

[Shri R. Ramakrishnan]

wish to associate myself with Shri Mohanarangam in the plea for water supply to Madras City. Madras City is starved of drinking water for two decades. More than six million people are therein Madras. Let not small things come in the way. Let the Centre convene a conference and see that the matter is decided expeditiously.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: We are not against drinking water supply to Madras City. We are only against the diversion of the scheme for irrigation purposes.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: I have asked only for drinking water. Never have I said that it is for irrigation purposes. I say that Government of India should intervene and solve this problem of drinking water supply to Madras City. Madam, we are asking for drinking water only for Madras City where lakhs of people are suffering for want of drinking water.

SHRI M. S. GURUPADASWAMY: We are with you.

SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: Madam, he says he is with me. I am very happy.

THE PONDICHERRY UNIVERSITY BILL, 1985

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we shall take up the Pondicherry University Bill, 1985. Yes, Mr. Pant.

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (SHRI K. C. PANT): Madam, I beg to move:

"That the Bill to establish and incorporate a teaching and affiliating University in the Union Territory of Pondicherry and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, be taken into consideration."

Madam, before the House begins a general discussion on the Bill, I think

it would be appropriate if the background to this proposal is briefly explained to the House.

The proposal to establish a University in Pondicherry was first made in 1971 when the Sri Aurobindo's Centenary Celebrations Committee was considering various programmes for the Centenary Year. At the instance of the Committee, this proposal was examined in consultation with the University Grants Commission who accepted the proposal. The Pondicherry Administration was anxious that the University be established as a Central University as it had no resources to establish and develop a University. After further consultations the Government approved in principle the proposal for the establishment of a Central University in Pondicherry in January 1974 and appointed an Expert Committee to go into the details of the proposed University. The Committee submitted its Report in July, 1974. On the basis of this Report, detailed proposals were framed for establishing the University. However, the establishment of the University was deferred from time to time due to paucity of resources. The announcement of the Government's decision to establish a Central University in Pondicherry had aroused great expectations in the Union territory. The Government, therefore felt that any further delay in the implementation of the decision would be a source of great disappointment for the people of Pondicherry. We have, therefore, come forward with this Bill to establish the University.

The Pondicherry University shall be a teaching-cum-affiliating University offering facilities for advanced studies and research. The teaching departments of the University will conduct post-graduate education, leaving the colleges to concentrate on under-graduate courses. At present, the colleges

in Pondicherry are affiliated to three Universities: the University of Madras, the Andhra University in Waltair and the University at Calicut. With the establishment of this University, it will be possible to have a unified system of education in the Union territory of Pondicherry.

As mentioned earlier, the proposal to establish this University emanated from the deliberations of the Sri Aurobindo Centenary Celebrations Committee. The contributions made by Sri Aurobindo to the cultural and spiritual life of the country and the development and fame of Pondicherry need no reiteration. The vision of Sri Aurobindo though rooted in the soil of India, transcended the boundaries of the East and the West. We have, therefore, decided that the University should establish a school for studies in Eastern and Western Thought, to be named after Sri Aurobindo. It has also been decided that the University should commemorate Shri Subramania Bharati. His contributions to the national awakening and national integration have been monumental. As he is a Tamil poet of the first rank, we have decided that the Pondicherry University will have a school for studies in Tamil language and literature named after Sri Subramania Bharati.

SHRI R. RAMAKRISHNAN (Tamil Nadu): Very good.

SHRI K. C. PANT: For historical reasons, Pondicherry is an ideal centre for the promotion of French studies. We have provided in the Objects that the new University will give particular attention to the development of French studies. While the jurisdiction of the University will extend to the Union Territory of Pondicherry, we have made a provision under which the Union territories of Andaman and Nicobar islands and Lakshadweep can, if they so wish, come within the jurisdiction of this University. Colleges in these ter-

ritories can seek affiliation to the Pondicherry University, if the administration of these territories so decides, with the approval of the Central Government. This is an enabling provision and does not automatically bring these Union Territories within the jurisdiction of the Pondicherry University.

