

ports, let us hear from the horse's mouth. So, let us know what exactly they are going to say on this particular point.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

India's non-participation in Commonwealth games

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN :
Shri Eduardo Faleiro will make a statement.

THE MINISTER OF STATE
IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO) : Sir, the Hon Members have no doubt been following recent development regarding the Commonwealth Games scheduled to start in Edinburgh from July 24.

The Government kept in close touch with the Governments of the Frontline States. The Prime Minister was personally in contact with leaders of some of the Frontline States in an effort to work out some formula whereby the Games could be salvaged. The Government's endeavour was to explore every possible avenue so that our athletes could have the opportunity to compete in the Games. Unfortunately, some of the recent statements of the British Government have left no doubt in our mind that they are not immediately prepared to implement even the minimum measures which all the Commonwealth countries had agreed to at Nassau, in case there was no progress in the direction towards the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa.

Under the circumstances, the Government decided, with great regret, not to participate in the Games. Our decision is an expression of our solidarity with the oppressed people of South Africa and with the Frontline States. It is still our hope that

concerted action by the Commonwealth to implement necessary economic measures to end apartheid in South Africa will follow soon.

SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUASEM (West Bengal) : It is good to see that at long last good sense has prevailed upon the Government of India and after protracted vacillation the Government of India has been able to come out of the vacillations and it has decided for India's withdrawal from the Commonwealth Games scheduled to hold from 24th July.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the decision to boycott should not be viewed merely and simply as a decision for non-participation in a particular Games. This decision of ours to boycott is to be interpreted and viewed as our strong protest against the British Government's continued support to the barbaric racist regime of South Africa. It is our protest against Mrs. Thatcher's reluctance to impose sanctions against the Pretoria regime; and it is a gesture of expressing our solidarity with the African States in their fight against Apartheid in South Africa. Viewed from all these angles, the Government of India's decision is very much welcome. In spite of that what remains to be observed is that India did not take the lead in the boycott move. We just joined in the Games boycott. It was legitimately expected of India because of its unique position enjoyed by it within the Commonwealth and particularly as the leader of the NAM that India would take the leadership role in the boycott move. We should have taken the initiative. We could have made a unilateral declaration of the boycott and pulled our weight in persuading and mobilising other countries for the boycott move. But instead of doing, we just vacillated in the name of some decision by the African countries in the meeting of Harare on the 18th of this month. This is the most unfortunate aspect of the

[Shri Mostafa Bin Quasem]

whole issue. There are newspaper reports that many staunchly anti-Apartheid leaders all the world round have also described that the position of India as 'ambivalent' Neak and ballist. In view of these vacillations on the part of the Government to decide for final withdrawal from the Games, I have the apprehensions that this might have caused some damage to the image of our country as the leader of the NAM. Sir, may I know from the hon. Minister whether this delay has done sole damage to the image of our country which we enjoyed as the leader of the NAM ? With these few words, I conclude.

SHRI P A R V A T H A N E N I UPENDRA (Andhra Pradesh): Mr Deputy Chairman, Sir, I welcome the Government's decision to pull out of the Commonwealth Games. But as my predecessor has rightly said we have just followed the African States and we have left a good opportunity to give a lead to the Commonwealth nations in this matter. I was present in the House of Commons on the 10th of this month when the British Prime Minister made some comments regarding the sanctions against South Africa. The manner in which she was talking and the way she gave a provocative to the 'Guardian' on this issue it was very clear that the British Government and the British Prime Minister are keen to protect South Africa and support its racist policies. There was no trace of regret or remorse in the British Prime Minister's attitude and speech in this regard. We should have strongly protested against this. And we should have been the first nation to withdraw from the Games and give a lead to the African countries and other Commonwealth countries. Instead of doing that we have wasted a number of days. The Opposition parties have resolved long time ago and they also told the Prime Minister that we should immediately announce our decision to withdraw, but the Government vacillated for so many days as if it was afraid of the British Prime Minister and ultimately, hesi-

tatingly this decision has been announced. It is very unfortunate and I strongly feel that we have missed a good opportunity of retaining our leadership of the African nations in the Commonwealth. We have somehow given an impression to the other nations in the Commonwealth that we have some reservations on this issue. I once again protest against this attitude of the Government while supporting the decision ultimately taken.

SHRI ALADI ARUNA *alias* V. ARUNACHALAM (Tamil Nadu) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, the House is aware of the fact that Mrs. Thatcher is blindly supporting the Apartheid South Africa without any justification ignoring the voice of the front line African States and other Members of the Commonwealth of Nations. Despite the earnest efforts of Queen Elizabeth Mrs. Thatcher has not relaxed her rigidity. So, in order to teach a lesson along with frontline African States, our Government has taken a right decision and on behalf of Anna-D.M.K. we welcome this decision. The Commonwealth of nations is nothing but a copy of the political history of the Confederating of Dullas and Athian League, and now it is a clear indication for dismantling the Commonwealth in course of time and Mrs. Thatcher has paved way towards the end.

