

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Mr. Fernandes must show his political muscle and so he got up to say something. And in the Government he is sitting. You are in the Government. I am not the Government here.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: I am only pointing out that you are shedding crocodile tears.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, I cannot argue with him because I find that he is completely lost nowadays. He was a young man and fighting in some ways when he was sitting here. Neither is he an opposition leader nor a Minister there that way. He is a cross between the two.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. hon. Member, that will do.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: He is a cross between the two. When I oppose, he talks like a Government. When I support, he opposes. In neither case he succeeds in talking convincingly. So he should better keep quiet. Mr. Fernandes, you are a lovable person that way though there is a lot of mischief in you. I know that. Then, Sir, I am asking Mr. Charan Singh: Who matters in your Government? Sir, here is the matter. Who matters there? He may be number two. But I do not know. But who matters there? Therefore, I am appealing to him that he should intervene to see that all the political prisoners are released. That is also according to your Election Manifesto.

Sir, I congratulate the public opinion and the people of India, including the Bar Council, that the opinion has been built up in such a manner that the Government has been made to retreat and bow to public opinion. So, we stand vindicated.

Finally, Sir, I would request him again this. First you bring my Bill today. You can waive the rules. You can ask the Secretary to bring that Bill and waive the rule. We can pass it in two minutes time. The Bill is there. Mr. Charan Singh, it will be a good thing. A thing from Bhupesh Gupta will be very good for you. So, you can take it from me because what I can give you, I am absolutely a proletariat in such a matter. Therefore, get that Bill from me and have it passed. Yesterday I said it and it will be an excellent gesture on your part. So, Sir, I have said all that. But we are happy that this MISA is going. But I do not know, Sir, will it take another year to get it repealed? I am asking him when we can expect from him the repeal measure.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: A categorical statement is there. Let us now come down to our work.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: It has not yet come before us. He has said that. But when they say a thing, generally they take one year. There should be no one-year business. You can get it passed at once. Sir, before this session ended, we should pass it. I am very sorry, Sir, Mr. Charan Singh did not give us the opportunity, especially the retiring Members, to have repealed this Act before they retired, which would have been a very good act on their part.

SHRI LAKSHMANA MAHAPATRO (Orissa): Even now he can take the Act and give them an opportunity.

REFERENCE TO THE LETTER PURPORTED TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BY SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI LAL K. ADVANI): Sir, this morning in the course of the debate on

[Shri Lal K. Edwani]

Samachar, Shri Bipinpal Das, who is not here, who has just left, quoted from a letter alleged to have been written by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee. At that time I had mentioned that so far as that letter is concerned, it is perhaps for Vajpayeeji to say something, it has nothing to do with the debate that we are having and it has nothing to do with me in any way. But immediately after that I found it was laid on the Table of the House and since it pertained to a colleague of mine in the Government, I immediately sent to him a record of the proceedings and all that had happened. He was hospitalised today. He is in the Institute. From there I asked him if he could come and make a statement or otherwise he could convey to us his views in the matter. He has sent to me a letter, which I have shown to you, Mr. Deputy Chairman, and with your permission I would like to read it out.

"My attention has been drawn to a matter that was raised during a debate on a Calling Attention in the Rajya Sabha today. Shri Bipinpal Das read out a letter dated 6.6.1977 supposedly written by me to Shri Kailashpatti, Finance Minister, Government of Bihar. I wish to state categorically that this letter is forged and concocted. In fact, about six months ago a photostat copy of this very letter was received by the Prime Minister, who showed it to me. I had informed him that this letter was a forgery, calculated to cause dissensions within the Janata Party and to damage my reputation. It is a matter of surprise and wonder that this letter, the contents of which relate exclusively to the affairs of the Janata Party, should have been read out in Rajya Sabha by such a responsible opposition Member, as Shri Bipinpal Das, without his

having cared to verify the veracity of the document. I would request you to convey to the Chairman, Rajya Sabha, the facts of the matter which you may like to do by reading this letter of mine in the House to set the record straight. I would have very much liked to come myself, but due to sudden indisposition, I have been advised complete rest."

