

a copy each (in English and Hindi) of the Fifth Report of the Standing Committee on Defence on the 'Army Cantonments'.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

• **MR. CHAIRMAN:** I have to inform Members that the Business Advisory Committee at its meeting held on Thursday, the 25th February, 1999 allotted one hour for the discussion on the Resolution regarding President's Rule in the State of Goa.

The Committee also recommended that the sittings of the Rajya Sabha fixed for Monday, the 1st March, 1999 and Wednesday, the 3rd March, 1999, be cancelled.

The Committee further recommended that in order to complete the listed Government Business, the House should sit beyond 5.00 p.m., each day, from Friday, the 26th February, 1999.

MOTION FOR ELECTION TO THE CENTRAL ADVISORY BOARD OF ARCHAEOLOGY

मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्री (डा० मुरला मनोहर जोशी): सभापति महोदय, मैं आपको अनुमति से निम्नलिखित प्रस्ताव उपस्थित करता हूँ:—

"भारत सरकार (भारतीय पुरातत्व सर्वेक्षण) संकल्प संख्यांक 9-1/97-ईई, दिनांक 15 दिसम्बर, 1998 के पैरा 1 के उपबंध के अनुसार में, यह सभा ऐसी रीति से, जैसा सभापति निर्देश दे, सभा के सदस्यों में से एक सदस्य को केन्द्रीय पुरातत्व सलाहकार बोर्ड का सदस्य होने के लिए निर्वाचित करने की कार्यवाही करे।"

The question was put and the motion was adopted

STATEMENT REGARDING GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL AND MINISTRY OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI DILIP RAY): Sir, I beg to announce that the Government Business in this House for

the next week commencing 1st March, 1999 will consist of:

1 Further discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address.

2 Consideration and passing of following Bills as passed by Lok Sabha:—

(a) The Explosive Substances (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 1998.

(b) The Coffee (Amendment) Bill, 1998.

3. Consideration and passing of the North-Eastern Council (Amendment) Bill, 1998.

4. Discussion on the Resolution seeking approval of the Proclamation issued by the President in the state of Goa.

RE. STRIKE BY BANK EMPLOYEES

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA (West Bengal): Sir, everybody knows that 13 lakh bank employees are on strike. They were on strike yesterday, and they are on strike today. There is an action plan announced by the Joint Committee which says that there will be continuous strike from 17th March, paralysing the entire banking system. Sir, I am not going into the merits of their demands. But, at the same time, taking into consideration the economic crisis of the country and taking into consideration the crisis of the country and taking into consideration the crisis in which some of the banks—not all, may be a few—are today, I appeal to the bank employees, their unions to be reasonable and realistic so far as their economic demands are concerned. I expect a little more realism from them. While saying so, I must say that the Indian Banks Association must end their confrontationalist attitude which is precipitating the strike. Who are the sufferers? It is the common people who are the sufferers. The traders and businessmen have their own alternative economy. They know how to manage

their own payments when the banks are not in business. Therefore, the distress of the common people should be looked into by the bank employees, the bank managements and the Government. The most unfortunate and painful thing is the role that the Ministry of Finance is playing. May be, the Finance Minister is too busy in preparing his hard Budget for the common people. That is his job. But he should have found time to ask the bank employees as also the bank managements to meet him and he could have presided over a meeting for a solution. The most unfortunate thing is the attitude shown by the Government. I do not know what the policy of the Government is. There was a strike in the All India Institute of Medical Sciences. There is a strike in the Pusa institute. There is a strike in the banks. I do not know whether the Government has abdicated its responsibility of bringing the strikes that are continuing in different parts of the country to a negotiated settlement. It is, in my opinion, a dereliction of duty. I appeal, if I am so allowed, to the Government of India not to be so unresponsive, in a way irresponsible, so far as this economic and important development is concerned. My special appeal to the Prime Minister is to take upon himself the responsibility of ending this impasse. The continuous strike in the banks must be averted at any cost. With a sense of realisation from the employees, with a sense of responsiveness from the managements and with a sense of responsibility from the Government this crisis of impending continuous strike must be averted. The country cannot allow the banks to go on strike like this; it cannot allow the distress of the common people to be continued like this. The country cannot afford this.

