

RAJYA SABHA

Thursday, the 12th December, 1968/the
21st Agrahayana, 1890 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock,
MR. CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

†SPEECH OF SHRI P. GOVINDA MENON AT
WASHINGTON

*91 SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA‡ :

SHRI CHANDRASHEKHARAN :

SHRI A. D. MANI :

SHRI C. ACHUTHA MENON :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased
to state :

(a) whether her attention has been
drawn to the speech of the Union Minister
of law criticising the United Front, made
in Washington and reported in the
'National Herald' (Delhi edition) of
September 11, 1968; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Govern-
ment to the speech ?

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI-
MATI INDIRA GANDHI) : (a) and (b)
The Law Minister did not make any
speech in Washington the subject. The
Press representative asked him certain
questions to which he gave answers, in the
course of which he expressed his views on
the concept of a 'United Front'. The
Minister's observations were made in
a personal and non-official capacity.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : I am
shocked.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Do not be shocked
but put the question.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : First of
all, Sir, he went there as a member of
the Government and not as a split
personality. I must point out to you that
under Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru a very
good convention was laid down that
Ministers should not criticise other parties
when abroad. In fact I may tell you,
before I put the question, once we had
a discussion with Panditji about it and
we also reciprocated. We said if that was
so, we should also avoid saying certain
things.

†Transferred from the 29th November,
1968.

‡The question was actually asked on the
floor of the house by Shri Bhupesh Gupta.

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Now, Sir, it is said it is not a speech.
The Prime Minister ought to know when
we talk to the man, it is a speech, some
physical act anyhow. Has the Prime
Minister considered that he went all out
against the United Front and made
scurrilous statements. The report is in
the National Herald. It says: "Mr. Menon,
who is head of the Indian delegation to
the United Nations Conference of
Social Welfare Ministers, said the
united front coalition of conservatives
and communists was a communist idea,
inspired by communists with a mind to
doing to India what happened in Eastern
Europe in the late 1940's". He charged
that the United Front is a fraud on the
electorate please understand, the system
in our parliamentary democracy is called
a fraud on the electorate—"because they
had united only to defeat the Congress
Party, and could not agree on any positive
policy of their own without breaking up".
The issue is not the merit of this thing.
It is whether he should say such a thing.
Further Mr. Menon said this "deprived
member parties of putting forth a con-
structive, positive programme. This was
a fraud on the electorate". We are accused
in a foreign country of committing a fraud
on the electorate. Thereby his suggestion
was—has the Prime Minister considered
it?—that our parliamentary institutions
function on the basis of a fraud. That
is what he said.

Has the Prime Minister also noted that
he accused Czechoslovakia of walking into
a trap? Since when it became the policy
of the Government of India to tell Cze-
choslovakia that Czechoslovakia had
walked into a trap? He brought another
thing. Has she considered this also? "Mr.
Menon said the UF Government in Kerala
has been forced to drop the parliamentary
principle of 'joint responsibility' of the
ministers. He said the Chief Minister
there declared that 'each minister would
enforce in his own ministry the policy of
his own regular party'."

MR. CHAIRMAN : It has nothing to
do with Kerala.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : "The idea
of joint responsibility was dropped." Here
again the suggestion is there. Has the
Prime Minister called upon him to
explain why he said so? Firstly, he
denounced the working of our parlia-
mentary institutions as largely a fraud.

SOME HON. MEMBERS : No, no.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Yes, it is so. The United Front won in many States.

(*Interruption*)

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : Why are you threatening us ? You ask a question.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : We thought that the Prime Minister has security outside, but the Prime Minister does not need a guard inside the House.

SHRI ABID ALI : That is in Kerala Government where the Ministers need security.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : That is number one, that he condemned our elections and electoral system as based on fraud insofar as his reference to the United Front is concerned. Secondly, he, being a Union Minister, charged in a foreign country a State Government, a constituent State of the Union of India, as having dropped what he called collective responsibility and all the rest of it—I have read it out. Again in defiance of the policy of the Government of India and in relation to the Government of Czechoslovakia, a socialist country, he went to the extent of saying that Czechoslovakia had walked into a trap.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Put the question.

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI : You want a reply or you do not want a reply ?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Therefore I should like to know—and the statement has not been contradicted all these months—why the Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, is not removing this man from the Cabinet, unfit to hold this high position; a man who decries our parliamentary institutions in this manner, denounces a part of the parliamentary institution, namely, the Opposition, goes against the foreign policy of the country and denounces the electoral system as largely a fraud is certainly not a man to be kept in the Cabinet, much less sent abroad in a representative capacity of the Government of India.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: Mr. Chairman. . . .

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: What are your reactions ? You have not said.

SHRI ABID ALI : You listen now.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : I fully agree that although there is not established convention, it is desirable for all political parties to refrain from ventilating domestic political differences in foreign countries. However, when one is asked a question at a press conference, one has to reply. It is not always possible to dodge the question.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : You dodge so many questions here.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : What the Law Minister meant, from what I can see from the report is that various components of the United Front Government are elected on specific programmes but when they combine in a coalition, they are not able to follow up those programmes. I think this is what he mean.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Sir on a point of order. We are not asking the Prime Minister to give a commentary in this thing or a philosophical explanation. These are the uncontradicted words. What does she think about them ? She should say that.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : The hon. Member is giving a commentary. I am saying what I think about his remarks. It is he who is giving a commentary.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: On the conduct.

