

THE HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE (EXTENSION OF DURATION AMENDMENT BILL, 1976)

* MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. H. R. Gokhale to move that the Bill to provide for the further extension of the duration of the present House of the People as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.

THE MINISTER OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI H. R. GOKHALE): Sir, I move:

"That the Bill to provide for the further extension of the duration of the present House of the People, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

Sir, last year I had moved a Bill similar to the present one for extending the period of the Lok Sabha for one year and that extended period of duration of the Lok Sabha will come to an end in March, I had given reasons at that time in the other House as well as in this House as to why it was necessary to extend the duration of the Lok Sabha. Principally, Sir, it was mentioned and had been accepted by all the Members and even by my friends in the C. P. I. that the extension was necessary because in this country some elements had come up who had created a situation of de-stabilisation, who had created an atmosphere in which they wanted to disrupt the democratic functioning of our country and even violent methods were sought to be used and in some places even used. I had also mentioned that the sole objective of these elements was to see that our democracy does not function in a democratic way. I am sorry to say that these elements which had created disruption are still active. It is wrong to think that they have been curbed or that they are not continuing their activities. Maybe, be-

cause of the stern measures taken during the emergency they have been curbed to a certain extent but that should not lead us to believe that they have gone away or that this threat of disruption of democracy has ceased to exist. It is no doubt true that in the course of one year after the emergency was declared some 16 or 17 months back there has been remarkable progress in some fields, particularly in the economic field. Sir, we know that we have made impressive foreign exchange earnings, there has been unprecedented growth in our gross national product, inflation and inflationary trends have been controlled to a remarkable extent and one is happy to note that the economy has attained a certain measure of stability and capacity for sustained growth.

Now, these are, of course, some of the gains of the emergency but that is why this exactly is the time when the country cannot afford to be complacent. These gains have to be consolidated and these gains have to be preserved from destruction which they are trying to attempt we have to see that all these forces which created an atmosphere of destabilisation, are again controlled and they are not allowed to come up to the surface, as, indeed, they are trying to come up to the surface whenever a single opportunity presented itself to them. It is true that in this country we are wedded to a democratic method of having elections free and fair elections periodically, and it is true that through this elective process we function in our democracy. Our faith and our confidence in this method is not at all shaken. In fact, I can say with confidence, that we adhere to this method. We have complete faith in all our democratic instruments and in this Parliament. We have faith in all other

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democratic institutions which are in this country although they have been subjected to very serious stresses and strains in the last one or two years. Now, if we take a view which will put the clock back, which will again put us in a situation where these forces which we tried to curb and which we want to curb, are allowed to come up to the surface, it will be really undoing the gains which we have achieved by this emergency. There has been a remarkable discipline after the proclamation of emergency in all fields. There has been more production. As I have said, labour generally has co-operated with us and there have been fewer strikes. Although there have been fewer lock-outs in the earlier stages, even these are now trying to come up to the surface and this is mainly on account of these very forces which had been responsible for disrupting our economy and disrupting our political system.

Now, it is up to us, and in fact, it becomes our duty, that we do not allow this to happen again. It is not true to say that we do not regard elections as an important thing in a democracy. Indeed, they are very important. It is not true that we regard elections as a distraction and, therefore we are not prepared to go in for elections. Elections, in that sense, are never a distraction in a democracy. But, while we take the larger objective in view, sometimes, it becomes necessary that we postpone this process for the time being. Therefore, what I have suggested now is the postponement of this process for the time being for one year which is permitted and which was in fact, contemplated even by our founding fathers because even at that time this provision was made in article 83 that in an emergency, Par-

liament will have the power, by law, by necessary legislation to extend the duration of the House, at a time, for one year. That is what we did last time and that is what is again sought to be done for a period of one year. Sir, I would strongly urge on all my friends here and even my friends in the C. P. I. who had co-operated with us last time, to co-operate with us. I do hope that they will recognise that the situation has not qualitatively changed so far as the attempts of these elements of disruption and their methods are concerned. In fact, if we have succeeded, it is because of the fact that stern measures were taken against them but that is not to say that we have succeeded fully in destroying these forces. And that is what we have to do and it becomes our duty. It is for this reason, mainly, Sir, that I brought the Bill first in the Lok Sabha, which has passed it and I have, therefore, a duty to perform in moving this Bill for consideration in this House.

The question was proposed.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): Sir, I rise to oppose this Bill. May I, Sir, have the attention of the Congress President liberated from the captivating distraction by an honourable lady in the House? After all, I am a humble worker of a party speaking and when the President of the ruling party sits in front of me, must not I have, at least, the privilege of having been listened to by him even if a charming lady may be on his side?

Sir, on the 29th, at a Press Conference at the residence of the Maharashtra Chief Minister in Bombay, a leader of the Youth Congress, whom some Chief Ministers promoted to be a national leader, declared:

"Whether elections are held one year earlier or one year later, is a minor issue. Future generations will not judge India just on the basis of the elections."

That statement we read early in the morning, on the 30th of October and we heard that the Lok Sabha poll was off. I had at least an inkling that it was off. You can ask me, how did I have that feeling? But sometimes, I go by intuition, intelligent guess and intelligent anticipation.

SHRI D. K. BOROOAH (Assam):
And also irrationality.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Nowadays, Sir, people look for policy announcements through some non-official private individuals, on whom more than one Chief Minister, these days, dances attendance even in distressing, and indeed, disturbing servility. If I may say, the elders should help and guide the younger ones, not try to spoil them. Sir, I would also like to point out to you that this phenomenon is a together a new one, never witnessed during the 28 years of freedom up to the time of the Emergency. This phenomenon will be, some day, for the historians to analyse and explain to those who will follow us. But we are disturbed at what has happened. Even before the 29th of October, a Bombay journal, briefed by some well-known circles in New Delhi, not only ran a campaign for the postponement of the elections, but actually forecast a postponement. Sir, I need not name it, you can recognise it by sight. On the 16th of October, that Bombay journal published in big headlines "ELECTIONS UNLIKELY TILL 1978"—Then, Sir, two weeks later, this journal with the 30th October dateline and—we received it three days earlier; we received it on Thursday, that is to say, two days before the hon. Minister made the statement—"The '44th Hotchpotch' is likely to force postponement on reluctant Prime Minister". The heading said "1977 POLL OFF". This is an article by the editor of the journal, Mr. R. K. Karanjia. He gives some inkling of what has been happening. I do not know; it is for the Prime Minister to clarify. I quote:

"The Prime Minister appeared to be of two minds on this controversy when I called on her last Thursday for an off-the-record discussion of current problems. Her faith in democratic values naturally prompts elections according to schedule, and objective conditions in the country were never more favourable to her party than today."

Many more things are said. Here, in the beginning of this article, the very prominent writer says:

"NEW DELHI: THE 1977 POLL IS AS GOOD AS OFF."

Now, Mr. Karanjia makes a policy announcement after making a trip to Delhi. He says:

"If the BLITZ forecast of October 16 . . . to which I referred—

" . . . to this effect needed any confirmation, it has amply been provided by the subsequent resolutions passed at joint meetings of the Pradesh Congress and Congress Legislature parties of UP, Punjab, Haryana and Bihar."

What else you need to explain the genesis of the Government decision to postpone the elections? Now, Sir, I mention this thing for the edification of hon. Members of this House and also for the notice of our Congress President, who is a dear friend of ours in every way. Now, Sir, I should better mention it. Now it will be conceded and admitted on all hands that the postponement of election is an extraordinary step. It is not possible under our Constitution, except under Emergency, in so far as the Lok Sabha elections are concerned. No one in the country, not even Parliament, has power to postpone the Lok Sabha elections or extend the life of Lok Sabha beyond its tenure, well, except under Emergency. Even under Emergency, Sir, Lok Sabha election has

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been held in this country. The Fourth Lok Sabha, in fact, was a creation of election under the Emergency. It is the privilege of the ruling party to go to polls ahead of normal schedule or call it prematurely for elections. This is done in many countries, literally in France, in England and in other countries pursuing, following, parliamentary democracy. In India also this was done in 1970-71 and for very good reasons also, after the dissolution of the Fourth Lok Sabha one year ahead of its completion of its term.

Now the Government seeks something else. It is one thing to go in for election before the term and it is quite another thing to postpone the periodic election which is almost a mandatory section not only in written Constitutions but in Constitutional practices, such as we have in England, which does not have a written Constitution.

The Government undoubtedly has power to postpone the election for another year after postponing it, after having done it for a period of one year already. It means, for two years the Lok Sabha may continue and there need not be any Lok Sabha elections. This, Sir, is by all accounts, an extraordinary step in a parliamentary democracy. Last year, we supported the postponement of the election. There were valid reasons for it. We were in the thick of the fight against the forces of destabilisation. The picture was not clear as to how things would ultimately shape. In that uncertainty, when we were in the thick of the fight, it was but natural on our part—all of us who had been fighting—to come together and take a decision, as an exceptional step, to postpone the mandatory election of the Lok Sabha. Hence, we took cover under the provisions of the Constitution, i.e. under the Emergency provisions, to get the term extended for one year. Nobody at that time sug-

gested that the term might have to be extended for a longer period. Postponement had to be extended for a longer period, none suggested. There were other factors, valid factors, which were taken into account. Only a few months back before we passed that Extension Bill last year, the 20-point economic programme embodying some of the very excellent demands of the agricultural labourers and the toiling people and other demands also of a popular nature, had been announced. We were all interested—'we' means they also—in effectively inaugurating that programme. So, for these two reasons we thought election should be postponed—first in order to continue to fight against the right reaction, having been in the midst of the fight, and also to ensure conditions so that you could successfully launch the 20-point programme. We thought the nation's undivided attention must be given and we gave that attention and sanctioned the postponement of election. Today the situation is not the same as in 1975. We are all happy that it has changed for the better. This is a credit to all of us who have worked for improving the situation politically in the country in so far as the threat of destabilisation is concerned. There are visible improvements. Not that the rightists, threat is gone or eliminated completely, I am afraid that threat potentially will remain so long as the socio-economic base of the reaction is not dismantled. That fight will be a prolonged fight and that fight will have to be fought not only administratively but even so, more so ideologically and politically. But, Sir, the rightists have lost all their chances. They are isolated today, as never perhaps in the past. The masses have rejected them and they have been rejecting them. In fact, many of the rightists are joining the Congress.