I think this puts the record very straight. I would like to emphasise again that in matters of this kind when allegations of this nature are made it would be proper for every Member of the House, and particularly for Members who are leaders in their parties, to be very careful, to be very particular, and check and verify facts in advance. And, if he knew that this letter related to June, it was very possible that he should have ascertained the fact from the Minister himself. That is all, Sir.

श्री महादेव प्रसाद वर्मा (उत्तर प्रदेश) :

बड़ी महत्वपूर्ण बात है इस सदन के एक जिम्मेदार सदस्य का इस तरह का आक्षेप जिसको कि मन्त्री महोदय कह रहे हैं कि यह फोर्ज्ड लैटर है।

श्री हरिसिंह भगुबावा महिड़ा (गुजरात) :

ध्यान आकृष्ट करना चाहते हैं।

He might say whatever he wants to say, but it is a fact.

श्री महादेव प्रसाद वर्मा : मैं यह नहीं

करना चाहता हूँ मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि इस तरह के व्यवहार के लिये माननीय बिपिनपाल दास को इस सदन से और मन्त्री महोदय से भी माफ़ी मांगनी चाहिये।

श्री हरिसिंह भगुबावा महिड़ा : माफ़ी मांगने का क्या सवाल है।

श्री महादेव प्रसाद वर्मा : माफ़ी मांगने की ज़रूरत है।

SHRI HARISINGH BHAGUBAVA MAHIDA: What is there to apologise? How can you believe this statement?

SHRI NARASINGHA PRASAD NANDA (Orissa): On a point of order, Sir. The Leader of the House has just now read a letter written by Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee saying that the letter which was read by Mr. Bipinpal Das is a forged and concocted letter. Mr. Bipinpal Das has just gone out and he will be coming back. The original letter will then be produced and it will be seen whether this is a genuine letter or a forged letter.

SHRIMATI PURABI MUKHOPADHYAY (West Bengal): The letter which has just been read out by Mr. Advani, the Leader of the House, is written to Mr. Advani and not to you. Sir, the proper method would have been, even if the Minister is sick, to go on record, he should have written to you. This is number one. Then, Sir, the main speech of Mr. Bipinpal Das was not with regard to this letter only but also about the functioning of the Jana Sangh in the texture of the Janata Party. We are told that the Janata Party is one; but it is a fact that in every case, the activist Jana Sangh is still maintaining its identity. So, when we bring that charge and level it against a particular Minister, there is no question of apologising, because we do not know whether that letter is concocted or whatever Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee has said is also concocted.

THE HIGH DENOMINATION BANK NOTES (DEMONE TISATION) BILL, 1978

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND REVENUE AND BANKING (SHRI H. M. PATIL): Sir, I move:

"That the Bill to provide in the public interest for the demonetisation of certain high denomination bank notes and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

I wish to point out that it was brought to Government's notice that high denomination bank notes were being used extensively for illicit transfer of money for financing transactions which are harmful to the national economy or which are for illegal purposes. Immediate action to demonetise bank notes of the denominational value of Rs. 1,000, Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 10,000 issued by the Reserve Bank of India was, therefore, considered necessary by Government in public interest. As Parliament was not in session and immediate action was necessary, the President promulgated an Ordinance on the 16th of January 1978 to provide for the demonetisation of all high denomination bank notes of the above value which ceased to be legal tender in payment or on account at any place on the expiry of 16th day of January, 1978. The present Bill which has already been passed by the Lok Sabha, seeks to replace this Ordinance by an Act of Parliament.

As at the close of business on 16th of January 1978, the total number of high denomination bank notes in circulation was 13,05,899 notes value at about Rs. 145.42 crores. According to the provisional figures furnished by the Reserve Bank of India, these include 12.69 lakh notes of Rs. 1,000, 36,287 notes of Rs. 5,000 and 346 notes of Rs. 10,000 denomination.

While commending the Bill for consideration of the House, I shall confine myself to explaining the relatively more important provisions at this stage. A detailed procedure that was to be followed by a person other than a bank or Government treasury was laid down in the Bill for the exchange of high denomination bank notes by which a declarant was required to deliver in person a declaration signed by him together with the high denomination bank notes not later than 19th day of January 1978 to the office or sub-office or branch of the Reserve Bank of India or to the main office or branch of the State Bank at the headquarters of a district or to any other office of a public sector bank notified