श्री कल्याण राय (उत्तर प्रदेश) : आदर्शणीय उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, प्रधान मंत्री ने दक्षिण अफ्रीका के सवाल पर कदम उठाया है वह पूरे देश की जनता के मन के अनुकूल है और सारे राष्ट्र ने इस कदम का स्वागत किया है और विरोधी दल के लोगों को भी इस कदम का स्वागत करना चाहिए और उसमें 'इफ' एंड 'बट' नहीं लगाना चाहिए। साउथ अफ्रीका के सवाल पर महात्मा गांधी से लेकर आज तक कांग्रेस पार्टी ने जो स्टैंड लिया है और अखिरात के किसी देश ने नहीं लिया। हमारा देश जो राष्ट्रमंडल का सबसे प्रमुख देश है उसने बहुत सच-विचार के बाद यह कदम उठाया है। इसलिए मैं विरोधी दल के नेताओं

से अपील करूंगा कि इस सबाल पर जो प्रधान मंत्री ने ऐतिहासिक कदम उठाया है राष्ट्र-हित को मद्देनजर रखते हुए उन्हें उसकी सराहना करनी चाहिए। इन शब्दों के साथ सरकार ने जो कदम उठाया है हम उसकी सराहना करते हैं और देश की करोड़ों-करोड़ों जनता की तरफ से दक्षिण अफ्रीका की महान जनता की आजादी की लड़ाई का समर्थन करते हैं।

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA (West Bengal) : Sir at long last, it seems that the youthful leader of our country has been able to pick up courage and give up vacillation. Anyway, he had vacillated too much. That is true but anyway, I congratulate them on behalf of my Party for taking a courageous stand after so much of vacillation. But I should tell our Minister that justice delayed is justice denied. Therefore, a good thing should be done in time rather than doing it much later. Anyway, I take this time in asking my young Minister of Foreign Affairs that it is not a question of expressing solidarity alone. India had expressed its solidarity with the African people long before. Perhaps, you and I were not born at that time. Therefore, the question is not of expressing solidarity, the question was India should have taken the stand to give a rebuff to the racist policy of Margaret Thatcher. We should have taken a lead to give that rebuff and that giving of rebuff has been delayed very much by this belated action. Anyway, I take this opportunity not only to congratulate the Government but to demand that it is not enough to break-off from the Commonwealth Games, it is necessary that we break-off from the Commonwealth itself as a mark of our solidarity with the peoples fight against racism.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY (Tamil Nadu) : Mr Deputy Chairman, Sir, our hon. Prime Minister thundered and roared like a lion in Nassau Bahamas Commonwealth meet to dismantle the abominable structure of apartheid in South Africa, but if you are really a crusader, you

should have been a pioneer, you should have taken the initiative. Only after the frontline African States took the decision, till that time, you were vacillating and vacillating. All the athletes were brought and they were expecting that they would be sent to participate in the games. After all these things and realising the importance of the boycott, you have at least saved the honour of this country. Therefore, I would request the Government not to repeat such a vacillating attitude hereafter on such matters.

SHRI GULAM RASOOL MATTO (Jammu and Kashmir) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I think I will not be divulging a secret when I say that the other day when the Prime Minister met the Opposition leaders, the Opposition leaders were unanimous in requesting the Prime Minister that we should boycott the games. The Prime Minister stated there that he was in touch with the frontline States who were meeting on the 18th. So this is a very good step and we all, welcome it. I have one or two questions to ask of the hon. Minister in this connection. The first question is that a news item has appeared yesterday that the Commonwealth Games authorities are going to have a retaliatory action against those who are not participating in the games. What is the reaction of the Government of India in that regard? The second thing that has appeared today is with regard to the reaction of the British Government on the action taken by the Government of India. The British Government only expressed its regret that we are not participating and said that by not participating we will not be assisting the cause of South Africa. What is the reaction of the Government of India on this issue? These are questions that I would like the hon. Minister to answer.