It is for your Congress President to enlighten us on the subject—how additions are being made, the kind of people coming.

Sir, look at, for instance, the interesting, if somewhat intriguing, press statement of Mr. Biju Patnaik who was one of the stalwarts of the total revolution, almost a Field Marshal in Orissa. He himself had driven the car when Mr. Jayaprakash Narain went to Orissa to lead the total revolution there. After his release, Mr. Biju Patnaik made a press statement in which he supports the emergency—he has his own reasons for it. He supported the 20-point programme. And has developed a preference for youth leadership suddenly, thinking his time has run out—and only ten years is left for them. That way ten years are left for me also, may be less, Sir, now perhaps he will also be allowed to go abroad to rejuvenate ideologically, politically and if possible also physically by another five or ten years. These are matters of detail—I need not go into them. But these are interesting pointers in the situation. Do you think it shows a worsening of the situation unless you do not believe Mr. Biju Patnaik and took him as trying to bluff you? I am sure, the Congress Party will never say that they do not believe in Mr. Biju Patnaik.

Now, Sir, many MLAs and MPs belonging to the rightist Opposition and the so-called non-Communist Opposition are joining the Congress Party. Here is my friend, Mr. Lokanath Misra, Deputy Leader of the Swatantra Party. Today he has found a berth. May heavens bless him in the Congress Party! Here is our friend, Mr. Prakash Veer Shastri,—sitting almost next to me—a Jana Sangh stalwart. Today we has preferred to be an Independent. In Karnataka they are queuing up from the rightist parties to join the Congress Party. In Orissa there is again a queue for joining the Congress Party by the BLD leaders and others, including ex-Maharajas and so on. The same spectacle is everywhere. Do you take it as a sign of strengthening of the rightist forces

or do you take it as a sign of weakening of the rightist forces? If Mr. Borooah can devise tactics to disrupt the rightist forces to weaken them, well, I can understand it. Only thing is, he should not weaken and compromise his own ideology and policy. But this is a party matter. I did not want to interfere in the internal affairs of any other party but since you are the ruling party and your good health is the nation's good health, your good health is Government's good health and to some extent we are also benefited by a healthy ruling party and a healthy Government, I say it.

Now, Sir, here again I should like to say, let us not, overlook these developments—the isolation and disruption of the rightist phalanx despite their attempt to regroup themselves. Well, they will do so. Their isolation, their disarray is a sign of victory of the anti-right forces, and I cannot think of the victory of the anti-right forces unless I take into account the great role the ruling party in the country played—many friends individually—in the heroic struggle that we fought last year against the forces of total revolution. Sir, of course, influx into the Congress and the fine reception that the rightists are getting in the ruling party cannot but cause some serious concern. That is a disturbing phenomenon. But, Sir, I should like to know. Do you need the postponement of the election to enable rightist entry into the Congress Party? I think Mr. Borooah is a for bigger attraction and you do not require an additional impetus for anyone to come into the Congress Party. Should you in your miscalculation decide to admit them within your own party, or I to believe that the right reaction can be fought by their stepping into your ranks while postponing the election by denying the people their overdu exercise of the right to vote? As for the 20-point economic programme has the prolongation of the life of the Lok Sabha led to the steady acc

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iteration of the implementation of the programme? Or has it produced the opposite result?

Sir, the more elections are postponed, the lesser is the fear on the part of the bureaucrats to be accountable to the people and some of the politicians also. Therefore, let us not talk, that, for the implementation of the 20-point programme, in the present situation, we need to postpone the elections. We had implemented our Plans and yet we had held the elections. Every five years, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Shrimati Indira Gandhi too went to the polls after having achieved some results under the Five-Year Plans and other things. They never said in those days that for the consolidation of the gains of the Second Five-Year Plan, or for the implementation of the Third Five-Year Plan or the Fourth Five-Year Plan, the elections had to be postponed. Now, new types of arguments have been devised by the Government for postponement of elections.

On the contrary, Sir, if the elections are held today, much of the resources mobilised and raised over the years for the active and energetic implementation of the Five-Year Plans will be inspired. Moreover, some of the amendments having been incorporated yesterday into the Constitution of our country, we do not take a defeatist argument, a mischievous argument, if I may say so, that the implementation of the 20-point programme demands the postponement of the elections.

Sir, some arguments have been given. I will answer those and I end my speech. The first argument was given by our friend Mr. Gokhale. Mr. Gokhale, I believe, has a portfolio of arguments. Every time, he gives some arguments. I have very carefully studied his speech in the Lok Sabha. He said: "We in the Congress Party are not afraid of elections". That heroic statement is unnecessary.

We never said the Congress Party is afraid of the elections. I do not believe that the Congress Members are afraid of the elections. I do not believe it. If I believed it, I should have said it. The Congress organisation is not afraid of the elections. I cannot believe that the Prime Minister is afraid of the elections, or Mr. Borooah is afraid of the elections. I cannot say how Mr. Bansi Lal feels about it. He will explain his position. But he also is not afraid of the elections from the point of view of the electoral results. He knows his position in Haryana. The only thing is that I ask him not to treat Haryana as India. Let him be a little merciful to us. He is not afraid of the results of the elections. So, Mr. Bansi Lal is quite convinced of his position as far as the election is concerned. Then, why bring in all these arguments? We never raised such points. Am I a fool to say that the Congress Party is afraid of the elections? Why introduce an argument which has no relevance and which none of us has raised? May be some people outside are saying this for demagogic reasons. But we sitting in Parliament never said so. That perhaps cannot be said of some others. If they are afraid of the elections, it is not because they are afraid of the results of the elections because that may upset some of their fond dreams, some of their plans, both short-term as well as long-term. Sir, may I, in this connection, remind you that from these plans we get an indication? These plans loomed large behind the demand for the constitution of the Constituent Assembly to redraft a new Constitution. Sir, this was a wrong demand altogether. Now, Mr. Karanjia, who is supposed to be well briefed, well connected—he always knows which side of the bread is buttered—has given the connection between the demand for a Constituent Assembly and the postponement of the election and the resolutions that were passed by the UP Executive Committee of the Congress Legislature Party.

and by similar bodies in Haryana and Punjab. Sir, these friends are also behind the demand for referring the Constitution (Forty-fourth Amendment) Bill to a Select Committee and the demand for extending the tenure of the Lok Sabha not only from five years to six years but from five years to seven years. If the Constituent Assembly had been convened they then expected that in the name of drafting the new Constitution, the elections would be postponed for a long time. After all, how can you hold elections when you are drafting the Constitution? It was a very calculated contrivance, and the demand came for scuttling the election, apart from the fact that some of them might be wishing to replace the present parliamentary cabinet form of Government by the Presidential system of Government. Can he deny it? Then six years came and then as a compromise it was arrived at "No Select Committee, no Constituent Assembly. Do not press for seven years, we shall have it for six years." as is provided for in the Bill. Then we shall seek extension of the life of the Lok Sabha by the addition of another year to make it seven years. Sir, it is 'cash and carry' business, not 'lend and lease' business—here and now give us seven years. And you have got seven years. That is a very wrong thing to have been done. On the same day as Mr. Borooah was speaking in the Lok Sabha, on the 30th October, the Prime Minister was addressing a Cadre's meeting in Delhi. She said that if the elections were delayed for long, the people would lose their faith. She said a very right thing. Sir, my regret—and it is tragic for me—is this. What the Prime Minister says sometimes is very good. It shows robust commonsense and political wisdom. She has referred to the feeling of the people. But the practices go contrary to her sentiments, her utterances, what she thinks to be good. Sir, this was news to me—here is a picture of the Prime Minister in the *Blitz* of 30th October, 1976. At the end of the picture, it is written "Indira Gandhi" . . . of two

minds' " I do not say "Indira Gandhi of two minds". But Mr. Karanjia who, I am told, has ready access to No. 1, Safdarjung Road, has discovered that Shrimati Indira Gandhi is of two minds. I hope she would not be of two minds. I refuse to believe such things. She would be of one mind and of good mind too. But she said, "If it is delayed, then the people would lose faith." She is correct. Here, the difference between her and us over this question is one of how long. That is the difference. Shrimati Indira Gandhi may say that two years are not much; I may say that in the circumstances, two years are quite long. It is a quantitative difference, it is not a qualitative difference with her over this matter. But what about Mr. Antulay my friend? He is one of the General Secretaries of the Congress. He said in Hyderabad that 80 per cent of our people are very poor and what they worry about is their sleepless nights. Sir, rhetorics are there. Were is 80 per cent, . .

SHRI D. K. BOROOAH: Rhetorics are there and here also.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Yes, if I have my rhetorics, Mr. Borooah, such rhetorics are not praised by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi causing blush as it happened in your case that day.

Sir, here Mr. Antulay—he is a Congress leader; so I take him seriously and he is a good friend also—said that 80 per cent of the people in the country were poor and were not expecting frequent exercise of their voting rights. What a profound utterance. Never have we heard such an utterance being made before by any leader of the Congress Party. Whether he likes me or not is a different matter; and whether I like him or not is a different matter. But never did I hear any Congressman counterposing the conditions of the people to elections in this manner. May I ask Mr. Antulay: Is it because of the Indian elections that today 22 crores of people live below the poverty-line and do not have even forty rupees per