The structure that we have proposed for the Pondicherry University is, by and large, the same as that for other Central Universities. Nevertheless, I would like to emphasize that certain special provisions have been made which will enable the University to pay greater attention to certain areas of crucial importance which have remained, unfortunately, neglected by most Universities in the country. We have proposed that the Pondicherry University should have Directors specially appointed to organize programmes of educational innovations of rural reconstruction, culture and cultural relations and physical education, sports, national service and student welfare. The University will also have a planning board as a statutory authority to review its educational programmes from time to time to promote innovations and experiments to develop new teaching and learning processes and to create an environment conducive to the introduction of innovations, value orientation, etc. The New Central Universities Act empowers the Visitor, who is the President of India, to appoint the first Vice-Chancellor and other officers, the first Court, Executive Council and the Academic Council.

I do hope that the establishment of a Central University in Pondicherry will fulfil the aspirations of the people of the Union Territory. I am sure that Members from all sections of the House will support this measure whole-heartedly.

[Shri K. C. Pant]

With these words, I beg to move that the Pondicherry University Bill 1985, may be taken into consideration.

The question was proposed.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri Mostafa Bin Quasem.

SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUASEM (West Bengal): Madam Deputy Chairman, the establishment of a University in the Union Territory of Pondicherry has been a long felt necessity and, therefore, the present piece of legislation seeking to establish a teaching-cum-affiliating University there is very much welcome. I, therefore, support whole-heartedly the object of the Bill.

Madam, I would like to take this opportunity of urging upon the hon. Education Minister, and for that matter the Central Government, to appreciate the necessity of establishing more Universities and colleges in different parts of our country. After 38 years of independence, Madam, only 36 per cent of our population are literate and only 10 per cent seek higher education, but the existing educational facilities in Universities and colleges are not capable to accommodate this 10 per cent who seek higher education. So I would once again urge upon the Minister to enhance the existing facilities in the Universities and colleges and establish more Universities and colleges. Let there be no jubilation over a microscopic 1 per cent allocation in the total Central Budget for Education. Let there be more allocation for education in the Central Budget.

Madam, coming to the Bill itself, I

have noticed, and you would see, that many of the things have not been covered by the Bill. I do agree that many details are to be left to be covered by statutes by ordinances and regulations. I know that. But certain major things like the mode and manner of appointment of officers of the University, the composition of the University bodies that could have been spelt out in the body of the Bill, if you look into the body of the Bill, these have not been worked out. I do not know why these major things, namely the mode of appointment of the officers and the composition of university bodies, has been left out. I do not whether it is to avoid immediate parliamentary criticism or to avoid resentment from democratic teachers movement of our country that these things have been conveniently left out for the future. Considering the policies pursued by the Central Government and the University Grants Commission which is at the helm of affairs of higher education in our country, my apprehension is that the things to follow, even in the case of this proposed Pondicherry University are not going to be happy so far as the principles of democratic governance, academic freedom and university autonomy are concerned. Madam, some recent happenings and some recent utterances on behalf of the Central Government are causing grave concern to us and particularly to the members of the academic community of our country. There are distinct indications of emerging curbs on democratic rights, academic freedom and autonomy of the universities in our country. The views of the Government are reflected in the Acts of the existing central universities of our country, where the process of bureaucratisation of management of the universities and the erosion of university autonomy are almost complete. We had a very recent taste of Government's attitude, views

and policies at the time of the enactment of the Vishwa Bnarati Amendment Act. Through that Act, a painful burial has been given to the cherished principles of democratic management of universities and democratic rights of the university community. The elective principles have been completely done away with. The Act has discarded the democratic electoral process and inducted the policy of nomination and rotation which, you would kindly agree, is entirely contrary to the principle of participatory democracy. It has also destroyed the system of elected students union.

Madam, the third thing which occurs to my mind is that the Government is contemplating to bring forward a comprehensive legislation on higher education in our country covering all the central universities and also the State universities in our country. The Government has the strength of the 47th Amendment of the Constitution which transferred education from the State List to the Concurrent List. The idea of a uniform and comprehensive legislation to cover all the universities in different parts of our country is ominous and runs contrary to the specific recommendation of the Kothari Commission. What is more alarming is that the sources of ideas and inspiration on the part of the Government to act like this are coming mainly from the Reports of the Police Commission, the Review Committee on the activities of the central universities in our country, the recommendations and deliberations of the Vice Chancellors Conference held in New Delhi in May, 1984 and the model Act presented by the Association of Indian Universities. I can very honestly tell you, Madam, that the recommendations of these committees and conferences not only underline the necessity of the existing curbs on democratic rights, academic freedom and university autonomy, but prescribe more onslaughts on these cherished principles of university governance. Madam, it is not my business to go

into the details of each of the recommendations. But taken together, the recommendations of these committees and conferences come to mean these.