श्री अश्विनी कुमार (बिहार) : माननीय उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, सरकार ने जो कदम उठाया है हम उसका स्वागत करते हैं। भले ही वह देर से उठाया है परन्तु दूरस्त उठाया।

[श्री अश्विनी कुमार]

है। मुझे इतना ही कहना है कि कामन वेल्थ गेम्स का जो हमने बहिष्कार किया है और इंग्लैंड को जो दक्षिण अफ्रीका के प्रति पालिसी है, कहीं न कहीं हमारे देश में भी उसके प्रति कुछ भावितियाँ हैं। जो आज एक समाचार जनसत्ता में प्रकाशित हुआ है कि जो खिलाड़ी वहाँ जाने वाले थे उन को इस निर्णय से घोर निराशा उत्पन्न हुई है। तो हमारी राजनीतिक विचारधारा है और जो खिलाड़ियों की विचारधारा है वह केवल खेल से जुड़ी हुई है यह देख कर मुझे अतीव कष्ट हुआ। मैं विदेश मंत्री जी का ध्यान इस ओर आकर्षित करना चाहता हूँ कि हमारे देश के खिलाड़ी जो हमारे अम्बेसेडर बन कर दूसरे देशों में जाते हैं उन की इस प्रकार की राजनीतिक शिक्षा-दीक्षा भी होनी चाहिए कि वे समझ सकें कि हमारे देश का हित और अहित क्या है। और यदि ऐसा होता तो जो निराशा का प्रसंग आया वह नहीं आया होता। उन को समझना चाहिए कि ऐसा निर्णय ले कर हम लोगों ने एक त्याग किया है तपस्या को है देश के स्वाभिमान के लिये। इस प्रकार इस क्षेत्र में जो कमी है उस की ओर सरकार को ध्यान देना चाहिए।

श्री बीरेन्द्र वर्मा (उत्तर प्रदेश) : माननीय उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, भारत सरकार द्वारा जो कदम उठाया गया है मैं उस को हृदय से एप्रीशियेट करता हूँ, स्वागत करता हूँ, प्रशंसा करता हूँ। संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघ की जब स्थापना हुई थी उस समय मान्यवर इंग्लैंड भी एक प्रमुख देश था, लेकिन मुझे दुःख है कि जिन सिद्धान्तों का प्रतिपादन संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघ के उद्देश्यों में किया गया है साउथ अफ्रीका की सरकार उन सब का उल्लंघन कर रही है। उन्होंने पिछले 30 वर्ष से जब से संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघ की स्थापना हुई होगी, यह बराबर किया है और दुःख यह है कि संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघ की स्थापना करने वाले प्रमुख राष्ट्र इंग्लैंड, उस के प्रधान मंत्री उन सिद्धान्तों की स्वयं अवहेलना कर रहे हैं। खास तौर पर जो ज्यादातया हो रही है साउथ अफ्रीका के देशवासियों पर, जो वहाँ बहुमत में हैं, जिन का राय वहाँ होना चाहिए था, आज

उनको वहाँ कुचला जा रहा है। उनके अधिकारों को कुचला जा रहा है। और अपारिथिड की पालिसी वहाँ निर्लज्जता से चलायी जा रही है। उनके साथ सहानुभूति प्रदर्शित करने के लिये जिन अफ्रीकन देशों ने इस बायकाट के सिद्धान्त को अपनाया है और उनकी हमदस्ती में आपने जो अपने को रखा है संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघ के सिद्धान्तों को ऊँचा उठाने के लिये और उन गरीबों को उठाने के लिये, उसके लिये मैं इस कदम का हृदय से स्वागत करता हूँ।

SHRI L. K. JHA (Bihar) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, I join all the Members who have welcomed this decision. The only reason why I got up to say a few words is that some Members have referred to the delay as they call it, and accused the Government of vacillation in not having taken the lead in the matter. I think this is a misinterpretation of the position. It was deliberate decision in my judgement to leave the lead to the front-line States. To take a popular cause and be the first to espouse it in order to show leadership is, of course, a matter of political expediency to which we are all parties. In international affairs let us not forget that the black nations want to feel that this is a matter which is of primary concern to them and they should be the first to take a formal concerted decision. And once the Harare decision was known no time was lost in declaring that we shall give our full support to it. So, to my mind, it was not an act of vacillation not a sign of weakness or hesitation, but a very mature, a sober act of respect to the nation, to the leadership and to the interests of the people most affected, our sympathy for whom has never been in doubt as is clear from all the past history of ours.

Thank you.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO: Mr. Deputy Chairman, permit me, through you, to thank all the honourable Members for having unani-