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month to make both ends meet, or is it because of some other reasons? On the contrary, Sir, elections have enlightened and educated our people, moved them into heroic action and have had their impact on the policies of the Government, which is why we are advancing today despite the frowns of the forces of external and internal enemies of our democracy. Sir, Mr. Antulay is barking up the wrong tree in this matter. May I ask Mr. Antulay: Is it because of the elections that lakhs and lakhs of people are sleeping on the pavement in the streets of Calcutta and Bombay, or is it because of some other reason? Mr. Antulay, may I tell you that it is the reactionary forces which are taking the bread away from the people, denying bread to the people and denying a decent and bearable life to the people. It is the exploitation of the monopolists, landlords and other enemies of the people, who are sometimes favoured by the policies of the Government, that is responsible for the present condition of the people. It is the reaction which has condemned lakhs and lakhs of men, women and children to spend the winter nights under the bare sky in the streets of Delhi or Bombay or Calcutta. It is the cruelty of an incontinent society which has condemned them to live such a life. And the elections are necessary in order to rouse the masses, to educate the masses and to lead them in the struggle against the forces of national ruin, national misery, national suffering, not to speak of the forces of political and right reaction. Sir, Mr. Antulay has even said "Don't talk about elections". That was very, very interesting. Why should he say that people should not even talk about elections? Sir, I will leave Mr. Antulay alone. You may say I am partial. I shall come to my own home State. On the day—Mr. Borooah, kindly note—Mr. Gokhale got up in the Lok Sabha, that is, the 30th of last month, to make his ill-starred announcement about the postponement of the elections,

something happened in West Bengal in the Writers Building. The announcement in Parliament on October 30 of the election postponement was celebrated by the West Bengal Food Minister, Prafulla Kanti Ghosh, right inside the Writers Building. He offered that afternoon sweetmeats to the reporters present in the chamber. Wah, celebration! Celebration for an assault on democracy by distribution of sweetmeats! I am reminded of many others who, when Indira Gandhi lost the election case, distributed sweetmeats in this manner. Sir, not only that, earlier on October 15, Prafulla Kanti Ghosh received a letter from Delhi in which he was asked to get a resolution passed by the West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee demanding the formation of a Constituent Assembly and postponement of the elections in order to, as they called, consolidate the gains of national emergency. Sir, Prafulla Kanti Ghosh, obliging as he is and no less sheepish than others in certain matters, could not carry out the order because he was not given enough time. Mr. Om Mehta, who is currently talking to Bansi Lal, should listen; both of them should listen. Sir, Mr. Bansi Lal does not listen. You know, whatever may be his politics, I told him one thing. I tell you, he has been a good friend of mine in this House. Personally he has been excellent to me as an individual. But I am not sure whether he likes Communists or not. I have my doubts about it. But I can only tell you that for a Defence Minister of a country like ours, to be anti-Communist is not in the national interest. He knows it. Let us now pass on to other points. I just leave the proposition before him.

What has been the result? People have begun to doubt whether any election at all will be held. Shri Gokhale anticipated this while he made his speech on the 30th. Of course, he said that elections will not be abandoned. I for one do not believe that elections are going to be abandoned. I am not holding any

defeatist point of view. I am here concerned with the postponement of the elections. Will they be postponed at all any more? This is a proposition. I am not accusing the Congress Party or the Government of doing something for which there is no warrant. Some people outside may think like that and therefore a question mark has arisen about the future of elections. Let this question mark be resolved. You must feel the impact of this on the masses. When I went to Calcutta, people asked me about this. Even the 31st paper carried the news that elections are off. Right from the airport I was told: Elections are gone, elections are gone. I said: No. They wrongly postponed the elections. But they will take place in the country and we should work for early elections. Shri Gokhale said in the other House that postponement does not mean elections cannot be held earlier. May I beg of the Congress Party to hold elections? You have got only an enabling Act. It is not a mandatory provision that you must postpone the elections for a year. You are getting powers to postpone the elections for a year more after March next year. I say, do not use that power. Do not use that power, but hold the elections early. Shri Gokhale said that the situation is ripe for the elections, but not for the country. What a great statement—almost from the divine position. People of the world will laugh.

We have Parliamentary Democracy in other parts of the world also. Which party which rules the country, having a Parliamentary system, does not go in for elections when the situation is ripe? Sir, never it has happened. Never stay away from elections when the situation is ripe. Your assessment, therefore, is entirely wrong. By heroics you cannot cover up your wrong assessment. I say it is not the question of assessment. Rightist forces are not in a position to mount the threat of the type they gave us last year. We know it very

well. We can call them to order in the political arena in a frontal, political battle against them. Sir, postponement of elections is for pushing certain other plans counter to the requirements on Parliamentary Democracy, counter to the requirement of accountability of the Ministers to Parliament, and counter to the traditions and conventions we have established over the years. Adult franchise is the most sacred right of our people. Adult franchise is the foundation on which our institutions stand. It has been said again and again that Parliament is supreme as it represents the will of the people. How can it represent the will of the people if the will of the people is bottled up artificially in this manner and not allowed to be expressed? The mandatory provision on elections, periodical elections, is the cornerstone of Parliamentary Democracy. Never are they postponed except for very, very compelling and overriding circumstances in a country having a Parliamentary system. They are never postponed except in times of war or in times of great natural calamity. Sir, even in Germany when Hitler and others were fighting we have seen nobody demanded postponement of the elections. They fought the elections. They might have not lost the elections and they might not have won the elections. But they fought the elections all right. Nowhere in the world democratic parties shy away from elections. But, Sir, here something else is happening. As I said, elections will upset the apple cart of some of my friends in the Congress Party. Sir, what is happening here now? Do you mean to say that the postponement of elections will strengthen the fight against the right reaction or is the implementation of the 20-point programme? I could have understood it if it were so. But what is happening in my State? Do you read in the newspapers that the West Bengal Ministers are busy discussing as to how the 20-point economic programme should be implemented or how the rightist forces should be fought and

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all that? They are discussing something else, something entirely different. They are discussing as to who should be the Chief Minister, who should be the Deputy Chief Minister, who should control Home, where their loyalties lie and all kinds of things. Sir, I am sick of reading such things in the newspapers. It is not my worry as to who becomes the State Chief Minister. It is for the Congress Party to decide. But there is no principle involved in such moves which are going on in my State today. Therefore, Sir, postponement of the elections will only strengthen such disruptive and retrograde trends in our political life and in the political life of the ruling party. I mentioned one businessman in Calcutta today. Sir, today that businessman is very powerful in Calcutta. I repeat, Sir, that the postponement of the elections will shield him, will cover him up and will not bring him to light, that businessman whose name I mentioned as Kamal Nath. He moves in a car with a red light on it which is used by the Ministers. He lives in a house where policemen are on guard and give him a VIP treatment and he does so many other things. I do not know him . . .

SHRI KAMESHWAR SINGH (Bihar): Sir, if the honourable Member has got any personal feuds with Mr. Kamal Nath he should sort them out with him personally, but not on the floor of the House.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I may tell you that I have no personal quarrel with anyone of you or with anybody else.

SHRI KAMESHWAR SINGH: You may not have any quarrel with me or with anybody. But you should not sort out your quarrel with Mr. Kamal Nath on the floor of the House at least.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I thought it should be brought before the House, it seems you do not like my example. All right, Sir. He does not like my example and I leave it at that. But there is the other thing. How did he got a contract for nearly three crores from a Department of the West Bengal Government without any tenders? I should like to know that. If the elections are held, such things will be discussed. When Mr. Boruah distributes the tickets, such things will come up before him and such things will be brought before him by the people of his party. Therefore, postponement of the elections means, Sir that such things are shielded and we do not like such kinds of things at all Sir, election is an open book and it gives us an opportunity for stock-taking for setting things right, and I hope the Congress Party will contribute to it and I have no doubt about that and we will also, in our humble way, contribute to this thing. But the postponement of the elections will only tend to strengthen the forces of right reaction and it is no wonder at all. Sir, those who led the 'total revolution' movement are today taking full advantage of the postponement of elections to spread cynicism and demoralisation among the people by saying that the elections have been postponed, that their right of adult franchise has been taken away and so on. I do not share their view and their deplorable anti-democratic, disruptive and cynical propaganda. But, Sir, must not I speak for the people who have their right of exercise of adult franchise? As I said, Sir, it is the foundation on which our democratic institutions stand and the renovation of parliamentary institutions from time to time is the law of development and if you deny that renovation through periodic, regular and assured elections at the national level, you are weakening the foundations of the parliamentary institutions, whatever may be your intentions. We know that the rightist forces are taking advantage of it and the monopolists are

very happy. Sweets are being distributed by these people whose political ideas are not very very good. Such people, you know are celebrating it and others are also celebrating it. The bureaucrats are the happiest people and they are happy that the elections are being postponed. Sir, therefore, I say: Change this decision. Take a better decision. I may appeal to you, gentlemen: Please do not misunderstand me. I am not questioning the *bona fides* of the ruling party as such, nor of its leadership. But certainly I cannot ignore the moves of some people within the party who wanted a Constituent Assembly, who wanted a seven-year term, who wanted stopping of the parliamentary system in favour of the presidential system, who want to push other friends, who want to have all our gardens arranged according to the flowers of their choice. Let a hundred flowers bloom but all the flowers need not be of their choice. Let them have a little garden according to their own choice in some back yard. Am I wrong, Sardar Amjad Ali? I ask you. This is all. I say.

Therefore, Sir, the postponement of the election will put us in the wrong light in the eyes of the world. Our democracy, our parliamentary democracy, has stood the test of time, and we can proclaim to the world, having won the glorious battle against the forces of destabilisation: We are proceeding with another election. Let it not be said that because of the requirement of some people in high positions in the party we are postponing the election. Sir, if the Prime Minister had been in two mirds, she might not have gone in favour of the postponement of the election

May I, Sir, with all respect for her, appeal to her. Come back to your fighting mood. Come back to that posture, with which you prematurely held the elections in 1971, took the bull by the horn and the nation gave you abundant support and mandate against the monstrosity and challenge of the 'Grand Alliance' at that time!

Where is that spirit gone? Where is that mentality gone? Must we surrender that spirit and mentality to the caprices of some ambitious, power-stricken politicians, no matter where they are situated? Indira Gandhi is loved by people. But she is loved because at the testing moment of our history. One again, the call has come and she has responded to the calls of history. One again, the call has come for going into a political battle to meet the challenge and sight of the rightist forces. I hope, Sir, she will come back to her old self. Let her take a definite decision.

Sir, the postponement of the election, in my view, today is a blow to parliamentary democracy. When some people say that the postponement of the election will mean the consolidation of the gains of the 20-point programme, I say, frankly, the postponement of the election will mean the consolidation of inactive gains, gains of the bureaucracy, gains of the reactionaries, and it will strengthen the hands of the reactionaries, no matter where they are situated. We demand that the election be held earlier. Let us not deprive the millions of people of our country to use a better tool with which to strengthen our politics and give expression and direction to our democratic institutions. Let us go back to the people as children go back to their mothers and seek their blessings, and we shall have created a far better condition not only to retain all the gains that we have made but also to carry them forward, not only to corner the rightist forces but to give them a mortal blow which is necessary.