SHRI KHAGEN DAS (Tripura): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I associate myself with the views expressed by Shri Gurudas Das Gupta.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Kerala): Sir, I want to associate myself with the views expressed by Shri Gurudas Das Gupta and express my sentiments. It may affect, the Indian people and the Indian economy. Even today this Parliament is in darkness. We do not know what is going on between the bank employees and the negotiating machinery. In fact, the Labour Minister is sitting here. As Shri Gurudas Das Gupta has said, I am not going into the merits or demerits of their demands. What I am asking the Government is not to push the nation into an economic crisis by precipitating the strike in the banking sector. From this forum I make an appeal to the workers, the employees, also. The Government is responsible and the workers are also equally responsible for this. But the Government should not close its eyes and say, "we do not see anything; you go on". That is very dangerous. I believe, taking into consideration the economic situation, this country cannot afford to have a strike by the bank employees from 17th March onwards. This country may plunge into an economic disaster. I appeal to the Government, through you, Sir, that they must, at the earliest, try to discuss, negotiate and settle the strike. I believe the workmen, the employees, would also show a gesture of coming to the table and try to settle the strike at the earliest. Mr. Labour Minister, it is your function also to persuade all the three components, the Government, the Indian Banks Association and the Federation. I appeal to the Labour Minister to intervene, if necessary, to avoid any indefinite strike.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Chairman, Sir, as regards this bank strike, it is not a token one. They are going to commence the strike in an indefinite manner from 17th March. It is not merely a question of interaction between the Indian Banks Association and the United Forum of Bank Unions. The seventh bipartite wage settlement expired in October, 1997. The last bipartite wage settlement expired in

October, 1997. The bank employees demanded 18% increase without retiral benefits and they demanded 15% increase with retiral benefits. The Indian Banks Association started with 8%. But it has not made any revised offer.

That is the main issue. If any revised offer had been made, they would have come to some point. But it is not so. When it is not so, Sir, instead of coming to some conciliation, they have provoked it. One head of a bank said that if they deduct two days' salary of the officials, they can save three crore rupees. Another bank official said that if it goes on like this, the management will be on the offensive.

This observation is made by the topmost seat of the Indian Banks Association. This is the say the Indian Banks Association unnecessarily, unwantedly, provoked the bank employees. Therefore, I appeal, through you, Sir, that the Government should come forward. Even the Prime Minister should intervene and see to it that an indefinite strike does not take place; otherwise, the market services will be disrupted completely. So, I again appeal that the Government should see to it that the indefinite strike is stopped once and for all. The Government should come forward and be lenient with the bank employees. Another thing, Sir, is every three years or five years, we cannot go on like this. Let them come forward and find out some norms. And based on those norms, the payment and other benefits should be fixed. Hereinafter, if there is any talk with bank employees, associations, etc. that should be based on those norms only. The norms should be perpetual, unless and until any basic structure is changed. Only the Government can decide about the norms that will be applicable to employees, associations etc. Therefore, the Government should come forward to help the association or the union to find out norms. With this, Sir, I conclude my speech.

SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA (Bihar):
Sir, I would like to associate myself with the issue raised by Comrade Gurudas Das Gupta. It is a very serious issue, Sir. The bank employees were on strike yesterday and also today. They have announced to go in for an indefinite strike from 17th March, 1999. It is true that the present economic situation of the country is really grim. We have gone back to 1991 conditions. We cannot afford to be there. The banking sector is very important for country's economic development and prosperity. So, it is very essential that the employees are not dissatisfied. The rationale behind the strike should be seen and negotiated. The Labour Minister should take a lead in these matters and he should coordinate the issue so that the matter is settled once and for all. There should not be any reason for the workers to go on strike. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU (Karnataka): Sir, I raise to associate myself with the issue raised by Comrade Gurudas Das Gupta. Sir, all of us should keep in mind the economic situation of the country also. Then, as Virumbiji said, there should be some sort of mechanism or formulation to be arrived at; otherwise, everytime somebody will give notice and go on strike disrupting public life, then negotiation, then some sort of settlement etc. This sort of activity, particularly in the banking sector is not good for the country. So, I request the employees who are on strike to leave the confrontationalist attitude and I also call upon the Government to come to a negotiated settlement with bank employees. Because, the main issue is, more than the employees, the public is suffering. Keeping that in mind, the Government should take the initiative and the employees should also not go in for a confrontation. They should come back to the negotiating table and settle the issue across the table.

