

RAJYA SABHA

*Thursday, the 15th May, 1969/the
25th Vaisakha, 1891 (Saka)*

The House met at eleven of the clock. THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

FREEDOM MOVEMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN PEOPLE

*347. SHRI KRISHAN KANT:†
SHRI ARJUN ARORA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of India are keeping a close watch over the freedom movement of the South African people; and

(b) if so, what measures have so far been taken by the Government of India to help the freedom movement of the South African people?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI SURENDRA PAL SINGH): (a) and (b) The Government of India have been closely watching the freedom struggle waged by the people of South Africa against the racial policies of the Government of South Africa. We have extended full co-operation to the African National Congress, the principal political organisation of the South African people.

The Government have been providing assistance to the African National Congress headquarters at Dar-es-Salaam in the form of medicines and clothings. The African National Congress opened its first Asian Mission in New Delhi in November, 1967. We have extended every cooperation and

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Krishan Kant.

assistance to the New Delhi Office of the African National Congress.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: In view of the fact that the freedom movement of the South African people has entered a new stage after their peaceful and non-violent methods, may I know, Madam, whether the Government has considered, in the interests of both the South African people and the Indians, to call a conference of Asian and African countries to consider the steps to be taken for giving help to the South African Nationals' freedom struggle.

SHRI DINESH SINGH: It is a suggestion for action, Madam. But may I say that this matter is very actively being considered by the world community as a whole? And I do not know whether there would be any particular need to call a conference of Asian and African countries. What we have got to do is to persuade another section of countries—which is being done at the United Nations.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT: May I know, Madam, from the Government whether the Government of India will in any way help in training these freedom fighters, guerillas and others in India, or giving them arms aid for their struggle there?

SHRI DINESH SINGH: Our stand and support have been and are for a peaceful struggle.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA: May I know if the attention of the Government has been drawn to the treatment of political prisoners in South Africa, particularly in Robben Island, which amounts to genocide? I read from a letter smuggled out of South Africa's Robben Island. This letter says:

"The poor medical treatment we receive is a matter which must receive your first attention. From last year four of our men died, mainly through negligence. Practically no

treatment was given to them until they were completely helpless."

And these are not the only four men who died. Subsequently, after this letter was smuggled, three more people have died in this Island prison. The conditions are so poor and the suffering of political prisoners so great that it amounts to genocide. May I know if the Government will take steps to draw the attention of both the United Nations, and the Red Cross in Geneva to this and see that these two world bodies do something in the matter of political prisoners in South Africa, particularly in Robben Island?

SHRI DINESH SINGH: The condition of political prisoners in South Africa is shocking. The world community is aware of it, but if the hon. Member would give me these particular papers he was referring to, we shall certainly take further action.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: May I know, Madam, in view of what is happening in flagrant violation of the Charter on Human Rights of the United Nations Organization, what steps the Government is taking to activate more effectively the United Nations Organisation for creating still more effective sanctions against South Africa and, in this connection, whether the Government is aware that, because of the attitude of the United States of America and certain other countries, the racialists in South Africa are so aggressive that they refuse to pay any heed to world public opinion? In view of this, will the Minister tell us whether they have any programme of action through the United Nations' forum and its agencies' on the one hand and also outside on the other?

SHRI DINESH SINGH: Madam, We have been pressing at the United Nations for the implementation of the U.N. Resolution asking for sanctions against South Africa—and the hon. Member is right—but unfortunately a number of countries have not im-

plemented that Resolution. It is our feeling that, if that Resolution is implemented sincerely, it could have a serious impact on South Africa. We are all doing our best to persuade the world community to act in unity on this matter.

SHRI S. K. VAISHAMPAYEN: Madam, the question so far as South Africa is concerned, it is not merely a question of the freedom of the people of South Africa, but it is a question also of racial discrimination, which is taking a very hideous form so far as South Africa and Rhodesia are concerned. So, does not the Government think that more active and vigorous steps should be taken than what are being done at present, and is it not necessary therefore that a conference of Asian and African countries should be called and this issue be made an international issue and thus build up world opinion against this racial discrimination in South Africa?

SHRI DINESH SINGH: Madam, it is not for the first time that we have been discussing racial discrimination. This was brought to the notice of the United Nations by us even before India achieved its independence. And since then the world community as a whole is seized of this matter.

SHRI S. S. MARISWAMY: The U.N. Resolution passed against South Africa is a very old resolution, and after that so many years have passed. What are the further steps that we have taken to see that the other nations observe the Resolution of the U.N. against South Africa?

SHRI DINESH SINGH: It is a question of others agreeing to implement. When this Resolution is not fully implemented, other steps in this direction become even more difficult and, therefore, our effort at this stage is to get this implemented by all countries—because it has been accepted by the United Nations—and then to persuade them to use their influence over South Africa to abandon its policy of racial discrimination.