12 Noon

Once again, I appeal to my friends opposite and if my friend Mr. Bansilal will not mind, appeal to him in particular. The decision to postpone the elections again is an anti-democratic and ill-advised decision. Let the Prime Minister of the country for whom we have got respect and the people have got respect, disengage herself from these

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kinds of forces which want to lead her the wrong way. If Karanjia is correct, I do hope that all of us are of the same opinion in this matter. As far as we are concerned, we are clear in our mind that elections are a moral and political necessity. We must not punish the people. We must respect adult franchise. Supremacy of Parliament must get a fresh mandate from the people, from our millions of voters who have never let down anybody in the nation, who have stood by the nation in all hours of crisis and test. I make my appeal to Mr. Gokhale if he is amenable to appeals. I believe he has been an appellate Judge for some time. Will you be amenable to appeal to advise your Prime Minister that a wrong and disastrous decision has been taken? It is better that you retrace your steps go in for elections and give no quarter to those who have begun to denigrate the elections, parliamentary system and parliamentary democracy and are wrangling for something which means totalitarianism in this country. This country can never be united, can never remain united or held together except in parliamentary democracy and under parliamentary institutions. Our democracy has played a great role in unifying the nation. Democracy has played a great role in unifying the nation and in leading the nation forward. Let us try our tested weapon, make the nation great and make the nation go forward.

Thank you.

SHRI D. K. BOROOAH: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have neither the eloquence nor the loud voice of my esteemed friend, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta. Nor do I have his simplicity with all his eloquence and all his erudition and all his experience in politics in the House and outside. Mr. Bhupesh Gupta has proved himself to be a very simple and gullible person. Sir, Mr. Gokhale, the Law Minister, has said that this measure of postponing elections is a very unusual procedure. It goes against the mandatory provision of

having elections every five years. But this very extraordinary provision arises out of a very extraordinary situation, that is today, the emergency. This House which is a sovereign House, is not allowed to extend the term of Lok Sabha except when there is emergency and that can be done only for one year at a time. We have done that earlier for a year and we are doing it for another year. Why did you do it earlier and, for that matter, why was emergency introduced? Let us consider that. As Mr. Bhupesh Gupta has said, there was a very big conspiracy of the fascist and reactionary forces. In this House, Sir, when I made a speech after Gujarat, I said: 'Please do not underestimate it. It is a conspiracy of fascist and reactionary forces in this country. And it proved to be so. And I am glad that not only the Congress but all progressive forces including Mr. Bhupesh Gupta's Party worked together to fight and eliminate the reactionary forces, who held innumerable camps all over the country, huge mammoth meetings, which the country had never seen before, opposing the rising of fascism in this country. We succeeded in certainly reducing and containing its size and virulence. But let us face the facts. It was possible to contain them to the extent we have been able to do only because of the introduction of emergency. Let us not forget this. And that is why all the progressive forces, including the Communist Party of India, supported the emergency, and all the Communist countries supported emergency. The Congress Working Committee passed a resolution expressing our gratitude to the socialist countries, the non-aligned countries. All the forces of non-alignment, all the progressive forces in the world supported us. It is only a year and a half, not even a year and a half but a year and four months. Are you to believe that all the fascist forces, all the reactionary forces, all the rightist forces vanished into thin air? If Mr. Bhupesh Gupta thinks that they have gone, have been liquidated, they have been eliminated, I am afraid he is living in a political paradise where no wise man

lives. They are there very much. Some of them have been liquidated, some of them have gone underground and some of them are imprisoned. But the fact is this snake has been scotched but not killed. They will raise their hood when the time comes, when the opportunity arises. Therefore, it will be unwise on our part to slacken our emergency. Any demand for removal of emergency—maybe, made out of democratic goodwill—basically will result in weakening democracy, will result in strengthening those forces which have gone underground but are very much alive. Sir, this was not a new phenomenon. Our founding fathers in their wisdom expected it. But you remember when they framed the Constitution they had to go through a trauma of communalism, communal fight and partition of India. It was a communal holocaust when men, women and children were killed on both sides of the frontier. During that period they built a Constitution and they knew what they were doing and they knew the changes that could be forthcoming. Sir, Dr. Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, is really, and you all agree, the architect of the Constitution. As Shri Rajagopalachari said, he is the Abhinav Manu, he is the new law-giver. Sir, the law-givers in this country have always been Brahmins. But the independent India when it had to choose a law-giver, it chose one from the deprived classes. I think it is a great historic achievement on the part of the Congress.

You remember, Sir, in the 'Veni Samhara', when Dronacharya died, there was a debate as to who should become the General of the Kauravas. It was Aswaddhama who put his claim because he himself was a good fighter as well as the son of Dronacharya. But others including Duryodhana wanted to make Karna who was a good fighter and a hero as the commander in chief. Then Aswaddhama said, 'How can you put him? He is a *'suta putra'*'. He is the son of a charioteer, son of a rickshaw-walla or

a *tonga-walla* or whatever you call it. Then what did Karna say? He said :

देवयत्त कुले जन्म, मदायत्त तु राक्षसम्

It means my birth is controlled by my destiny but my achievements by myself. That is the principle on which this Constitution was built by a person whose birth did not stand in his way of becoming the architect of the Indian Constitution and the law-giver of Independent India. Now, what did he say? In his valedictory speech, Sir, when the Constitution was completed, he made a very, if I may say so, profound speech. He was a scholar, a lawyer, a D.Sc., a Ph.D, and an LL.D.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Not a Ph.D.

SHRI D. K. BOROOAH: I am talking of Dr. Ambedkar, not you, Sir.

Sir, if I am not mistaken he did not really study, he ate dinners only in England.

Sir, he was a D.Sc. and an LL.D and Sir, if I am not mistaken, Mr. Gokhale was his student when he was the Principal of the Law College. Now what did he say? He said: "We have built up democracy. This Constitution will be the pivot around which the democracy will grow." If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form but also in fact what must we do? The first thing in my judgment that we must do is to hold fast to constitutional methods for achieving our social and economic objectives. It means we must abandon the methods of revolution. It means we must abandon the methods of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and *satyagraha*. When there was no way left for constitutional methods for achieving social and economic objectives, there was a great deal of justification for unconstitutional methods and when constitutional methods are open and available there can be no justification for adopting unconstitutional methods. These methods

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are nothing but forms of anarchy and the sooner they are abandoned the better for us.

Secondly, Sir, he said that if we wished to preserve the Constitution in which we have sought to enshrine the principle of Government of the people, for the people and by the people, let us resolve not to be tardy in the recognition of the evils that lie across our path and which induce people to prefer Government for the people to Government by the people. Mark these words "Government for the people" and not "Government by the people" and let us not be weakened in our initiative to remove them. That is the only way to serve the country, I know no better. That is why when all these anti-democratic reactionary forces wanted to destroy the democratic edifice of this country a couple of years ago we all stood by the Constitution and democracy in this country and fought down the forces of reaction and because the Prime Minister herself was the leader of that great *jehad* against anti-democratic forces in this country and she, recognising the evil, more quickly than many of us, introduced this emergency so that that evil, that anti-democratic evil could be removed and she did not show any weakness in that. What she did was in conformity with the wishes of the founding-fathers. Therefore, extension of one year at a time is also in accordance with the wishes of the founding-fathers.

We have taken this time not only to consolidate the gains of the emergency and the 20-point programme, but also to see that we do not slacken our fight against forces of reaction. I do not believe, as Mr. Gupta firmly seems to believe, that these forces have already been contained and we do not have to do anything now except to eat *rasgoolas*. But Sir, how can you complain if a man from Calcutta eats *rasgoolas*, because that is the home of

rasgoolas. And it is also a fact, Sir, Mr. Gokhale said that what Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow. But I find what Bengal eats today, we are all eating tomorrow. *Rasgulla* is a Bengali creation; it is now popular all over India. Even there, Sir, Bagh Bazar is a place of *Sandes* and if Mr. Bhupesh Gupta eats a few *Sandes* more than others, how can we blame him? He comes from that area.

There are a number of things that I would like to go into. About the question of what I read, Sir, I am not a very bad reader of books. Certainly, I do not specialise at all in reading tabloid papers and I wish Mr. Bhupesh Gupta would also utilise his hard-won leisure after the work that he has to do here and outside, in reading something more serious so that he may not be misguided by them.

[Mr. Deputy Chairman in the Chair]

Sir, I will tell you one thing. He said that the Constituent Assembly demand was raised by the Pradesh Congress Committees. Sir, in this country, there are 22 or 23 Pradesh Congress Committees now. Now, Sir, it was at my instance, and my General Secretary had advised, that the Pradesh Congress Committees should also consider this Constitution amendment and give their views. All of them have given their views, but, in this country, we do not force our views on anybody. We are not only belonging to a democratic country but we are also a democratic party. And it is, Sir, this party that introduced democracy in this country. Dr. Ambedkar placed it on record that but for the Congress Party, the framing of the Constitution would have been an impossibility. He said it not only once but more than once. Therefore, it is we who brought about the independence and also democracy in this country. We behave democratically. Our members in this House, our members in the Assemblies, our members in the Pradesh Congress

Committees, in the All-India Congress Committee, are free to give expression to their views. But, Sir, there is one basic thing. Once we come to a conclusion, once we come to a position at the highest level, which means certainly, the Congress President, the Congress Working Committee and the Prime Minister, no Congress man has the inclination to differ. Even so, there was a demand for a Constituent Assembly but once the Prime Minister decided: No, the Parliament has the constituent powers to amend the Constitution as and when it likes everybody accepted it. But for the support of the Congress Party in this Constitution (Amendment) Bill, this would not have been passed in this House. The opposition—majority of them—were neither in the Constituent Assembly nor are they here and I can put it that they are irrelevant to the history of India.

Sir, he said that we enter into—what did he say? Did he say cash and carry business? Isn't it? —that we entered into an agreement with them that it will be six years and there is a demand for Constituent Assembly. Sir, this six years' period was included in the Bill which was introduced here on the 1st of September 1976 itself. When it was introduced first on the 1st of September, long before the demand for a Constituent Assembly was aired, six years' period was already included in it. How can we have an agreement or a horse-trading or a cash and carry agreement about something which is already there. When they found that the consensus was not in favour of this demand and when the Prime Minister herself made it clear and categorical, as loyal Congressmen, as democratic Congressmen, they withdrew their demand and that was the end of it. There was no horse-trading and no cash and carry contract. It was very simple that it was already decided long before this demand was there. That knocks the bottom of his argument.