SHRI S., VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: Sir, the Government should make a *suo motu* statement.

SHRI R. MARGABANDU (Tamil Nadu): Sir, cutting across party lines, I would like to say that the economic conditions of the nation should be taken in to consideration while acceding to the demands of the organised sector. We should not forget that whenever the organised sector makes a demand, its demand is fulfilled. So far as the unorganised sector like farmers is concerned, their interest is not taken care of. I have come to know that 50 per cent of the Government revenue goes towards salaries of Government servants. Very little amount is left for meeting the demands of the common people. These things also should be taken into consideration.

Of course, a reasonable demand can be accepted by the Government. Sir, I would like to request the ruling party as well as the Opposition parties to take into consideration the overall interest of the nation. One cannot accept the demand of every organisation. I heard that they are demanding 18 per cent increase. But the Government has agreed to give ten per cent increase.

Now the Government is prepared to give 11 per cent increase. But the bank employees are saying that unless give them 18 per cent increase, they will go in for an indefinite strike from 17th March onwards.

Sir, my humble request to the whole House is, we should take into consideration the problems of the nation. We should also take into consideration the problems of the unorganised sector. My earnest appeal to the bank employees is to take a reasonable stand and come to some settlement with the Government. Thank you.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Sir, the hon. Member has misinformed the House about the package offered by the Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is all right Shri Naresb yadav.

श्री नरेश यादव (बिहार): सभापति महोदय, बैंक के साढ़े बारह लाख अधिकारियों और कर्मचारियों की सम्पूर्ण हड़ताल की ओर श्री गुरुदास दासगुप्त जी ने सदन का ध्यान खींचा है, मैं उससे अपने आपको सम्बद्ध करते हुए आपके माध्यम से माननीय प्रधान मंत्री जी से आग्रह करना चाहता हूँ कि कहीं न कहीं बैंक के यह साढ़े बारह लाख कर्मचारी इस देश के नागरिक हैं और इस देश में अपनी सेवा दे रहे हैं। सरकार को सम्बेदनहीनता का परिचय नहीं देना चाहिए, सम्बेदनशीलता का परिचय देना चाहिए जिससे कि जो बैंक कर्मचारियों की मांग है उस पर मिल बैठकर तय करें और देश हित में निर्णय करें जिससे कि आज जो देश का करोबार ठप्प है और आगे आने वाले 17 मार्च से सम्पूर्ण हड़ताल भी होने वाली है, इस ओर सदन का ध्यान आकर्षित करते हुए आग्रह करना चाहूँगा कि तुरन्त माननीय प्रधान मंत्री को इस पर ध्यान देना चाहिए। बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद।

SHRI ABANI ROY (West Bengal): Sir, I would like to associate myself with the issue raised by Shri Gurudas Das Gupta. Looking at the problems which the people are facing, I would like to request the hon. Prime Minister and the hon. Finance Minister to make some arrangement as early as possible to avoid the strike which the bank employees are going to hold from 17th March onwards. Some negotiable and honourable settlement should be reached at the earliest.

