

The House reassembled after lunch at half past two of the clock, THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

ABSENCE OF MINISTERS DURING THE DEBATE

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Pathak.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): Who is representing the Government?

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Is there no one here?

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I think the Government should be censured by the House.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL (Gujarat): Madam Deputy Chairman, yesterday also we had a scene. We had all the Opposition Members speaking. This is very unfair to this House. It is not conducive to parliamentary etiquette or parliamentary practice. I think, Madam, you should draw the Prime Minister's attention to this repeated practice of Ministers remaining absent from this House. It is grave discourtesy to this House.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Madam Deputy Chairman, I am not very keen on making my voice heard by the hon. Ministers of Government, but parliamentary decorum is something which should be cherished and observed. I think the matter is becoming serious. Yesterday you yourself were good enough to draw the attention of the Government to this matter and it is in the Press today and the only way they have replied is by completely boycotting it.

SHRI P. N. SAPRU (Uttar Pradesh): I would also like to support the Opposition in regard to this matter. The House should be taken seriously by Ministers and I think it is highly improper for Ministers to absent themselves when discussions are going on; there should be some Minister.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I suggest that the House be adjourned.

SHRI GANGA SHARAN SINHA (Bihar): I would suggest that till the Ministers come you may kindly adjourn the House.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: You can adjourn the House; you are perfectly within your rights.

(Interruptions.)

HON. MEMBERS: Very unfair.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I agree with the Members who have expressed their opinion. This House should be treated with proper courtesy and senior Ministers should be present when the House meets at 2.30.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Thank you very much. Till the Ministers come, Madam Deputy Chairman, I request that we adjourn.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House stands adjourned for ten minutes.

The House then adjourned at thirtytwo minutes past two of the clock.

The House reassembled at fortytwo minutes past two of the clock, THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Before we begin the debate, the Chair demands the attention of the Treasury Benches that this House be treated with proper courtesy and I do hope that such a lapse will not occur again.

THE MINISTER OF IRRIGATION AND POWER (HAFIZ MOHAMMAD IBRAHIM): Madam, may I say something about this? This was perhaps only by chance. I myself entered the Lobby at 2.30. I was coming inside when I came to know that the House was adjourning. I did not know it, There was some difference between the clock here and my watch. Otherwise I came in time. He also came two minutes before.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I accept your explanation, but the time of meeting is 2.30. As such, some senior Minister should have been present here. Mr. Pathak.

MOTION OF THANKS ON PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS—*continued.*

SHRI G. S. PATHAK (Uttar Pradesh): Madam Deputy Chairman, I rise to support the Motion of Thanks and also join in the tributes, rich tributes, paid to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the retiring President. He is the symbol of India's greatness. He combines simplicity of life with dignity of office. He combines scholarly habits with high statesmanship. He represents the ideal Indian life. All his actions are actuated by a true spirit of service to the people. He has built up traditions which I am sure will be followed for a long time to come and for ever. I join in the wishes expressed by the hon. Members who spoke before me and I wish and pray that he may live long and may have many, many years of useful service to the nation.

Madam, before I deal with one or two aspects of the Address of the President, I might be permitted to deal with one question which emerges from the speech made by the hon. Member who spoke before me. That question is one of grave constitutional importance. The hon. Member was certainly entitled to criticise the Government. He has levelled scathing criticism against the policies of the Government. He was certainly entitled to do so. But the question is whether he could advocate separation of a territory of India, whether he could advocate self-determination or could call a group of people as a nation in India. Madam, this is a question which is one of grave constitutional importance. We are here in Parliament, the highest Legislature in this country. We are here after having oath on the Constitution. All

of us have taken an oath that we shall bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution. The freedom of speech which is permitted to us under article 105 of the Constitution is subject to the provisions of the Constitution. The question, therefore, is whether any hon. Member of this House can, after having taken oath on the Constitution, plead separation of any territory on the basis of self-determination or any other basis. Madam, our Constitution does not permit any separation by any citizen of India. It is not open to any citizen of India to say that he wants to have a territory separated from the Union. Even individual States cannot ask for separation, much less individual citizens or groups of citizens residing in any territory. That is opposed to the indissoluble character of our federal Constitution. And when an hon. Member, after having taken oath on the Constitution, wants that unity to be disrupted, that raises a very important question. We must remember that in the very Preamble of our Constitution the unity of the nation is prominently mentioned. If the matter had been raised in any other federal country, we know what the answer would have been. The example of a State, Texas by name, is well known. Texas wanted to separate from the federation of the United States. The matter went to the Supreme Court and the Supreme Court there decided that the federal Constitution was indissoluble. It is not open to any State to secede from the Union and to say that it wants to form an independent State. That was the case of Texas *versus* the White.

SHRI P. N. SAPRU (Uttar Pradesh): In Australia also, South Australia wanted to secede.

SHRI G. S. PATHAK: There are other such examples. I will not trouble you by citing other examples. The matter is important. It is much more important, because it is not a State, but a group of citizens residing in a particular territory who want to