I am grateful for what he has said about the twenty-point programme, that it has created a stir in the minds of the people. Certainly, it has, Sir, we would like to be praised. But we do our job not because others praise us, but because we think it is in the interest of the country. I am sure, whatever others may say and whatever some cynical friends amongst us also may say, the twenty-point programme has caught the imagination of the people. We have been able to achieve a great deal, and that too, without confrontation. We have only applied the policy of non-violence which made India independent and which introduced democratic processes in this country. We only applied that method of non-confrontation, of mass participation and mass persuasion in the twenty-point programme. It may be, we are a little slow. But I believe, in the ultimate analysis, the tortoise will defeat the hare. Therefore, one year and four months is not long enough a period to push through the programme all over the country having a population of 600 million living mostly in the villages. The twenty-point programme—he knows and all of us know—relates to the life of the man who lives not only in the city, but also to the man who lives in the remotest corner of India. Therefore, Sir, it will take time. It is quite justified that we take some time to consolidate our gains. You can fight the fascist forces temporarily by force and temporarily by public opinion. But ultimately, you will have to involve the broad masses of India to fight fascism, and for that, the masses of India must have a feeling that to fight fascism is in their interest. You must create a stake for them in the country so that they know that these forces are going to take away the food from their mouth and the cloth from their back. A sense of participation, a sense of involvement and a sense of having a share in the country is necessary, and for that, the twenty-point programme is very important. It has already created a climate of mass participation in the

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people of India and it has helped in lifting the country by the boot-strap. Therefore, I say it cannot be done through a magic wand. It takes time. It requires hardwork. Therefore, I would say that there is nothing wrong in taking more time.

Now, Sir, Emergency has to continue. The students of European History well know that Emergency was proclaimed on the 3rd September, 1930. It has never been rescinded. In September, 1976, the Irish Parliament passed a fresh resolution to continue the Emergency. There was trouble because of this and the President resigned. The period is from 1939 to 1976. Let us not forget that Ireland was a neutral country. It was not involved in the War. There was no problem because they did not participate in the War. They remained neutral. I do not say we should continue like that. They need not cite examples against us. We can cite examples in our favour.

SHRI ABU ABRAHAM (Nominated): It is not a very good example.

SHRI D. K. BOROOAH: He said about Western countries. I did not say it is a good example. When they can cite examples against us, we can also cite examples in our favour. I claim that right. I have acclaimed that right. But one Directive Principles of the Irish Constitution.

So, Sir, for the purpose we wanted the extension of Parliament. We got one year and we are asking for one more year because otherwise, the election would have opened the Pandora's box and would have enabled those forces to rear their heads and their hoods also. So, only because of this, Sir, I representing the Indian National Congress, thought deeply about this problem and suggested to the Prime Minister that perhaps it would be necessary to postpone the elections by one year. As he knows it

better than I do because he was here when I was not, when Prime Minister held the elections one year earlier some people opposed it but we all were agreed on this because this has been a democratic principle, a principle of the parliamentary system, that it is the right of the Prime Minister, not even of the Cabinet, to decide the time of election. It is the Prime Minister who decided the time of election, i.e. one year ahead. And when she decides now that it should be held later, I suppose you should not grudge her right because ultimately it is she who has to take the bull by the horns, not Mr. Bhupesh Gupta. It is the lady who took the bull, the fascist bull, by the horns. So, let her handle.....

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: At the moment she is on the horns of a dilemma.

SHRI D. K. BOROOAH: Let her handle the situation as best as she can and she can surely do it. You were all doubtful whether the Constitution Amendment Bill would be passed in this House. There are so many people who were doubtful about it, but I say that the Prime Minister is of a single mind, she is of an undivided mind. She said that in this Session the Parliament has to pass the Constitution Amendment Bill and it has been passed

I agree, as you were right to say that it is an enabling clause, it is an enabling authority and she will use it as best as she can. But I feel and I am sure not as an individual but as President of the Indian National Congress—I have my own sources of information and I am very grateful to him when he said that he accepted it—if we go to polls we will win hands down, I have no doubt about it . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I did not say like that. I said you are not afraid of elections. Don't put your word in my mouth.

SHRI D. K. BOROOAH: At least you have given us the compliment of being courageous. I am thankful to you. I only wish I could reciprocate. What I saw is that we know we will win. I will not, therefore, raise this question at all. It is not the question of winning an election but in the process of winning the forces of disruption will get revitalised. That is what I do not want and no Congressman will support it. That is my contention. Therefore, I would like to make it clear that it is for the Prime Minister to decide when the election should be held. Certainly, the Prime Minister will not wait like Mr. Callaghan whose majority is one or less than one. I am sure, she has the majority and more than the two-thirds majority. The right to decide the continuance of the Lok Sabha is not a personal right. It is a right given by the Constitution itself and in special circumstances or at a situation of internal disturbances. That nobody has complained of. Nobody has questioned that there was not a situation of internal disturbances. There was a case for emergency. Everybody is agreed on that. Nobody has opposed emergency but what is opposed to or what is objected to is what stamps out of emergency.

Sir, I do not want to reply to whatever points he has raised because they are not germane to our discussions. But one thing I will tell you again. So far as the Congress is concerned, I cannot speak for others but certainly I can speak on behalf of the Congressmen—we do not want to postpone the elections for a day if it were not in the interests of the democratic governance, protection and safeguarding of democracy in this country. We will win the elections as I said, hands down. We will come, perhaps, with a larger number than we are in the present House there. But, as I said, in the process there is a risk that the fascist forces will get an opportunity to raise their heads—and for quite sometime I would not like to have them. But,

even so, ultimately it is for the decision of the Prime Minister and I am sure in her wisdom, in her knowledge of the country and, as he himself has said, in her choice of the historic moment she will decide. And in her capacity to choose the historic moment, I suppose, she is unrivalled and unequalled in our history. So we defended her to void the anti-democratic, fascist forces in this country. We did so under her leadership.

We established three milestones for democracy by amending the Constitution, by including so many things, by including socialism and secularism as not the character of our Constitution but also our objective. So, let us not fight for a very small thing. I know, one year under her leadership would be an advantage rather than a disadvantage for democracy in this country. We have passed the Constitution Amendment Bill. A lot of things will emerge out of the Constitution. We discussed the problem of the legal system. Then we included education also in the Concurrent List. Let us also have a close look at these problems. I am sure, Sir, democracy will be safer in her hands for one year rather than if we had introduced the election now and created an opportunity and enabled the disruptive forces a field day even for a short period. I have, therefore, no hesitation—both as an individual and as the head of the Congress Organisation—in supporting this Bill moved for the extension of the Lok Sabha by one year by the Law Minister. I am sure, Sir, if Mr. Bhupesh Gupta would think a little more objectively and not get involved about what happens in Bengal, what happens here or somewhere else.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: But you are going to Bengal. I know, all the Bengal leaders you have got here. I have got none. What are you doing with them?

SHRI D. K. BOROOAH: I did not refer to Bengal. You did. I have not said a word about Bengal.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You are most welcome.

SHRI D. K. BOROOAH: I know, Sir, so far as I am concerned, I may say one or two things by way of joke. But I know, so far as Bengal is concerned, it has been the harbinger of patriotism in this country and I am sure they will fight for India, maintain Indian democracy and consolidate India's nationalism in the lowest reaches. Let us not worry about Bengal, let us not worry about the Congress.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I am not worried. Sir, on a point of personal explanation. I am not at all worried about anything. The only thing I would like is that Bengal be ruled constitutionally by the institutions that are there and not by remote control.

SHRI D. K. BOROOAH: Sir, Bengal is under the Centre. So are all other States. But Bengal has a very special characteristic of its own. As I said, it is the harbinger of patriotism in our country. Certainly, they will not let us down. I am sure that Bengal can look after itself. But, Sir, I will again earnestly ask him to re-consider what he had said. Let us not go by matters which are peripheral, matters which are irrelevant. In this large country there are people who may behave perhaps irrationally, there are people who may behave even, if I may say so, not in accordance with what we consider to be proper values. But, even so? by and large, I am sure Sir, the last year and a half has enabled the country, under the leadership of the Congress and through the instrumentation of the Government, to march forward towards democracy. I suppose, there cannot be any doubt about it. Therefore, let us strengthen the forces of democracy by enabling the Government and the Prime Minister to deal with the forces of reaction for a short while. Then the Prime Minister, in her own judgment, in her own assessment, and in her own

sense of the historic action, will choose the day when we will go to the polls against the forces of reaction and rout them.

Thank you, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Schamnad. (After a pause). Are you not speaking?

SHRI HAMID ALI SCHAMNAD (Kerala): No, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Swaminathan.

SHRI V. V. SWAMINATHAN (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I oppose the Bill because it seeks to extend the life of the House of the People from 5 years to 6 years on a permanent basis when there are adequate measures in the Constitution, old as well as the newly-amended one, under Emergency powers to elongate the life of the House of the People to 6 years, 7 years, or 8 years or even 10 years from the statutory tenure of 5 years. The only thing is you have to extend it from year to year. You cannot jump to more than a year at a time.

I opposed the relevant amendment in the Constitution (Forty-fourth Amendment) Bill also.

Let us look at the world. In various countries, U.K. Canada, France, Ireland (to which my honourable colleague Shri D. K. Borooah referred), South Africa, Zambia, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, in all these European, African and Arab countries also, the life of the Parliament is only 5 years.

If we take a bigger country like the USSR, the life of Parliament is only 4 years. In Japan and Yugoslavia also, it is only 4 years. In Australia, it is only 3 years. In the USA, the life of the House of Representatives is 2 years. Life of the Presidency only is 4 years. Even in China, the provision is only for 4 or 5 years.

Amendment—Bill, 1976

Sir, why should we alone go in for more than five years? Why one more year? In the Constitution (Forty-fourth Amendment) Bill, no reason is adduced for extension of the life of the House of the People.

Either they must be jealous of the Council of States which has a term of six years or they are selfish. The reason now adduced in the present Bill is that the conditions that prevailed in 1975 prompted the Government to extend the life of the House of the People for one year, from 1976 to 1977, continue to prevail. Even for argument sake if we accept it, Parliament has got ample powers under Emergency provisions of the Constitution to extend the life of the House of the People from 1977 to 1978. What is the difficulty about it? who objects to it? Where is the intervention of the Judiciary coming in the way? Nobody can dare to say that this Bill is necessary to bring about a bloodless socio-economic revolution, except perhaps, in the pay and allowances of the Members of the House of the People for one more year.