SHRI JIBON ROY (West Bengal): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to associate myself with the issue raised by Shri Gurudas Das Gupta. I have well taken the advice given by Shri Venkaiah Naidu. Workers cannot afford to take the path of confrontation. They don't have that much strength. at the same time, I would like to say that if the workers are beaten up, they will give a reply. Initially, the government had taken a stand that they would come to some settlement in a piecemeal way and bankwise. It is a tradition that the banking industry makes negotiations at the national level. Sir,

they wanted to negotiate in a piecemeal way to divide the workers. It has vindicated the negative approach of the Government to settle this issue. They are sitting tight on ten per cent. Sir, the bank workers and the bank unions are eager to come to some settlement. If they are given something reasonable, they will negotiate and settle the issue. I would request my esteemed friend to advise the Government and the Finance Ministry to call a meeting immediately and negotiate with them. At the same time, I would also request the hon. Labour Minister to resolve the problem. The Labour Ministry represents both labour and the employer. Now what is happening is that, as if they have to represent the employer alone and not the labour, the labourers are not taken care of. Your Agenda of Governance says that labour is the party and partner of the Government. But you don't call meetings to discuss the matter with them. I would like to know what steps the Labour Ministry has taken in the matter.

श्री गांधी आज़ाद (उत्तर प्रदेश): धन्यवाद सभापति महोदय। मैं अपने को इस विषय से सम्बद्ध करते हुए केवल इतना कहना चाहता हूँ कि बैंक कर्मचारियों की हड़ताल जेनरल है और इसके कारणों का पता लगाना चाहिए और उनके निवारण का कोई उपाय किया जाना चाहिए। धन्यवाद।

श्री संजय निरूपम (महाराष्ट्र): सभापति महोदय, गुरुदास जी ने जो प्रश्न उठाया है, उस प्रश्न से मैं अपने आप को सम्बद्ध करता हूँ। बैंक कर्मचारियों की हड़ताल का मैं एक भुक्तभोगी हूँ। कल से एक चेक लेकर मैं घूम रहा हूँ जो कि एनकैश नहीं हो रहा है। मेरी जेब में सिर्फ़ सौ रुपये पड़े हैं। बैंकों में हड़ताल कोई नई बात नहीं है। कई बार भुझे लगता है कि बैंक वाले काम कम करते हैं और हड़ताल ज्यादा करते हैं। मुख्य मुद्दा उनका वेतन वृद्धि का होता है, हमेशा यही होता है। इस बार भी वेतन वृद्धि का प्रश्न है। मेरे ख्याल से जो मैंने अखबारों में पढ़ा है कि सरकार दस परसेंट तक बढ़ाने की बात मान चुकी है और उनका जो टोटल वेतन वृद्धि का प्रश्न है, वे 56 परसेंट की बात कर रहे हैं। तो कहीं न कहीं दोनों को पीछे हटना पड़ेगा। सरकार को थोड़ा सा आगे आ जाना चाहिए और बैंक की युनियन्स को

अपनी जिद से पीछे हट जाना चाहिए ताकि हड़ताल खत्म हो सके और जो डेडलॉक बना है, वह डेडलॉक खत्म हो जाए क्योंकि देश की आर्थिक स्थिति बहुत खराब है। बैंकों में जब-जब हड़ताल होती है तो हज़ारों करोड़ रुपये का नुकसान एक दिन में हो जाता है। कल हमारे यहां जट आने वाला है। यशवन्त सिन्हा जी जूझ रहे हैं कि किस तरह से इस देश की आर्थिक स्थिति को दुरुस्त किया जाए। तो ऐसी स्थिति में बैंक कर्मचारियों को पूरे राष्ट्र का खयाल रखते हुए राष्ट्रवादी हितों का खयाल रखते हुए बैंक की जो हड़ताल है, वापस ले लेनी चाहिए और सरकार को हड़ताल को समाप्त करने के लिए, बैंक कर्मचारियों को पटाने के लिए तत्काल सामने आ कर इस डेडलॉक को खत्म करना चाहिए। धन्यवाद।

MR. CHAIRMAN: We will now take up the next item... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: The labour Minister is here. The entire House is concerned with it. Let the Labour Minister say something. Let him react.

SHRI S. VIDHUTHALAI VIRUMBI: sir, let him react.

SHRI JIBON ROY: Let the Minister respond.

