

**ALLOTMENT OF TIME FOR THE  
CONSIDERATION AND RETURN OF  
THE CENTRAL EXCISES AND SALT  
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 1959.**

MR. CHAIRMAN: I have to inform Members that under Rule 162(2)- of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, I have allotted thirty minutes for completion of all stages involved in the consideration and return of the Central Excise and Salt (Amendment) Bill, 1959, by the Rajya Sabha, including the consideration and passing of amendments, if any, to the Bill.

**RESOLUTION *RE* REORGANISATION  
AND DECENTRALISATION OF THE  
ADMINISTRATION—*continued.***

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Pendse. You have already taken 11 minutes. You have got 19 minutes now.

SHRI LAL JI PENDSE (Bombay): Mr. Chairman, Sir, when I moved my resolution the previous day, I said in the few minutes then at my disposal that the administrative structure of our country was highly defective to cope with the increasing demands of democracy that Mr. C. D. Deshmukh, himself an administrator of a high order, lamented its deterioration. The Balvantray Committee Report also made a pointed reference to it and demanded its decentralisation. This report made it clear that decentralisation means transference of the entire general administration, save law and order, and development of the area to popular bodies. It holds:

"So long as we do not discover or create representative and democratic institutions which will supply the local interest, supervision and care necessary to ensure that expenditure of money upon local objects conforms with the needs and

wishes of that locality, and invest it with adequate power and assign to it appropriate finance, we will never be able to evoke local interest and excite local initiative in the field of development."

This is in general.

Let us now turn to the, so to say, the most progressive State in the Union, the Bombay State. Mr. Pimputkar, a diehard civilian and a senior member of the Bombay State Secretariat was asked to enquire into the administration and report to that State Government. He came to the same conclusion through, of course, different premises. He holds that the Collectorate is burdened with all kinds of works and odd jobs. As many as 122 days of his year are wasted in public functions and conferences. This renders him helpless and cynical. Mr. Pimputkar, therefore, favours transference of this work of developmental activity to a new agency invested with proper powers and authority. What that agency should be has been aptly elaborated by Balvantray Report in its recommendation No. 221 on page 126. Mr. Pimputkar holds that additional appointments of Joint Collectors or Personal Assistants create duplication of work and unnecessary large staff. These in turn create certain other problems. It creates room for corruption which, he holds, has become alarming. It involves too much tossing of papers of which some people have made an art. This loosens the grip and results in thwarting of decisions. Quick dispatch and efficiency suffer. Mr. Pimputkar asserts that Government servants have started talking in disparaging terms about the efficiency of Government, and the ill-effects of such a psychology on government machinery are incalculable. Such a report must be considered courageous in these days of sycophancy.

I may say, Sir, that what is said of Bombay State is true of other States including the Centre. I will come to

that later. But, Sir, such a state of affairs gives rise to that all-pervading thing, called the red tape before which even our Prime Minister is helpless. I will cite an instance. Once he referred to a complaint about the delay in the dispatch of work. As the newspaper report goes, the Prime Minister agreed with the complaint and narrated his own experience. He said he wanted a certain file which had passed off his hands a little while ago and it took 32 days to be traced and sent to him. The Prime Minister's remark must have provoked a good laughter but remained barren of effect and continues to be an ever-green subject for the press. I have a heap of newspaper cuttings, the recitation of which would be quite regaling, but as I am hard-pressed for time at the moment, I will cite only one case which has appeared in today's papers. It relates to the Ministry of External Affairs as a result of an audit report. The case is, the administrative delay in the disposal of a case of disciplinary action has benefited a temporary official of the External Affairs Ministry to the extent of over Rs. 22,000. The Ministry took four years for disposing of the matter, according to the Audited Report for 1957-58. I need not go into the details but the two facts mentioned in this are enough for me that a simple case needed or involved four years for disposal and the exchequer was robbed to the extent of over Rs. 22,000. The two reports to which I referred, namely, the Pimputkar report and the Balwantray Committee report, pertain to administration at the

[MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair.]

