

dated the 31st January, 1976, issued by the President in relation to the State of Tamil Nadu.

(ii) Statement giving reasons for the delay in laying the Report mentioned at (i) above.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT-11549/76 for (i) and (ii).]

LEAVE OF ABSENCE TO SHRI SURESH NARAIN MULLA

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have to inform that the following letter dated the 7th November, 1976, has been received from Shri Suresh Narain Mulla:—

"In confirmation of the telegram already sent, this is to inform you that as I have been taken ill, and the doctors have advised me not to move out of the station, I will not be in a position to attend the 98th Session of the Rajya Sabha.

In the above circumstances, I request that the House may be pleased to condone my absence during this Session."

Is it the pleasure of the House that permission be granted to Shri Suresh Narain Mulla for remaining absent from all meetings of the House during the 98th Session of Rajya Sabha?

(No hon. Member dissented)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Permission to remain absent is granted.

REFERENCE TO INCREASE IN EXPORT DUTY ON COFFEE

SHRI U. K. LAKSHMANA GOWDA (Karnataka): Sir, with your permission. I would like to raise a matter of grave concern which has arisen in the case of the coffee industry. Sir, a few days back, I sought your permission to raise this matter. At that time, the House was considering the Constitution (Forty-fourth Amendment) Bill. Therefore, permission was not granted. Now, I take this opportunity to raise

this matter. Last Saturday, that is, on the 6th of this month, the export duty on coffee was suddenly raised from Rs. 3,000 per tonne to Rs. 13,000 per tonne. In my view, this is a very crippling and savage duty to be levied at one stroke. As you know, in the case of the coffee industry, the majority of the coffee producers are small growers. Sir, you come from the Karnataka State and you know the position very well. You have been the Chief Minister as well as the Finance Minister of Karnataka and you know the position. About 97 per cent of the holdings are below 25 acres. Now, the production from these holdings amounts to about 53 per cent. This duty which has been levied directly affects the producers and it is a very crippling one. Prices of coffee have gone up and the exports have also gone up. I have no objection if there is a graded increase in the export duty. This was done in February last by raising it from Rs. 50 to Rs. 300 a quintal, that is, Rs. 3,000 per tonne. From Rs. 3,000, this sudden jump to Rs. 13,000 is very crippling. I brought this to the notice of Mr. Subramaniam as well as Mr. Pranab Mukherjee. I would like the hon. leader of the House to convey the feelings to them so that some immediate relief could be given.

Sir, one more word. This levy has been made on the basis of the sales of the small quantity which was remaining from the crop of last year. Prices went up from Rs. 22,000 to Rs. 26,000 per tonne in the international market at this tail end of the season. Suddenly, Rs. 13,000 has been levied as export duty. But Sir, that new coffee crop comes into the market only in January. Normally, when the new crop comes into the market, prices come down both here and in the international market. If this levy is continued, the grower, I am afraid, will not be in a position to realise even the cost of production. This is borne out by the figures which have been submitted by the Coffee Board itself. The Coffee Board is not my organisation. It is directly run by an execu-

tive appointed by the Central Government. And they can get the figures from there. Therefore, I would urge upon you to take up this matter. I would like my friend, Mr. Om Mehta, and also the leader of the House to take it up with the Finance Minister and see that immediate relief is made available. Otherwise, the 80,000 growers of coffee who are producing coffee and are also earning substantial foreign exchange, will suffer. I hope this matter will be looked into on top priority.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Pahadia, you are moving.

THE GUJARAT APPROPRIATION (NO. 2) BILL, 1976

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
(SHRI JAGANNATH PAHADIA): Sir,
I beg to move:

"That the Bill to authorise payment and appropriation of certain further sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of the State of Gujarat for the services of the financial year 1976-77, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The Bill is in respect of Supplementary Demands of Rs. 15.75 crores voted by the Lok Sabha on the 4th November, 1976, and an expenditure of Rs. 19.37 lakhs charged on the Consolidated Fund of the State of Gujarat for the year 1976-77. Full details of the provisions asked for have been given in the Statement of Supplementary Demands for Grants laid on the Table on the 3rd November, 1976.

Sir, I move.

The question was proposed.

SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA
(West Bengal): Mr. Chairman, Sir,
once again the Gujarat Appropriation
(No. 2) Bill has come up before us for

discussion, Sir, the prolonged period of President's Rule in Gujarat has created a big question in the minds of people as to how long this Presidential Rule will continue. It has also been reported that in a House of 182, the Congress Party has a strength of 106 members. If that is so, the question arises: How long will the Presidential Rule continue despite sufficient strength of the Congress Party there?

It has also been reported that within the last 12 months the Administrative Committee of Parliament met only twice, to deal with the situation prevailing at present in Gujarat.

Sir, it is also a fact, as reported in the paper published from Bombay, dated 13th November, that a hard core leader of Jana Sangh and RSS, Mr. Basantji Thakrar, MLA, who had joined the Congress, was arrested under MISA, a day after the murder of Mr. Dhanji Bhai Kotialwala, in the public view, in day-light. This indicates that the Jana Sangh and RSS people are entering the Congress Party to get protection, to play with the Congress Party according to their motives. This type of the game of defection, i.e. Aya Ram and Gaya Ram, is going on. As the Congress Party which is the ruling party is responsible for the whole of the country as well as for Gujarat which has a vulnerable place in the politics of India, will the ruling party and the Government take these things into consideration seriously that the people of Jana Sangh and RSS are entering into the fold of the Congress Party? Is this the lesson that we got from the so-called total revolutionaries operating under the leadership of Mr. Jayaprakash Narain? Sir, this is politics which should be considered seriously. In which direction is the vulnerable State of Gujarat going, in the matter of politics, despite the sufficient strength of the Congress Party there after this ghastly murder in Porbandar, the birth place of Mahatma Gandhi? It is surprising, amazing and amusing also how, in broad day-light, the Chairman of the Municipality of Porbandar could be