Before the Constitution (Forty-fourth Amendment) Bill, you had article 31C. Article 31C itself is a powerful economic weapon, a magic wand. You had the Ninth Schedule to shelter all the radical legislations aimed at the socio-economic progress. You had both the sword as well as the shield to bring about a socio-economic transformation, to establish a socialistic society. Now, after the Constitution (Forty-fourth) Amendment Bill, you have had article 31C amended which is an advanced form of the old article 31C. The new article 31C has now made almost all the Directive Principles enforceable as good as the Fundamental Rights. The new article 31C is equal to Alladin's wonderful lamp. Further, now you have a new proviso to article 358 and also to article 359 by which you can have emergency in a part of the country; you need not declare emergency in the whole of the country. One State affected by emergency need not

affect the adjacent or other States not affected by the emergency conditions.

When you have all such sophisticated gadgets in the Constitution, where is the necessity to elongate the life of the House of the People on a permanent basis? It is significant to note that this provision is not there in the Swaran Singh Committee's Report, and the reason given in the Statement of Objects and Reasons cannot be believed. If really the conditions that prevailed at the time of extending the life of the House of the People in 1975 for one year had continued during the time of August, 1976 when the Opposition leaders belonging to the All India Anna DMK, the CPI and some other Members of Parliament met the Swaran Singh Committee, the Committee would not have failed to bring it to the notice of the Opposition parties. It was not there definitely in the month of August, 1976 and we cannot presume that it is there even now. This is a later invention and so this argument cannot be accepted.

It is not a mere question of the extension of the life of the House of People, it is postponement of the general elections not only to the House of the People but also to the Council of States because as a necessary corollary the life of the legislatures of the States also is extended from five to six years. Then the elections to the corporations in the metropolitan cities and to municipalities, village panchayats and panchayat unions are also postponed. The people are vexed. Postponement of elections has brought about desertion and defection. Young political workers aspirants to have experience in the local administration, to participate in the local legislature's and Parliament's proceedings are thoroughly disgusted and disappointed. They have lost their enthusiasm.

By postponing the elections to the Assemblies in Tamil Nadu and in Pondicherry, you are denying the people of these States the right of

[Shri V. Swaminathan]

sending their representatives to this august House. From Tamil Nadu, you must elect six Members and from Pondicherry one Member to this House. By passing this Bill, you will be violating the supremacy and sovereignty of the people; you will be guilty of committing a breach of faith placed by the people in you in 1971. This is misuse and abuse of the mandate the people gave you in 1971. Under the guise of consolidating the gains during the emergency, you are doing something illegal, something immoral. This is pure selfishness. This is nothing but grabbing power. Do not rely upon the two-thirds majority always. You know that it was the tyranny of the majority that was responsible for the crucifixion of Christ and for Socrates being ordered to die by hemlock. You say that all those Opposition parties which did not meet the Swaran Singh Committee and did not participate in the discussion on the Constitution (Forty-fourth Amendment) Bill are irresponsible. But, Sir, we responded to your request and we had discussions with the Swaran Singh Committee and also participated in the discussion on the Bill. I must say that Mr. Gokhale and other members of the Swaran Singh Committee welcomed us and gave a very patient hearing. We responded to your request. It is time for you—and your turn—now to respond to our request to drop the Bill, not to pass this Bill in the interests of the supremacy and sovereignty of the people. Sir, I oppose this Bill.

श्री सुलतान सिंह (हरियाणा) :
उपसभापति जी, यह जो विधेयक ला मिनिस्टर साहब ने पेश किया है मैं इसका समर्थन करने के लिये खड़ा हुआ हूँ। आप जानते हैं कि इस देश के अन्दर एक अजीब हालत पैदा हो गई थी। आज जो लोग लोकतंत्र की दुहाई देते हैं वे इस बात को भूल जाते हैं कि आज से दो-तीन साल पहले हिन्दुस्तान

के लोकतंत्र की क्या हालत बन गई थी। चुनी हुई ऐसेम्बलियों का काम करना मुश्किल हो गया था। लेकिन हमारे देश की प्रधान मंत्री ने इमरजेन्सी लागू करके लोकतंत्र को जिन्दा रखा है। अब लोग इस बात को मानने लगे हैं कि आज वे आराम के साथ काम कर सकते हैं। यही नहीं इमरजेन्सी के बाद देश की अर्थ-व्यवस्था बदली है और कल-गर्सों की वर्ल्ड बैंक के चेयरमैन का बगान आपने पढ़ा होगा। उन्होंने यह कहा है कि हिन्दुस्तान ने अपनी अर्थव्यवस्था को जिस तेजी से संवारा है इसकी मिसाल दुनिया में मुश्किल से मिलती है। आप हमारे देश के एक्सपोर्ट को देखिये, प्रोडक्शन को देखिये और दूसरे कार्यों को भी देखिये। हर क्षेत्र में देश की हालत बेहतर बनी है। ऐसी स्थिति में यह जरूरी हो जाता है कि जो ताकतें लोकतंत्र की दुश्मन हैं, जो फ़ासिस्ट आर्गेंनाइजेशन हैं, जो हमारे जनतंत्र को भंग करना चाहते हैं और जो इस इमरजेन्सी के बाद भी देश में सक्रिय हैं, उनको किसी तरह का ऐसा मौका न दिया जाये जिससे वे इस इमरजेन्सी का नाजायज फ़ायदा उठा सकें। आप जानते हैं कि कुछ एक ऐसे भी पार्लियामेंट के मेम्बर हैं जो दूसरे देशों में जाकर इस देश के खिलाफ़ बेहूदा प्रचार कर रहे हैं। इससे साफ़ जाहिर है कि ये ताकतें अभी तक दबी नहीं हैं। इन्हीं परिस्थितियों को देखकर हमारे लाँ मिनिस्टर यह बिल लाये हैं जिसके अनुसार लोक सभा की अवधि एक साल के लिए बढ़ाई जा रही है। इस विधेयक का मैं समर्थन और स्वागत करता हूँ और वह इसलिए करता हूँ कि पिछले एक साल के अन्दर हमारे देश की अर्थ-व्यवस्था जिस तरह से संवरी और सम्भली है उसको बनाये रखना बहुत आवश्यक हो गया है।

हमारे बुजुर्ग दोस्त श्री भूपेश गुप्ता ने कहा कि चनाव जल्दी होने चाहिए। मैं

तो इस बात को मानता हूँ कि चुनाव होने चाहिए। श्री भूपेश गुप्ता ने यह तो नहीं कहा कि कांग्रेस पार्टी चुनावों से डरती है। लेकिन कुछ लोग कहते हैं। ऐसे लोगों को मैं एक बात बताना चाहता हूँ कि कांग्रेस पार्टी अपोरचुनिस्ट पार्टी नहीं है। अगर कांग्रेस पार्टी अपोरचुनिस्ट पार्टी होती तो आज से बढ़िया वक्त चुनाव के लिए कोई दूसरा नहीं हो सकता है। कांग्रेस के सामने कभी यह सवाल नहीं रहा कि कांग्रेस किसी तरह से कुर्सी पर आए या गद्दी पर आए। कांग्रेस के सामने हमेशा यह सवाल रहा कि देश को आगे कैसे बढ़ाया जाये और इसी भावना से प्रेरित होकर लोक सभा की अवधि एक साल के लिए बढ़ाई जा रही है। उप-सभापति महोदय, मैं आपकी भारभर अपने दोस्तों को यह बताना चाहता हूँ कि कांग्रेस पार्टी चुनाव की डर की वजह से लोक सभा की अवधि एक साल के लिए नहीं बढ़ा रही है। कांग्रेस पार्टी का एक कैरेक्टर रहा है। जिस रोज इस देश का बंटवारा हुआ, यहाँ पर हिन्दु-मुस्लिम झगड़े चल रहे थे, कत्ले आम चल रहा था। उसी समय हमारा पड़ोसी देश पाकिस्तान बन रहा था। पाकिस्तान 14 अगस्त को बना और उसी रोज एक एलान हुआ कि पाकिस्तान एक इस्लामी राज्य होगा। आप जानते हैं कि 15 अगस्त को हिन्दुस्तान बना और उसी रोज पाकिस्तान बनने के दूसरे दिन पंडित जवाहर लाल नेहरू लालकिले के सामने यह एलान करते हैं कि हमारा देश सेकुलर होगा। उन्होंने कभी इस बात का भय नहीं दिखाया कि इसका परिणाम क्या होगा। बल्कि उन्होंने यह कहा कि हम लोग अपने रास्ते पर चलते रहेंगे। यही कांग्रेस पार्टी की शक्ति रही है क्योंकि कांग्रेस पार्टी हवा के साथ कभी नहीं बहती। पंडित जवाहर लाल नेहरू के बाद उनको सुपुत्री श्रीमति इंदिरा गांधी आज देश को प्रगति के पथ पर ले जा रही हैं और उनके द्वारा

दिखाये हुए मार्ग पर चल रही हैं। आप जानते हैं कि कुछ मान पहले कोई आदमी यह नहीं मानता था कि आंध्र प्रदेश कभी एक रज नकेगा। लेकिन आज आंध्र प्रदेश एक प्रान्त के रूप में आगे बढ़ रहा है। इसी प्रकार मे इपरजेन्सी से पहले कुछ विरोधी पार्टियों की गतिविधियों के कारण हमारे देश में ला एण्ड आर्डर बिल्कुल खत्म हो चुका था और कालेजों और स्कूलों के अन्दर अभ्यवस्था फैन चुली थी। विद्यार्थी विध्वंसक कार्यवाहियों में संलग्न हो गये थे। आज यह सारी स्थिति बदल गई है। आज हमारे सामने सवाल यह है कि इस स्थिति को किस प्रकार में स्थायी रूप प्रदान किया जाये। हमारे देश को प्रधान मंत्री श्रीमती इंदिरा गांधी चुनावों से डरते वालों नहीं हैं। कांग्रेस पार्टी भी चुनाव से डरने वाली पार्टी नहीं है। श्री भूपेश गुप्ता जी ने चौधरी बंसीलाल का जिक्र किया। वैसे तो कांग्रेस प्रेजिडेंट ने भी किया। लेकिन उन्होंने उनके बारे में एक खाम बात कही कि चौधरी बंसीलाल जी एन्टी-कम्युनिस्ट हैं। यह उन्होंने खुले लबजों में कहा। उपसभापति महोदय, मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि यह बात सही नहीं है कि चौधरी बंसीलाल एन्टी-कम्युनिस्ट हैं। यह ठीक है कि वे कम्युनिस्ट नहीं हैं पर एन्टी-कम्युनिस्ट भी नहीं हैं। पता नहीं उनके पास क्या है जिसके आधार पर उन्होंने यह बात कही। भूपेश जी चले गये। अगर कम्युनिस्ट लोग देखें तो जिस वक्त रूस के अन्दर क्रान्ति आई और क्रान्ति के बाद पहली मीटिंग जब लेनिन ने की तो उसके अन्दर उन्होंने कहा कि किसी भी देश में सोवलिज्म बिजली के बगैर नहीं आ सकता। यह लेनिन ने कहा था। भूपेश जी यहाँ बैठे हुए नहीं हैं परन्तु मैं उनको यह बताना चाहता हूँ कि हिन्दुस्तान में अगर कोई ऐसा व्यक्ति है जिसने स्टेट का मुख्य मंत्री बनकर सबसे पहले हिन्दुस्तान के अन्दर अपनी स्टेट में