श्रम मंत्री (डॉ॰ सत्यनारायण जटिया): सदन में माननीय सदस्यों ने जो चिंता व्यक्त की है, उसके बारे में सरकार गंभीर है। मेरा आग्रह होगा कि हड़ताल को समाप्त करके चर्चा के लिए अनुकूल वातावरण तैयार करें और बातों का ठीक प्रकार से निराकरण हो सके, इस प्रकार का प्रयास किया जाए। इसलिए मैं आग्रह करूंगा कि हड़ताल समाप्त करके इसके लिए अनुकूल स्थिति पैदा करें, इसके लिए मेरा आह्वान भी है।

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: This is not the issue. The Labour Minister should take the initiative... (*Interruptions*) This is not the way the Government should respond... (*Interruptions*)

श्रीमती कमला सिन्हा: आपको तो आगे आकर समझौता कराना चाहिए।

श्री राजूभाई ए॰ परमार (गुजरात): आप हमारी भावनाओं को आगे बढ़ाएँ।

डॉ॰ सत्यनारायण जटिया: मैं आपकी भावनाओं से वित्त मंत्री जी को अवगत करऊंगा और इसमें क्या निष्कर्ष निकल सकता है, ऐसा प्रयास करूंगा।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, it is now 12.25 p.m. If the Members agree, since the Private Members' Business starts at 2.30 p.m., we can sit up till 1.30 and continue with the debate on Motion of Thanks on the President's Address...

SHRIMATI MAAMLA SINHA: No, not today, Sir.

आज तो जुमे का दिन है। आज तो एक बजे समाप्त होता ही है।

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you going to pray?

श्रीमती कमला सिन्हा: जरूर सबके साथ बैठकर प्रे कर लेंगे।

MOTION OF THANKS ON PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS—Contd.

SHRI M. VENKAI AH NAIDU (Karnataka): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I had just started speaking yesterday and the House had adjourned. I was speaking on the Motion of Thanks on President's Address to the Joint Session of Parliament.

The biggest problem in this country seems to be one of double-standards and hypocrisy. As Members, as political parties, after fifty years of our independence now, we should ponder over whether we should pursue this level of functioning in public life. In the President's Address there was a mention about the overall economic situation, as also the various initiatives taken by the Government. The nuclear tests conducted by India have brought recognition and respect to India in the entire world. Earlier, we were being treated as a weak and a meek nation. The situation has gone through a qualitative change and today India is respected and heard the world over. I should really compliment the hon. Prime Minister. He is the first Prime Minister to tell the super powers, "Let us go in for nuclear disarmament. You had earlier taken the lead in going in for nuclear weaponisation. Now you take the lead in going towards disarmament; We will follow you". All the time they had been teaching us and giving us sermons, but nobody was able to tell them to their face

what our hon. Prime Minister has told them. The hon. Prime Minister has put the actual situation and the path that we are pursuing before the world community. But unfortunately, my friends here and outside in the country, the Congress and the Left, are not clear about their stand even with regard to the nuclear tests. When people of India were appreciating it, my Congress friends started saying that Madam Gandhi had initiated this policy in 1974. Yes, Sir, it was initiated by Madam Gandhi in 1974. The entire country, including my party, had appreciated it and had stood behind the then Prime Minister at that time. But today the Congress starts attacking the Government for each and every thing saying that because we have conducted nuclear tests, tensions are building up and so on. But so far as the Left, which has got so many intelligent people who have spent their entire lives in public service, is concerned, it is very unfortunate. I was really surprised and I want to be enlightened by my friends in this House. The Communist politburo condemned the Government. On the one hand, they complimented the scientists—I was really amazed at their double-standards... (*Interruptions*)

SHRI JIBON ROY (West Bengal): We don't want the Indian Government to play into the hands of the RSS. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI M. VENKAI AH NAIDU: Sir, I would like to bring this to the notice of my friends. On the one hand, you congratulate the scientists for developing the nuclear capability and, on the other hand, you condemn the Government for allowing the scientists to do so. It is just like going to a family in which a newly-married couple is blessed with a child, calling on the mother and congratulating her saying that it is excellent that she got a good baby, and then turning towards the father and saying, "What man! What a bad and nasty thing you have done." I mean, what is this congratulating the mother and condemning the father? How