district level. District is the lower unit of administration and as in the days of the British, there prevails the bureaucratic rule of the Collector. Even the smallest demand of the panchayats or the municipalities has to go to the Collector or to the State Government. There is thus a virtual negation of democratic functioning even in the tenth year of our Republic. It may be

argued that some power is delegated to several bodies. But I must submit that mere delegation is no substitute for decentralisation. This is not only my view. I draw upon the Balwantray Committee Report and on page 7, paragraph 28, the report says:

"It is not infrequently that delegation of power is mistaken for decentralisation. The former does not divest the Government of the ultimate responsibility for the action of the authority to whom power is delegated; this authority is under the control of the Government and is in every way subordinate to it. Decentralisation, on the other hand, is a process whereby the Government divests itself completely of certain duties and responsibilities and devolves them on to some other authority."

This is the picture of the administration at the district level. It is packed with all sorts of works and too much concentration has given rise to bureaucratisation, mal-practices, corruption, graft, etc. But the picture at the higher levels is no different. This is what Prof. D. R. Gadgil, the noted economist, said in a forthright speech in New Delhi in connection with the work of the Third Five Year Plan. Speaking on 'Planning and the Administrative Structure', the same subject as that of my Resolution, Prof. Gadgil is reported to have made some scathing remarks. This is the purport of what he said:

"We are planning a democratic life. But we have still retained the colonial administrative structure suited to colonial rule. That was unitary system; only the I.C.S. Officers were at its head. They wielded unlimited powers and ruled the country. The same system continues even to this day; but the civilian does not understand the very essence—the very spirit—of the popular planning and so the result is a complete negation of the popular urge behind our plans. Not only the Ministers and the

LShn Lain Pendse.J departmental secretaries, but even the senior officers in charge of the actual execution of planned projects are often ignorant of the technical knowledge necessary for the projects and are therefore incapable of discharging their duties efficiently and skillfully."

Further he said:

"Our administrative structure is also indifferent or cold in securing co-operation of local bodies; instead there is a mushroom growth of advisory bodies which are so constituted as come in handy in tendering only such advice as Government would need. Thus the very essential element of decentralisation of power so clearly implied in the planning, is shelved. And although planned projects and charts continue to be published, they are never taken to the people and so spontaneous co-operation of the people never comes forth."

This is what Prof. Gadgil said. Prof. Gadgil's observations, read with the remarks of the Balvantray Committee Report, which I read a minute ago, *ais* but an indictment of our administrative structure. I understand Prof. Gadgil's remarks have created quite a flutter in the circles concerned. But are flutters productive of any beneficial results? I doubt very much. The political climate of New Delhi is such that it needs a good shaking of an earthquake to make it move. All the same it does not prevent us from hoping that these remarks may be given the consideration due to them.

Departmentalisation to the minutest detail is a capitalist contrivance in the name of specialisation. But that gives rise to bureaucratisation and centralisation of the power. We have followed this pattern in all walks of our lives even including education and administration. Even the most interdependent activities of the Government are separated and departmentalised and the work is conducted in exclusion of the other. I intended

to cite the instance of agriculture and food but since the Deputy Minister of Food stated only yesterday during the Food Debate that the whole policy was under consideration, including the zonal system, I shall not enlarge upon that.

Then the relations between the States and the Centre create duplication of work such as in excise, textiles, major projects and other industries taken over by the Centre, food, construction, so on and so forth. In these and others, we have a dual system of administration and duplication of expenditure. Thus there is a vicious cycle of more taxes and more duplication of work.

Ours is said to be a two-tier democracy but the tiers are patently of unequal sizes. That is why its run is not straight. 'smooth and it does not take speed. Often it slips and is out of gear as the Food Ministry of which we know enough. This is because our States are shorn of all resources and initiative. They have freedom to tap new sources of revenue and the Centre pounces upon them when they are found lucrative. The Sales Tax is a pointer. Now the States are asked to explore new avenues of revenue and even such resourceful States as Bombay are hard put to it and are remonstrating. This year's Budget speech of the Bombay Finance Minister contains a threat of an additional tax burden for the next year. The States are asked to formulate and suggest schemes of development with no money and power to execute them, and whatever schemes are formulated are turned down or held up by the Centre for want of funds. Naturally enough, the incentive even at the State level is absent. That is why, be it food or industrial output or large scale developments, they are often in jeopardy.