[श्री सुलतान सिंह]

एक-एक गांव तक बिजली पहुंचाई तो वह चौधरी बंसीलाल है। वे अपनी स्टेट के एक एक गांव तक बिजली ले गये और ऐसे व्यक्ति को वे एन्टी-कम्युनिस्ट कहते हैं। मैं मानता हूँ कि वे एन्टी-कम्युनिस्ट हो सकते हैं लेकिन एन्टी-सोसलिस्ट नहीं हैं।

श्री काली मुखर्जी (पश्चिमी बंगाल) :
सारा हिन्दुस्तान एन्टी कम्युनिस्ट है।

श्री सुलतान सिंह : वह सोशलिस्ट है। लेनिन ने कहा था कि यदि सोसलिज्म लाना है तो एक एक गांव में बिजली ले जाओ। हिन्दुस्तान में पहला मुख्य मंत्री चौधरी बंसीलाल था जो एक एक गांव तक बिजली ले गया उसके बाद 100 परसेन्ट अगर किसी स्टेट में ट्रांसपोर्ट का नेशनलाइजेशन हुआ तो वह सबसे पहले हरियाणा में हुआ, चौधरी बंसीलाल के जमाने में हुआ। अगर 8 सौ या 7 सौ फुट नीचे पानी को उठाकर राजस्थानी जमीन सिंचि जा सकती है तो वह हरियाणा प्रान्त में की जा सकती है। पाइप लाइनें बिछा कर वाटरलौगिंग पैदा करके मेन कैनाल कहीं बनी है तो हरियाणा प्रदेश में चौधरी बंसीलाल के मुख्य मंत्री बनने पर बनी। जब चौधरी बंसीलाल मुख्य मंत्री बने तो सारे हरियाणा स्टेट के अन्दर कुल 5 हजार लम्बी किलोमीटर सड़कें थीं परन्तु जिस दिन वह हरियाणा छोड़ करके आये उस दिन 17 हजार किलोमीटर लम्बी सड़कें छोड़कर आये। जिस दिन वह मुख्य मंत्री बने उस समय केवल 24 हजार ट्यूबवेल थे और जिस दिन छोड़ कर आये उस वक्त 2 लाख ट्यूबवेल चलते थे। जिस रोज वह मुख्य मंत्री बने हरियाणा प्रदेश में कोई मुकम्मल यूनिवर्सिटी नहीं थी, केवल एक यूनिवर्सिटी कुरुक्षेत्र में थी और जिस रोज वह छोड़कर आये थे उस दिन एग्रीकल्चर यूनिवर्सिटी हिसार में, साइंस यूनिवर्सिटी रोहतक में, कुरुक्षेत्र में यूनिवर्सिटी बनीं। तो वह कहते हैं कि चौधरी बंसीलाल एन्टी कम्युनिस्ट हैं।

हमारे देश की प्रधानमंत्री श्रीमती इंदिरा गांधी जी ने इस देश में सोसलिज्म लाने के लिये जो छोटे छोटे कदम उठाये, वे चौधरी बंसीलाल के नेतृत्व में हरियाणा स्टेट में सबसे पहले पूरे किये गये हैं। मैं बताना चाहता हूँ कि चौधरी बंसीलाल ने पिछली बार जो इलेक्शन लड़ा उसमें न उन्होंने कोई अपना पोलिंग एजेंट भेजा, न किसी कांस्टीट्यून्शी में गये। वे इलेक्शन से डरने वाले नहीं हैं।

उपसभापति महोदय, आज जो यह एक साल लोकसभा की मियाद बढ़ा रहे हैं यह इस देश के हित में बढ़ा रहे हैं। इंदिरा गांधी जानती हैं कि इस देश का भला किस बात से हो सकता है। अगर इंदिरा गांधी जी यह देखेंगी कि देश का भला एक साल बाद चुनाव कराने में है तो वह उस वक्त जरूर चुनाव में कूदेंगी। उस वक्त भी कुछ लोगों ने कहा था कि इन्दिरा गांधी एक साल पहले लोक सभा को क्यों तोड़ती हैं? लेकिन देखा सबने कि वे टूथर्ड मैजिस्टी लेकर आईं। आज भी उनके सामने एक ही सवाल है कि हमारा देश उन्नति करे, तरक्की करे और यहां पर उन्होंने साबित कर दिया कि इमरजेन्सी के बाद इन्दिरा गांधी जी ने जो कदम उठाया है उसके बाद हमारी अर्थ-व्यवस्था संभली है, हमारी रेलगाड़ियां टाइम पर चलने लगी हैं, हमारी चुनी हुई, सभाये ठीक तरीके से काम करने लगी हैं और जहां तक कम्युनिस्टों का ताल्लुक है मैं तो कहना नहीं चाहता लेकिन पिछले साल तो वे समर्थन दे रहे थे इसी तरह के बिल का, इस साल वे अगल क्यों हैं? मगर यह उनकी पुरानी आदत है। उपसभापति महोदय, आपको याद होगा महात्मा गांधी ने “भारत छोड़ो” का नारा दिया था तो शुरू में साथ थे लेकिन बीच में छोड़ कर भाग गये। आज भी उनकी राय हमसे अलग हो सकती है तो मैं उनका बुरा नहीं मानता।

मैं एक बात आपकी मार्फत उपसभापति महोदय, बता देना चाहता हूँ। कांग्रेस पार्टी अपाचुनिस्ट पार्टी नहीं है; कांग्रेस पार्टी के सामने इस देश का नक्शा है। इस देश के नक्शे को पूरा करने का लक्ष्य कांग्रेस के सामने है। कांग्रेस चुनाव से कभी डरी नहीं, कभी डरने वाली भी नहीं। जब हिन्दु मुसलिम झगडा था तो कांग्रेस ने सेक्यूलरिज्म को कायम रखा; जब इस देश के अंदर लोग कहते थे कि इन्दिरा गांधी शक्तिशाली नहीं है तो लोकसभा को तोड़ कर इन्दिरा गांधी चुनाव के मैदान में गई। आज भी जब सारे देश के अंदर अफ़रा तफ़री, बदअमनी और बुरी हालत लोग पैदा करने की कोशिश कर रहे थे तो इन्दिरा गांधी ने साबित कर दिया कि इन्दिरा गांधी इस देश को किस तरह बचा सकते हैं और उनको कितना बड़ा समर्थन हिन्दुस्तान की जनता ने दिया। आप जहाँ जहाँ भी किसी यूनिवर्सिटी में, किसी कालेज में जाकर देखें, वही बच्चे जो बिध्वंस की कार्यवाहियाँ करते थे, अब वे इन्दिरा गांधी जिंदावाद के नारे लगाते हैं, वही लोग जो रेलवे को जलाते थे, जो तोड़ फोड़ करते थे, आज वे दिन रात काम करते हैं। तो आज देश का वातावरण बदला है। मैं चाहता हूँ यह वातावरण जो बदला है और इसके अंदर इन्दिरा जी ने जो एक आर्थिक कार्यक्रम दिया है वह मजबूत हो। इलेक्शन भी बहुत बड़ी चीज है, लोकतंत्र भी बड़ी चीज है लेकिन लोकतंत्र से भी देश बड़ा है। हमें देश का हित कभी नहीं छोड़ना चाहिये। आज ऐसा जो वातावरण बना है उसको बनाये रखे, यह देश तरक्की करता जाये। कांग्रेस पार्टी का बेशक नज़रिया लोकतंत्र है और यही वजह है कि जगह जगह हमारी कांग्रेस पार्टी प्रस्ताव करती है और फिर प्रधान मंत्री जो फ़ैसला करती है उसको मानती है क्योंकि हमारी सिस्टम ही लोकतांत्रिक सिस्टम रहा है, हमारी पार्टी लोकतंत्र से कभी दूर नहीं हुई और जो भाई लोकतंत्र की दुहाई देते हैं उनका नज़रिया हमेशा फ़ासिस्ट रहा है। लोकतंत्र

का कोई भी अगर रक्षक बन सकता तो कांग्रेस पार्टी ही बन सकती है। धन्यवाद।

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA (Orissa)
Sir, I rise to support the Bill. After the Congress President has intervened in the debate, there is hardly any new point which I think I can add. Sir, there is very little that I can add after what has been said by him and by Mr. Gokhale when he sponsored the Bill. But, Sir, as a humble soldier of the ruling party.....

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Soldier of the ruling party?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bhupesh Gupta, you must go to your seat.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: All right, Sir.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Sir, I would like to give my vocal support to the Bill.....

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Sir, I am very sorry that our friend is a humble soldier. I was wondering how he, who was a general in another party, has become a soldier.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: Sir, some references to me have been made by my esteemed friend, Shri Bhupesh Gupta, and I think I have to deal with them in my humble way. But I will deal with them later because I think personal matters come later.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: No, no. Nothing personal; nothing personal at all.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: The national issues have to be dealt with first and, therefore, I would deal with

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the national issues, first after which I would come to his references.

Sir, I think at no point of time in history....

SHRI G. LAKSHMANAN (Tamil Nadu): He supported the postponement of elections last year. You ask him

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: I will deal with him later.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Deal with me quickly because I have to go.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: I will deal with them later. All right, if you wish not to be here after you have made.....