Madam, I seek your permission to read out. They are; (a) The deliberative bodies may be dispensed with. If at all they are retained, they will not have any decision-making power; (b) The Vice-Chancellor nominated by the Central Government or its representative shall have practically despotic powers; (c) The element of election in University bodies need to be minimised so that the overwhelming majority of members is nominated directly or indirectly by the Government; (d) The University's power to recruit teachers should be curtailed by imposing a national level test; (e) Appointment of teachers to Universities shall be subject to verification of their past activities or some sort of police verification; (f) Police shall be able to enter the University campus even without the express permission or on the requisition of the Vice-Chancellor or his duly authorised deputy. Madam, I would request you to think for a second. If these recommendations find a place in the contemplated comprehensive legislation, will any semblance of democratic rights, academic freedom and autonomy of the University be left to be seen for the future? Madam, in this connection, I would like to point out....

SHRI K. C. PANT: Where did you read it from?

SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUASEM: This is the sum total of the recommendations of these committees, conferences, etc. I did not quote the exact recommendations themselves. But what exactly transpires from those recommendations, I placed before this august House.

SHRI VISHVAJIT PRITHIVIJIT SINGH (Maharashtra): Along with his personal comments.

SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUASEM: Madam, one argument which is float-

[Shri Mostafa Bin Quasem]

ed by the Government, by the UGC and by certain circles is that this electoral process has been done away with in order to depoliticise the Universities. That is one argument which is generally floated. But I would most humbly ask one question: With the packing up of the bodies and authorities of the Universities with nominated members, will the hon. Minister still say that that will be helping in depoliticising the Universities. Rather the Government will be making the universities a breeding ground of politics of sycho-phancy. I would like to make one more point. Now that the impartiality and the political detachment of most of the Governors acting as the ex-officio Chancellors of the Universities are exploded myths, would the hon. Minister continue with this thinking that the Governors of the States will be the Chancellors of the State Universities? That is one question on which I seek a clarification from him. I may be permitted to put one thing by way of an example and nothing more than that. The considered opinion of the democratic academic community of West Bengal is this that the action of the former Chancellor of Calcutta University in respect of the appointment of the present Vice-Chancellor on his decision to send the Calcutta University Amendment Bill to the President for his assent was not guided by any academic consideration but he indicated his political preference. Madam, I would like to say....

SHRI SANKAR PRASAD MITRA (West Bengal): Where did you get this view of the intellectual Community?

SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUASEM: I said the democratic academic community.

SHRI SANKAR PRASAD MITRA: Where did you get this view of the intellectual community of West Bengal that the Governor's decision was wrong?

SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUASEM: Firstly, I did not say the intellectual

community. I did say the considered opinion of the democratic academic community of the State. When the hon. Member intervened, I would like to add that it is also the considered opinion of the democratic teachers movement of the State. Madam, I am grateful, through you, to him that he has given me the opportunity.

SHRI SANKAR PRASAD MITRA: It is an opinion of our party.

SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUASEM: Now, Madam, what I was going to tell is that I am constrained to say that the Central Government is perhaps preoccupied with the idea of destroying democratic governance of the universities of the country, and because of this preoccupation it failed to get the assent of the hon. President to the Calcutta University (Amendment) Bill which sought to make the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor more democratic, giving more powers in the hands of the Senate and the Syndicate, which are predominantly elected representative bodies. (*Time bell rings*).

Madam, before I end, I seek your permission to speak only for two more minutes. These questions are coming up very vigorously these days. With your own alternative of university management, with shackled democratic rights, academic freedom and university autonomy. I would most humbly ask the hon. Minister, can you claim that the Central universities are functioning perfectly in our country. There are reports of irregularities. I am sorry to say before this House, academic, administrative and financial, there I need not go into the details because newspaper reports, revelations academic community and democratic teachers' movement are not very infrequent. And I would like to put this question also: Can any honest observer say that since 1977 the universities in West Bengal are functioning badly because of more democratisation of universities there?