I would submit, Sir, that the concentration of powers and resources at the Centre is not accidental. It is deliberate. Under the plea of strengthening the Centre with which I I agree, a strong unitary government I is being built up. Our Constitution-

makers renamed the provinces as States, but expropriated much of the power they had under provincial autonomy. The partition and the incidental riots gave them a good handle or justification. The process is still unending. But the evils of such usurpation have begun to be felt in some States and there has started a constant friction between the State Governments and the Centre which has already become unwieldy. Thus, Sir, there is dissatisfaction at all levels—the States, the districts, the panchayats and the people. This is a general picture of the country—of the Indian Union. That is why people are cold over our ambitious development plans and this coldness is seized upon by the reactionary groups—the Swatantras and Paratantras or whatever you may call them. But the Olympian heights in New Delhi are maintaining a complacent attitude and the situation is allowed to drift.

Sir, this does not augur well. Why is it so? It is so because we have not seriously clutched the implications of democracy. We raised the ghost and are afraid of it, we are mortally afraid of it. While we proclaim democracy, we preserve a highly centralised administrative structure. But democracy and centralisation cannot go hand-in-hand. We have to choose between the two.

Sir, the character of a government is known not by its proclamations, but by the administrative machine it wields, because it is through this structure that governments operate and reach the people and it is this machine through which the people know their government. Therefore, precept and practice have to go in unison. We have, therefore, to take a bold step. If you do that, I will say

If you are taking that step, that step should be in the direction of all-round decentralisation. Full autonomy within the framework of the Union must be restored to the States, so that they are able to initiate their own

plans of internal development to achieve self-sufficiency. Much of the duplication has to be removed and the administration should be simplified so as to guarantee full access to the people. In the field of construction and development new autonomous bodies truly representing all shades and studded with honest men of integrity have to be created and requisite power has to be assigned to them. Undue interference of officials and even of Ministers should be scrupulously avoided. The people must be made to feel that the work is theirs. They must be encouraged to develop co-operative economy for which no outside agency, either of the Sevakas or of Sadhus, should be thrust on them. The dispatch of work should be quick and direct.

That Sir, is the concept of my Resolution. It is based on the findings of very weighty opinions and it is free from any narrow or sectional political considerations. Therefore, I fervently hope that in the light of the explanations that I have given, it will receive the generous support of the House. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Motion moved:

"This House is of opinion that Government should take necessary steps forthwith to reorganize the administrative structure of the country with a view to decentralise the administration and to enable the active participation of the people in developmental activity."

SHRI ROHIT M. DAVE (Bombay): Mr. Deputy Chairman, the Resolution which has been moved by my hon. friend is a very timely one and it should be taken into consideration with all seriousness and dispatch if we want to rise to the level at which we may be able to adequately discharge the responsibilities that are inherent in a planned economy. Sir, we have often been told that because of certain backward character of our economy, it is absolutely essential that our administration and our Government

[Shri Rohit M. Daw.]

have to undertake responsibilities which perhaps under normal circumstances. ...

SHRI N. C. SEKHAR (Kerala): Sir, have we got a quorum in the House now?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Go on, Mr. Dave.

SHRI LALJI PENDSE: Democracy is sleeping, Sir.

SHRI ROHIT M. DAVE: As I was saying, because of this certain backwardness, our administration has to undertake responsibilities which under normal circumstances might be undertaken by private citizens or groups of private citizens or by voluntary agencies. Once this fact is realised, and it has been accepted that the Government should undertake certain responsibilities and certain functions, it becomes necessary to examine the administrative machinery which ultimately has to discharge these functions.

Sir, the administrative system that we have inherited from the British is a system which was ideally suited for a sort of police State, where the main task consisted only of maintaining law and order and perhaps of undertaking certain responsibilities which were not of a very vital character. However, once the positive State idea has been accepted, it becomes very necessary to change the whole function and the whole concept of the administrative machinery. I would not say that the Government has been sleeping over this matter. I would not say that.

SHBI BHUPESH GUPTA (West Bengal): That is clear from these benches now.