1 P.M.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I have come for you.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: After having made all the charges, with your experience of 25 years here, if you prefer to go, I would deal with it without you...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: In abstentia.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I want to hear you. That is why I am here.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: As I said, India has today attained a height which it has never attained in its history. And the height that it has attained is due to the outstanding and courageous leadership of Mr. Indira Gandhi, our Prime Minister, and the emergency introduced a year and some months ago. Sir, India's prestige has gone up very high internationally. There was a time when foreigners used to think of India as a country with people who are unskilled, who are dependent on others, who go about with a begging bowl all over the world. That impression

has been completely eradicated—so much so, the World Bank President says that India has remarkably improved economically. The International Monetary Fund Chairman makes similar references. Presidents and Prime Ministers of many countries make laudable references regarding India and its progress. All this has been possible within these few months.

The impression that we had created about ourselves in the pre-emergency period was no doubt because, to some extent, of the efforts of Mr. Bhupesh Gupta and his party as well as other Opposition parties. Mr. Bhupesh Gupta's contribution was not the least among other parties. So far as 'gheraos' were concerned, he was a party to the 'gheraos'. So far as the S.V.D. governments were concerned, he was a party to the S.V.D. governments. He wants to run with the hare and hunt with the hound. Now, of course, he is in a position to denounce all that, because with the proclamation of emergency he fought against the forces which still remained in darkness and wanted the whole country to be in a state of depression and chaos. I congratulate him for this. This is the first time, when internal emergency was proclaimed, that the C.P.I. has taken a correct stand, a right stand.

Sir, if you go back into the history, you would probably recall, and easily recall—because it is easily recallable—that Mr. Bhupesh Gupta and his party fought for the British and against Mahatma Gandhi and said that Mahatma Gandhi was fighting a wrong cause. They went on preaching this in India when the Mahatma was fighting for independence tooth and nail. I marvel at Shri Gupta's roundabout turn from being British lackeys to be top patriots during the last few months of emergency. If they can take a roundabout turn that way and come all the way from an entire wrong to entire right, what is wrong in my coming from the deputy

leadership of the Swatantra Party and failing line with the Congress? I joined the Congress because I believed in the Congress ideology, because I changed my opinion and I believed in the Congress ideology and the leadership of Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Mr. D. K. Borooah. What is wrong about it? I made a full-breast confession about my change of opinion. I believe in the Twenty-Point Programme and I believe in the Congress ideology. Therefore, I joined the Congress. I do not believe in back-seat driving. I do not believe in support and agitation methods. That is given to hypocrites. I believe in doing things straight. When I felt like joining the Congress, I made no concealment about it. I made a statement saying that I wanted to join the Congress. I applied to the Congress President in accordance with the procedure that has been laid down. I met the Prime Minister and told her as that I intended joining the Congress. Sir, if Mr. Bhupesh Gupta had the power to screen the people who enter Congress, then may be I had to consult him. But, fortunately for our country, did not head the screening committee for the people who were to be admitted in to the Congress. I have done it through the proper channel. Of course, Bhupesh Gupta's party and its position has been a little affected in Orissa with my joining the Congress and, therefore, to that extent, they have lost ground in Orissa. That is why, may be he is trying to put the blame on me. This is like losing something in the pond and trying to find it in the river. Therefore, all his misgivings and the language that he used against me are misplaced.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I have not used any language.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: That shows your generosity. I cannot talk the way Mr. Bhupesh Gupta speaks. He has the experience of 25 years in this House. He is a public orator

and goes on propagating the point of view of his party in the country. So, I cannot shout at him the way he has done. In my own humble way, I have tried to place my point of view. May be it would convince him and may be he would not have an occasion to refer to me in future the way he did today.

Now, I come back to the Bill.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I can tell you that I never used any disrespectful language. All that I said was that he has joined the Congress. That is an improvement.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bhupesh Gupta, you will agree that you are much happier with Mr. Lokanath Misra being in the Congress than in the Swatantra Party.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Certainly, from Swatantra Party to Congress is an improvement. Therefore, I say that the situation has improved.

SHRI LOKANATH MISRA: So far as his references regarding the elections are concerned, I completely disagree from him. He says that things have improved now and, therefore, we should have elections and take a fresh mandate from the people. When the extension was sought for last year, his party supported the move because he thought that that was the time when the reactionary forces which create chaos and havoc in the country should be put down. Now, he says that they have been completely put down or may be tolerably put down (*Interruptions*). This is according to Mr. Raha who has interrupted me. Now, he feels that we should go back for elections. When we talk of elections in India, we cannot think of the pattern of elections that is prevalent in the Soviet Union. It will have to be a free and fair election in which all the other parties will participate. Therefore, their conception of an election very much differs from ours. We do not believe and our beloved Prime Minister

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ter does not feel that it is time yet to go to the polls. So, when she feels that the reactionary forces have been done away with, when we do not have to face that kind of danger in case we go to the elections, then we shall have the elections. Even though we are for the time being giving an extension by one year, we might hold elections even earlier if the time is opportune. There is no bar to hold the elections earlier simply because we are giving an extension by one year according to the Bill.

Sir, the discipline in the country after the proclamation of emergency is spectacular. Wherever I go, to whichever office I go, I find that the staff are there in their seats in time. Wherever the time is 10.00 hours, they are there in their seats at 10.00 hours, and if the time is 10.15 hours, they are there at 10.15 hours. Sir, we would like this to take stronger roots. The sapling has just taken the roots now but we would like the tree to become strong and be in a position to face all weathers. Before that, we cannot welcome cyclone and an immediate election would mean a cyclone.

Sir, production has gone up in the country. The foreign exchange earning has doubled, the balance of trades has also doubled or tripled. The price rise has been contained. Sir, in certain items of luxury, only, the prices have varied a little this way or that during the last three months. But, Sir, our common man is very much concerned about agricultural products rather than the luxury goods, and in those items, prices have definitely gone down. Sir, 80 per cent of our population is concerned with the day-to-day needs like agricultural products and they are having them at fixed prices. And 20 per cent of our population needs luxury goods. There may have been a slight fluctuation in the prices of luxury goods.

Sir, the 20-point programme has gathered momentum and it should go forward unhampered. This is a very courageous programme given by our outstanding Prime Minister in the most opportune time and it has gathered tremendous momentum. But it has still miles to go so that it involves every common man. Everybody in the country feels that he is also a part of this 20-point programme. In addition to that, Sir, the youth which used to behave in the pre-emergency days as irresponsible persons, their energies have now been channelised under the robust and dynamic leadership of Shri Sanjay Gandhi and the presidentship of Mrs. Ambika Soni. Who would not agree that this should stabilise? If the younger generation becomes more responsible through constructive channels, the generation that would take over the administration of this country, they would be better citizens and the administration in the country would also be responsible. Therefore, it is our duty to support this Bill which seeks to extend the Lok Sabha elections by one year. If all these are supported, then naturally the corollary is that we have to support the extension of the Lok Sabha by another year. Mr. Bhupesh Gupta supports some measures in part and agitates against some measures at his will and at his convenience but the Congress Party, as stated earlier by some Members, does not believe in Opportunism and does not believe in benefiting itself. It only believes in the benefit that would accrue to the country. Therefore the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Parliamentary Party and the undisputed leader of the country has rightly taken the decision that the Lok Sabha elections should be postponed for another year. I do not think she has acted on the advice of any group or pressure group as indicated by Mr. Bhupesh Gupta. He smells a rat everywhere because that is the system in the Soviet Union with which he is so much familiar. Therefore he suspects the evils of proletariat dictatorship everywhere, but in our country the pressure tactics

does not work that way. The ultimate decision in the ruling party is with the leader and once the leader takes a decision and the party feels that it is in the right direction, it supports it. I therefore support this Bill.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned till 2.15 p.m. today.

(The House then adjourned for lunch at seventeen minutes past one of the clock).

The House reassembled after lunch at seventeen minutes past two of the clock, THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI LOKANATH MISRA) in the Chair.

PETITION RE. REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES OF HANDLOOM WEAVERS

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI LOKANATH MISRA): Shri Kader-shah will present the petition.

SHRI M. KADER SHAH (Tamil Nadu): Sir, I beg to present a petition signed by Shri N. V. Subburam President, Handloom Weavers Association and 105 other weavers from Dindigul in Tamil Nadu praying for the redressal of the grievances of the handloom weavers.

THE HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE (EXTENSION OF DURATION) AMENDMENT BILL, 1976—

contd.

SHRI ABU ABRAHAM: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, in spite of reservations, I voted for the Constitution (Forty-fourth Amendment) Bill yesterday and in spite of reservations, I shall also vote for this Bill but somewhat reluctantly, and only in the belief that this will be the last time that elections will be postponed. I am doing it as an act of faith—in the Prime Minister, faith in Mr. Gokhale, faith in Mr. Borooah, faith in the Congress Party and faith in the people of India. I would like to state my reservations and express my disappointment, my doubts and fears about this Bill. We have been told again and again that the time

is not ripe for holding elections. They say "The time is not ripe for this; the time is not ripe for that" and so on. It reminds me of what the British Government used to say in the old days to their colonies 'You are not ripe for democracy'. I remember, some years ago, a Jamaican politician told the British Government 'Do you think we are a bunch of bananas?' As for this country, Sir, we have been ripe for democracy for a long time and we are a democracy. Our problem today is to maintain the processes and the institutions of democracy. Then again, we are told that we have to consolidate the gains of the Emergency. Now, how long are we going to consolidate the gains of the Emergency? Unless fresh gains are made, what is there to consolidate? I believed that we shall make no more gains if the emergency continues much longer. In fact, already the negative effects of the Emergency are beginning to show. Various power groups have come up all over the country which are using the Emergency and the atmosphere created by it for unauthorised and unconstitutional activities. People, whether they are politicians, bureaucrats or other public figures, are using power for their own purposes in a most autocratic manner. This is one reason for the unrest that has arisen in some parts of the country. Mr. Borooah mentioned this morning—Mr. Gokhale has also said this—that there are still disruptive elements in the country. Of course, there will always be some disruptive elements. But we should put them down. Postponing the elections will only strengthen these elements. We are never going to have perfect conditions for an election. Postponing the election is in fact, what these reactionary elements want because they are not the people who believe in the normal democratic processes.

Sir, the Prime Minister has said that the Emergency is a strong medicine. I think it is a perfect analog because, I believe, the Emergency came about on account of some sick