mously supported the decision of the Government not to participate in the Commonwealth Games. May I allay the fears of some of the Members about what they call the delay in this process. There was, in fact, no delay even for a moment. It has been said that we might have lost some credibility with the developing countries, particularly with African States. This is absolutely not the case. As the House is aware, we were the first country in the world to cut off diplomatic and trade relations with South Africa. It happened on the 17th July 1946, just two days back forty years were completed. We were the first country again to have taken the matter of apartheid before the United Nations General Assembly and it was at our instance that every year since then this matter of apartheid and racism in South Africa has figured consistently on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly. I am not talking merely of the past. In the present the image of the Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, is as bright and as vibrant as the name of Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Shrimati Indira Gandhi in the heart of every African, particularly of the oppressed black majority of South Africa. May I bring to the notice of the House, and I am sure the House will be glad to know that just yesterday we received a message from the African National Congress which, everybody know, is the sole, authentic, representative of the people of South Africa, a message from the General Secretary of the African National Congress from London congratulating this Government on its consistent stand and thanking this Government for its strong stand in support of the struggle against apartheid. We have also got a message the day before yesterday from the Chairman of the British Anti-Apartheid Group thanking this Government for its unflinching support to the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. So, I will agree with the honourable Members that our non-participation is a mark of protest against the policies or the

statements of the British Government so far. We had, however, hoped that the British Government would change its policy in view of the unanimous condemnation within the Commonwealth of the apartheid regime and the unanimous demand for sanctions or strong economic measures against the racist regime as the only possible alternative to a bloodbath of dimensions not witnessed since the Second World War. There are the words or terms in which the Eminent Persons's Group have, in their report, said.

Sir, we have expressed by this non-participation our solidarity with the frontline States. As has been rightly pointed out here, the frontline States are the States which bear the brunt, first and foremost, of the racist policies of the Pretoria regime. Sir, they were meeting in Harare over the weekend, I am sure the House would agree with me that it would not have been proper if we had taken a decision without due respect, deference, to their deliberations and without waiting for their deliberations, the deliberations of these most concerned and affected by any decision. We waited for their decision and since a decision came, we have taken this step.

Sir, I thank the honourable Members for their support to this.

SHRI PARVATHANENI UPENDRA : Sir, just only a minute. There was proposal that a parallel Commonwealth Games be organised. Will the Government of India consider such a proposal? I am asking this question because more than half the Commonwealth nations have boycotted these Games and a large number of athletes have been disappointed. Therefore, will you consider organising a parallel Games for those who have boycotted the Edinburgh Games or will you participated in such games if they are organised by others?

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO:
Well, this a very novel idea, if I may say so, and we have not applied our mind at all. Thank you, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN:
Just one minute. Mr Vishwa Bandhu Gupta wants to put a question.

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA (Delhi): Sir, one of the points has not been answered and I thought that I should bring it to the notice of the Minister. A large number of boys and girls who were to participate in these Games were disappointed and as a sportsman who has foregone going several times to such meets, I would say that this does hurt the sports interests of the countries and the teams which are to participate and also some of our sport standards. I think you may reply saying that this is a small sacrifice on the part of the Indian sportsmen which is the only way to show our protest and also our solidarity with the African countries.

SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO:
Sir, I hear some senior Members here saying that no sportsman was disappointed and this is very credible in the context of the fact that, as you know, Mr. Deputy Chairmen and as the House knows, the largest community of Indian origin anywhere in the world outside India is only in South Africa and more than a million of these people are there in South Africa and they have suffered a lot as a result of our boycott of South Africa. But, Sir, they have never shown any resentment. On the contrary, they have supported our measures and they fully support our stand. Thank you, Sir.

THE INDIAN ELECTRICITY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1986—Contd.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN :
We shall now continue with the discussion on the Indian Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 1986. Yes, Mr. Rameshwar Thakur to speak now.

SHRI RAMESHWAR THAKUR (Bihar) : Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Indian Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 1986.

The main objectives of the Bill are to discourage the theft of energy and tempering with meters and electrical installations, and to enhance the punishment for such offences by making the offences under the section 39 and 44 cognizable offences. This Bill provides for amendments to the existing sections of the Indian Electricity Act of 1910, that is, sections 39, 44, 47, 48, 49, and 50. The main amendment is to section 39 which deals with the theft of energy and which is proposed to be substituted by two new sections, that is section 39 and section 39A. Section 39 deals with theft of energy and provides for the circumstances under which if any person dishonestly abstracts, consumes or uses energy, he shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend up to three year or a fine which shall not be less than Rs. 1000/-. Now, this is one part. The second part is Section 39(a) which is a new section in which for the first time we have added that the persons who abets an offence—there were complaints that certain persons even belonging to the Department were abetting or some other persons were abetting and there was no punishment for them—will also be punished. This is a very commendable addition. This section says that any body who abets the offence will be punishable under Section 39 or Section 44, notwithstanding anything contained in section 116 of the Indian Penal Code and he will be punished as provided in section 39 as well as in section 44. Section 44 mentions about two parts, i.e. connections and re-connections. Reconections were not there earlier. They have been added and it deals with punishment which will be given. In place of Rs. 500/- it will be Rs. 5000/-. Earlier in the 1910 Act, there was one more clause which has been omitted now. This is for the hon. Minister to consider whether this should not have been there.