SHRI ROHIT M. DAVE: I would not even say that the ruling Party has been sleeping over the matter. They had appointed certain committees, and the Balvantray Committee also considered this question from some of these aspects and a very valuable report has been presented

to the nation and to the Government by that Committee.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I am having the quorum bell rung.

(Quorum bell rings.) (*Some*

*hon. Members enter.*)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is a sad reflection that the quorum bell had to be rung immediately after the question-hour. I hope hon. Members will keep up the quorum. Yes, go on, Mr. Dave.

SHRI ROHIT M. DAVE: While these committees had thrown up valuable ideas and suggestions, very little has so far been done to reorganise the administrative machinery in order to enable it to undertake the heavy responsibilities involved both in a welfare-State and in a planned economy.

Sir, the administration, as we know it today, is an administration consisting of persons who have got a good grasp of general knowledge, who have acquired certain competence in administration, who are able to discharge a given function once that function is properly defined and determined, and who know how these functions have to be discharged. But a positive State and planned economy demand something more than that. They demand that the administration should take the initiative in things, that the administration will take certain decisions which are not purely of an administrative character, that the administration will take certain decisions which are of an enterprising character, which require a certain technical know-how, which require a certain organising ability apart from administrative ability and which require certain local knowledge of the particular task which is being undertaken. Obviously, Sir, it is impossible for one individual to combine in himself administrative ability, enterprise, initiative, local knowledge and technical know-how

It is because of this, Sir, that it has become necessary to have decentralisation, decentralisation of power, decentralisation of function and decentralisation of responsibility so that each individual quite well-versed in a particular aspect of all these aspects is responsible to undertake that responsibility and to discharge it properly. It is because of this, Sir, that it will also become necessary to change the whole aspect of the relationship of the various cadres of our administration. Till now, it was the highest official in the administration who, because of his experience, because of his competence and because of his knowledge, was in a position to take important decisions on his own initiative and was able to pass on these decisions to the lower strata where these decisions were executed. But, Sir, now, as I have said, in so many cases local knowledge is required and perhaps people in the field, in the lower strata of administration, are more in the know of certain aspects of a given policy, given function or a given issue and it is necessary for the higher officials to have the advantage of this knowledge and this experience. This can come only if there is some sort of give and take of experience and ideas between the lowest and the highest strata. Unfortunately, Sir, our administration is riddled with the concept of a class system. We have got the high class strata which would not mix with the lower class and the lower class would not mix with the higher class. Even when certain conferences are held, it is expected of the cadre belonging to the lower class to take care of what is known as, or what is, the general policy or idea of the higher officers regarding the particular matter under discussion and it should hold on to it unless the particular officer is able to convince his senior officer about his views or the senior officer permits him to express his point of view. This is not quite written down as such but it is the actual practice. Because of this, Sir, it becomes very difficult for experience to move from the lower strata to the

higher strata and this problem can only be solved if there is a certain amount of decentralisation of administration so that local initiative is combined with local knowledge, local experience is combined with local competence and, in a limited sphere, it is possible for the administration to function on its own initiative. Therefore, it is very necessary that not only certain local bodies like the Zila Parishads and the Panchayats should be created which should undertake certain responsibility on their own heads but it is also necessary that the whole administration, the philosophy of the administration, the routine of the administration and the rules of the administration should be so changed that the lower stratum of the administration is in a position to undertake responsibilities on its own initiative and because of its own competence.

This, Sir, is the purpose of the Resolution of my hon. friend and I support it wholeheartedly.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I listened with great interest to the speech made by Mr. Dave and I entirely agree with the approach he has made in this matter. We sponsored this Resolution in this House precisely with a view to giving to ourselves an opportunity to review certain aspects of our public administration. These are vital questions and unless and until we begin to tackle them, I do not think we shall be in a position to develop democratic institutions in our country.

Now, Sir, this question has to be viewed from different angles. The first is the constitutional angle. The second is the political angle and then comes the administrative angle. As far as the constitutional side is concerned, we have a written Constitution and whatever institutions we create must naturally fit in within the broad framework of our Constitution, but here again, the Constitution itself is not a dead document. It is a living document and by now we have made, I believe, eight amendments to it.

