very far from that place, I did not hear about it.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH: Sir, in view of what the Prime Minister has said that this is a very great national tragedy, will this House be given an opportunity to discuss this matter?

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think the Prime Minister has made a statement pointing out that this is not the occasion or the opportunity for doing anything more than expressing our deep sorrow for the people who have died there. But he said that when the Committee's report is available, this House will have an opportunity of discussing this matter. I am now putting a motion of condolence:

"This House expresses its deep sorrow at the sad death of numbers of people and conveys to the bereaved families its deepest sympathy."

That is the motion and in sympathy with that I would ask you to stand up for a minute.

(Hon. Members stood in silence for a minute.)

SHRI B. GUPTA (West Bengal): On a point of privilege .....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Wait, wait. I am standing. It is my privilege to stand here. The discussion on the President's Address will take place on the 17th and 18th of February 1954. Amendments to the motion of thanks may be sent in till 4 P.M. tomorrow, the 16th February 1954. Yes, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA: Mr. Chairman, I want to draw your attention to the speech of the Prime Minister just now made. We are all sorry for the tragedy that has occurred in the Kumbh Mela and it is right that we stood up and showed our condolences. If the Prime Minister had confined himself just to expressing condolences in the House, that would have been a different matter. But he has come out with certain other propositions, for example, that this House cannot discuss these things even though it is a question of national tragedy.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He said that as the matter is under investigation by a committee.....

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA: Mr. Chairman, the whole point is this that the way in which the enquiry committee itself has been constituted is to be discussed because this enquiry committee is without any non-official members.

DIWAN CHAM AN LALL (Punjab): On a point of order. Is the hon. Member competent to raise any point, now that you have put the motion and carried it? Is he moving it as a point of order?

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA: I am entitled to say it because I am not referring to the motion of condolences. I am referring to the speech which the hon. Prime Minister has made here in which he has deprived this House of its right even to discuss the constitution of that particular committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is for the local Government. It is the U.P. Government who have appointed the committee and Members in that legislature? may take any kind of objection.

SHRI B. GUPTA: We have not been consulted, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

SHRI B. GUPTA: May I make a submission, Sir?

*(Some hon. Members rose.)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order. Sit down. I know that you are all articulate, but all of you cannot stand together.

SHRI B. GUPTA: Only one is standing now, Sir. You have to give your final ruling on this point. We understand that a committee has been appointed by the Government, but at the same time it is also clear that the Government has not taken us into confidence with regard to the formation of that committee. Now, Sir, the Prime Minister has made a speech here. We would like to know whether this matter is going to be discussed here. When a national disaster takes place, it is the duty of Parliament to immediately take up the subject for discussion and .....

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: I should like, Sir, in spite of this great tragedy, to submit to the House that excitement does not help in clear thinking.

SHRI P. SUNDARAYYA: On a point of order. Sir. Can it be said that we are all excited?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: The hon. Member opposite says that he was not consulted when the committee was appointed. He has also made certain other rather remarkable statements. But it is not the normal practice while appointing committees to consult any hon. Member. (Interruptions.) So far as this committee is concerned, I got to know of it from the newspapers. It is the Uttar Pradesh Government that has appointed it. I got the names I from newspapers.

SHRI B. GUPTA: When the committee was appointed, even the Prime Minister was not consulted. That is a very strange thing. (*Interruption*).

SHRI, JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: If I may submit again, Sir, I would ask the hon. Member to control himself, if he can help us all in this House. It is perfectly true, and he can take it, that the committee was appointed without consulting me or the Government of India.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH: We accept it.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: The fact that an enquiry was going to take place was obvious. That matter was mentioned to me immediately after by the Chief Minister. But as to the members of that committee I knew nothing till the next day when I read it in the newspapers. The hon. Member says that there are no non-officials on that committee. The committee consists of an ex-Chief Justice. Mr. Kamla Kant Varma, of the Allahabad High Court, Dr. Panna Lai, a senior retired service man, who retired some years ago and who has nothing to do with the Government now, and<sup>1</sup> the Chief Engineer. If I may say so, it is an excellent committee. The Chief Engineer might be considered to be connected with Government, but the others have no connection with Government at all.....

KHWAJA INAIT ULLAH (Bihar): Sorry, they are not Communists, Sir.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: It is a matter of gratification to me, Sir, personally speaking, that the hon. Members opposite are taking so much interest in this matter, whatever their motive or purpose might be.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH: Only one point remains to be solved so far as we are concerned. The committee is appointed by the Government of Uttar Pradesh, according to our Prime Minister's statement. It may not help us to feel that we are helpless in the matter of discussing the committee's report. It may not be said that the

committee is appointed by the Uttar Pradesh Government and this Government has nothing to do with it, and therefore we should be excluded from discussing the committee's report.

MR CHAIRMAN: You are trying to give them an argument.

Sum H. D. RAJAH: We want an assurance that this committee's report will be placed on the Table.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: It is clear and in my opinion this subject normally should not come up before this House.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH: See.

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: It is for you, Sir, to decide at the proper time what we should discuss or what we should not discuss. This should, not come up because it is entirely a provincial matter. (*Interruption*). I want to make that perfectly clear, because it would be a bad precedent if we ignore the rules and regulations and the practices of this House. Nevertheless, I say that so far as this committee's report is concerned, when it comes, we shall certainly place it on the Table of the House. And speaking on behalf of Government, quite apart from creating a precedent, we shall have no objection in discussing this matter.

SHRI B. RATH (Orissa): I submit that the Central Government over the last one year attempted to attract people from all parts of the country to this place and they are certainly responsible for the killing of the people there.

MR. CHAIRMAN: All those questions will have to be raised at the time when the matter comes up for discussion and not now.

SHRI H. D. RAJAH: Anyway, we have your assurance that we will have an opportunity to discuss that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We will adjourn till 2 P.M. tomorrow,

SHRI H. N. KUNZRU (Uttar Pradesh): Before we adjourn, I should like to say this. The President has referred to this tragedy in his Address. Shall we be out of order in referring to it in our speeches? We cannot be debarred from speaking on it. May I also put one question to the Prime Minister? He has expressed his satisfaction with the personnel of the committee. Is he aware that there is great dissatisfaction in Allahabad with it?

SHRI JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: I am not aware of it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Is there anything else you wish to say?

SuRi| JAWAHARLAL NEHRU: It is not really a matter for me to say. I wished to draw a clear distinction

in my statement about the subjects—provincial and other subjects—that could be discussed in this House. It is for you to decide. But, having drawn that clear distinction, I wish to say that in this particular matter the Government does not wish to come in the way of any discussion on it at any time provided the facts have been ascertained, and again, subject to your decision, in the course of the debate on the President's Address, I take it that it will be open to any hon. Member to refer to this matter.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned till 2 P.M. tomorrow. We will meet from 2 P.M. to 7 P.M.

The Council then adjourned till two of the clock on Tuesday, the 16th February 1954.