Madam, considering all these things, I have certain apprehensions

regarding what is going to follow in respect of this yet-to-be-born or going-to-be-born University of Pondicherry. Before I conclude would like to ask the hon. Minister whether he can dispel my apprehensions and assure me that so far as the proposed Pondicherry University is concerned, there will be no restrictions, no curbs and no further onslaughts on the democratic rights, academic freedom and autonomy of the university.

With these words, Madam, I conclude. Thank you.

SHRI B. KRISHNA MOHAN (Andhra Pradesh): Madam, Deputy Chairman, I take this opportunity of congratulating the Government particularly the Education Minister for introducing the Pondicherry University Bill, 1985, for the establishment of a Central University in the Union Territory of Pondicherry. Even though a decision was taken, as per the Statement of Objects, in 1974, due to financial restraints and constraints this University could not be established. Now the people of Pondicherry are extremely grateful to the Education Minister for getting a University established in Pondicherry after the Bill is passed.

I come from East Godavari district from where the Union Territory of Pondicherry is only 20 kilometres from my home town and there is a college also governed by the Pondicherry Government. But the students from Yanam and Mahe are experiencing difficulties as students who have secured 70, 80 or 90 per cent marks are not able to prosecute higher education due to lack of seats allocated to them in different universities. The setting up of a Central University in Pondicherry will go a long way in helping the student community to prosecute their higher studies. Madam, when the Jawaharlal University was established they opened an education centre in Shillong and Imphal. Yanam is 600 miles away from Pondicherry. I request the hon. Education Minister to kindly see that a

University Centre is established in Yanam also. Section 6 of this Bill reads: "The University shall also establish a School for studies in Eastern and Western Thought to be known as 'Sri Aurobindo School of Eastern and Western Thought' and another school for studies in Tamil language and literature to be known as 'Subramania Bharti School of Tamil Language and Literature'. I take this opportunity to request the hon. Education Minister that since Yanam is in Godawari District, he may kindly see that a school in the name of Nannaya, renowned Telugu poet for Nannaya Telugu language and literature is also created to help Telugu speaking students to enter the school and enrich their knowledge.

Most of the Central Universities, particularly the Vice-Chancellors, are not in a position to punish as they are handicapped of certain powers and they are not in a position to do their best as they are not enjoying many powers. I hope the Vice-Chancellors of the Central Universities would be vested with greater powers so that they can give a good leadership for successful functioning of Central Universities.

In 1972, when there was an agitation in Andhra Pradesh and when they raised the slogan that Andhra citizens are being treated as second class citizens in the city of Hyderabad in the matter of educational opportunities and the present Minister of Education and then the Minister of Home was responsible for establishment of Central University in Hyderabad, there is a feeling among the students that most of the students of Hyderabad are not in a position to get admission because several students from other parts of the country are getting admissions. Regarding the Central University at Hyderabad also there was a feeling that proper talent is ignored in favour of talent of outside parts. I request you to kindly see that local

[Shri B. Krishna Mohan]

talent, if it is up to mark, be encouraged.

Madam, the President in his opening address to Parliament made it clear about Government's determination in bringing about comprehensive educational policy, a comprehensive policy to be restructured and refashioned in such a way as to keep the needs of the vast masses of the country. You are aware, Madam, there is no uniform pattern of Acts for all the Universities in the country. Time has come when we have to bring about a comprehensive legislation for all the Universities in the country. You are also aware that some controversies have arisen in the matter of appointment of Vice-Chancellors in West Bengal, in Andhra Pradesh etc. Since I am associated with the University as a member of the syndicate for the last 14 years and as a member of the senate for the last 20 years, I have some experience. When the present Vice-Chancellor was appointed for the Andhra University, he had severed his connections with the University even though he was a professor of the University and he severed his connections and had settled in the United States and was brought to Andhra Pradesh University due to some considerations of the present Government. Most of the professors and students made representations to the Chancellor that local talent should be encouraged. There was a controversy also about the appointment of Vice-Chancellor of Sri Venkateshwara University where the Chancellor had used his independent discretion of appointing one person as the Vice-Chancellor. That appointment was challenged in the Andhra Pradesh High Court. A Division Bench consisting of Mr. Justice Jiwan Reddy, and another judge, has opined that the Chancellor of a University, as a Chancellor, is independent and is not bound by the advice of the Council of Ministers and they upheld the appointment of

the Vice-Chancellor of Sri Venkateshwara University. So, many such controversies have arisen in the appointments of Vice-Chancellors in West Bengal, in Andhra and in other areas. I request the hon. Minister to see that a comprehensive legislation about the functioning and governance of the university is brought about as expeditiously as possible in the best interests of the university education in the country.