SHRI ABID ALI : He should sit down.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : Perhaps Mr. Bhupesh Gupta has a greater knowledge of this, but the Chief Minister there himself has said that each Minister would enforce in his own Ministry the policy of his own regular party. And that the idea of a joint responsibility is not possible in a coalition. That is what we have heard.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : You have heard where ?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: We have heard that he has said this.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : In the market place ?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : Wherever he has said it.

SHRI ABID ALI : He must shut his mouth.

SHRI A. D. MANI : The hon. Prime-Minister said that the Minister did not make the statement attributed to him.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : I did, not say that.

SHRI A. D. MANI : If he had made some statement, we would like to know what exactly was the statement made because I understand later that the made general observations about the United Front Governments. If so, what are the general observations ? He must have submitted some statement to the Prime Minister in response to this question that he made a general statement. I would ask the Prime Minister to tell us whether she will at least advise her colleagues not to comment adversely on what is happening in India when they go abroad because at Press Conferences questions are bound to be asked on what is happening in India and the Opposition on this side has always respected the rule of not criticising the ruling party whenever they go abroad.

SHRI ABID ALI : No, no.

SHRI A. D. MANI : Yes. We have done it. (*Interruptions*) This courtesy should be extended to both sections of opinion. At least for the future, would she advise her colleagues not to make such statements abroad ?

SHRI AKBAR ALI KHAN: The Prime Minister has already answered it

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: Sir, I have already answered.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Sir, I want a brief discussion on this.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I cannot go against my own ruling.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Sir, I request you. Here is a matter of public policy, a matter of public importance which I have brought...

MR. CHAIRMAN: You can raise it.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I have brought the matter relating to a gross misconduct on the part of a Government Minister. Therefore, you agree . . .

SHRI JAIRAMDAS DAULATRAM : On a point of order, Sir. Questions of general policies cannot be raised during the Question Hour. (*Interruptions*) No.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : You will go abroad.

MR. CHAIRMAN : We cannot discuss questions of policy during the Question Time. And if you are so anxious that it should be taken up by some other motion, you may do so. But I am sure of my ruling. When a question is answered, and a big question, and ten minutes are complete, there it ends. But you can raise a separate motion.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Why should not all these questions be pursued ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : I am sorry.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : He said it in the world arena. You will realise it. We feel very strongly about it. The Congress Party may not feel. We, the entire Opposition, have been slandered and maligned. And naturally . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN : I am suggesting to you that you can give a separate motion. So far as the Question Hour is concerned....

SHRI ABID ALI : Sir, he has taken eight minutes himself.

MR. CHAIRMAN : it is a matter of policy...

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : May I have your permission for a brief discussion ?

MR. CHAIRMAN : That is another matter.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: We shall bring it before the House that he has done something unprecedented, impermissible, unforgivable.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Next question.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Let there be a debate. (*Interruptions*) I am surprised. Jawaharlal Nehru publicly condemned here on the floor of the House when Ministers (*Interruptions*) But Shrimati Indira Gandhi unfortunately is trying to . . .

SHRI ABID ALI : He condemned the Communists also.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I have stated my view that policy questions should not be raised during Question Time. You can give a motion. I will see to it.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : You will allow it ? I am tabling a motion.

SHRI ABID ALI : Obey the Chair.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : This man should not be in the Government.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question No. 327. (Interruptions) I have already stated my views.

(Interruptions)

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : You do not admit. A Minister had committed a fraud. (Interruptions) He has called all of us frauds. I am calling him a fraud.

SHRI ABID ALI : Communists are frauds. What else are they ?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Ministers can go and tell the Americans whatever they like..

SHRI AWADHESHWAR PRASAD SINHA : We are very polite.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : * * *

SHRI AWADHESHWAR PRASAD SINHA : Sir, he has said* * *. That should be expunged. Or he should apologise.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : * * *

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : I shall go through and see.

SHRI AWADHESHWAR PRASAD SINHA : Thank you, Sir.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : * * *

MR. CHAIRMAN : Hot words do not break bones, Mr. Bhupesh Gupta. I tell you.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA : Why do you tell me. For over two months why the Prime Minister should not explain ? Why was he not called to explain for malingning and smearing this country while going abroad.

(Interruptions)

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question No. 327.

***Expunged as ordered by the Chair.

FILM FINANCE CORPORATION

*327. SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA : Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state :

(a) the amount of money which has been given to the Film Finance Corporation of India during the last five years;

(b) whether the Corporation has received any foreign aid; and

(c) what are the other sources of income for the Corporation ?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI K. K. SHAH) : (a) Apart from the paid up capital of Rs. 50 lakhs, Government have given loan of Rs. 50 lakhs since inception.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The sources of income of the Corporation are : Interest on loans to film producers ; interest on deposits with Banks ; loan application fees ; service charges, and sale of loan application forms.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA : May I know for what films the Film Finance Corporation has given financial assistance so far ?

SHRI K. K. SHAH : There were in all 248 applications for loans amounting to Rs. 727.84 lakhs. Out of these, 64 applications were approved for giving loans amounting to Rs. 160.01 lakhs. The Corporation has, up to the 31st October, 1968, disbursed loans amounting to Rs. 147.41 lakhs to producers of 62 films.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA : May I know from the hon. Minister whether he is aware that Mr. Satyajit Ray, the famous film director, did not get financial aid for making his film ?

SHRI K. K. SHAH : Sir, to the best of my information, Mr. Satyajit Ray did get it.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA : Sir, the reply is incomplete. Mr. Bhargava asked about the names of the films which information the Minister has not given.

MR. CHAIRMAN : It is for Mr. Bhargava to say.

† Transferred from the 3rd December, 1968.