Secondly, recruitment of teachers is going on in several universities.

1.00 P.M. They have their own expert committees consisting of internal as well as outside experts. Since the University Grants Commission is coming in a big way in financing new schemes, at least for a period of five years. I would request the hon. Education Minister to see that in the matter of selection of teachers, readers and professors, a representative is also there from the University Grants Commission on the selection committee. I am saying this from experience. In the Andhra University in the Department of Commerce, where selections were held, out of eleven posts, eight posts were given to the nominees of the Vice-Chancellor. Such a sorry state of affairs is prevailing. Nepotism is prevailing. I would request the hon. Education Minister that since the University Grants Commission is giving financial assistance to the universities, in the matter of recruitment of teachers, the University Grants Commission should be consulted. At least, the University Grants Commission should be associated in the matter of selection of teachers in the universities.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA (Andhra Pradesh): Madam Deputy Chairman, I am on a point of order. Madam, we are discussing...

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I think, you are speaking.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: We are discussing the Pondicherry Univer-

sity Bill. We are not discussing the Andhra University.

SHRI R. RAMAKRISHNA: It is connected.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Madam, first of all, the Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra University has no opportunity of defending himself here. Secondly, this University is under the control of the State. In view of this, it is not pertinent on the part of any Member to refer to these matters. He said that eight persons were nominees of the Vice-Chancellor. But the Vice-Chancellor of the Andhra University has no opportunity of defending himself here. If this is allowed to go on record, it will be detrimental to the prestige and names of the Vice-Chancellor. In view of this, it will be good, in the interest of academic purity and also the decorum of this House, that references are not made about those institutions which have no opportunity of being here and defending themselves.

SHRI R. RAMAKRISHNAN: Madam, Deputy Chairman, I have a submission to make on this point of order of Prof. C. Lakshmanna. While it may be ethical and perhaps even moral to say—as he says—that it would not be good to refer to persons who are not present in the House and also not to bring in names, I do not think we can follow this strict rule in the House that when one speaks on a particular Bill he should confine himself strictly to the provisions of that Bill. Now, we are going to discuss the Indira Gandhi National Open University Bill. If you say that we can discuss only what is contained in the Bill, for which express provisions are there, it will be very difficult. This will provide us with an opportunity to discuss the entire educational policy of the country and so many other related matters. I have nothing to say or pass judgement on what the hon. Member from the other side has said, whether he is making a true

statement or not. Prof. Lakshmanna is free to put forth the other side when he speaks and if the hon. Minister so chooses, he can reply. But to limit the discussion to only matters relating to the provisions of a particular Bill, will not be correct.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Madam, you have given him an opportunity to make his submission on my point of order. Therefore please give me one minute. I am not saying that a Member cannot refer to the policies involved, the programmes involved. But one should not refer to certain acts which have taken place and pass judgement over those matters, which are done by a properly constituted selection committee, whether the selection committee was biased or not is a different matter. But the selection were made by a properly constituted selection committee as per the provisions of the Act under which the selection committee was constituted. Therefore, it is not proper to say that the vice-Chancellor of the University and the selection committee.....

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I have understood. I would like to say that when we discuss these things, we may discuss policy but we should not bring in the names of the people. Prof. Lakshmanna, when you are speaking, you can reply to this. Now, we will adjourn till 2 P.M. when we can continue with the discussion on the Bill.

The House then adjourned for lunch at five minutes past one of the clock.

THE House reassembled after lunch at four minutes past two of the clock
 [The Vice-Chairman (Dr. (Shrimati) Sarojini Mahishi) in the chair.

Supplementary Demands for Grants
 (General) for the year 1985-86
 (July, 1985)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARI): Madam, I beg to lay on the Table a statement (in English and Hindi) showing the