Lbhn Bhupesh Gupta.] Therefore, if the provisions outiive some of their functions, it becomes necessary to amend them. I must say here, Sir, that from the point of view of decentralisation, we must also pay attention to the constitutional difficulties. The very first thing that I would like to say in this connnection is this: There has been an enormous concentration of power at the Centre, in the hands of the Union Government or the organs functioning under the Union Government. The powers are financial, executive and, to some extent, legislative as well. I say that despite the Lists, Concurrent and others, it is quite self-evident that the real powers are placed in the hands of the Centre whereas the States have some restricted and limited powers. In a federal set-up which is supposed to be the basis of decentralisation, powers are given to the constituent States in an abundant measure while the Centre retains to itself very much restricted and limited powers. It seems to us that the process here has been entirely opposite. It is the States which have got very limited power, crippled power, whereas the Centre retains much power in its hands. This is a stumbling block to the democratisation of our administrative and political set-up in the country. This stumbling block has got to be tackled should we desire that we must proceed to decentralise in a democratic fashion. For example, the financial powers are concentrated in the hands of the Centre. What can the States do? If, for instance, the States wanted to develop their economy or otherwise bring about changes in the life of the people within the States, they are immediately up against formidable obstacles in the field of financial authority and powers. They are crippled. Now that comes in the way of what is called decentralisation and certainly that saps the vitality from democracy and makes democratic institutions somewhat inane and lifeless. I say, Sir, in some respects the States in India enjoy less power than the London County

Council—I do not say in every respect. In France and other Western States you find that the local administrations enjoy more power than the Indian States in some vital respects. That is a very great weakness of our present system. I would not call them glorified municipal bodies but we know they are approximating towards that and the tendency today is to concentrate more and more power by executive order, by legislative order and by financial measures in the hands of the Centre. That is the trouble here. I am not concerned with which party governs a State; I think it is the common experience of every State of the Indian Union that they are circumscribed in their functions and responsibilities by the meagre power they possess and by the fact that the Centre enjoys all the power. That is a thing to be considered.

Then, Sir, I come to the question of the States. There again you will find that within its own sphere the power is concentrated in the State Governments instead of being decentralised and bestowed on local authorities, such as the panchayats, local boards, district boards where they exist, or other competent bodies which combine democratic initiative with the responsibilities and which draw the masses of the people into the functions of the administration. Now, very often we are accused of not believing in democracy but I can tell you that immediately after the Bolshevik Revolution, Lenin gave a slogan that we must make every cook an administrator. That is to say, the workers, peasants, soldiers and others must be drawn into the fold of administration and must be made the masters of the State not only in theory but in the very practice of life. Every cook must be made an administrator: here we find that opposite process. A sort of exclusive bureaucracy is developed at all levels which is arrogating to itself all authority and powers, while the masses are bereft of power. Their initiative is not developed and they are not drawn

into the broad functions of administration and given responsibilities.

Even in the committees that exist, powers are not given and in some cases they are perverted. Now, see our panchayats. Why should not the panchayats have financial powers within their respective spheres? Why should they not have powers to collect revenue? Why should they not have powers to do certain things which are normally regarded as functions of the State? They should be given the necessary powers. People become thereby the masters of the land. This gives confidence to the people and it would also bring the administration in line with the desires of the people but here we have got, a terrific proliferation of bureaucracy. You just see the number of Secretaries, the number of Deputy Secretaries, Assistant Secretaries and so on; they are increasing in almost all the Departments. I am not saying that they should not increase but they are increasing in a far bigger way than similar increases at the lower rungs of the administration. This indicates concentration of power and authority in some hands; that is not good for a democratic set-up. Whatever law we pass, however proud we may feel about our democratic institutions, until and unless the common man is made to stand on his feet and he is drawn into the functions of the administration according to his ability and competence, I do not think that we are really going to have a proper type of democratic institutions at all. So this is a tendency which must be taken care of.

Not only that; some institutions are even monopolised by the party in power. I do not accuse the Congress here just for the sake of accusing. You see what is happening. As you know, Jyoti Basu and I submitted a memorandum to the President with regard to decentralisation and the popular functions and there we pointed out that the Government talks wildly about enlisting the co-operation of the masses of the people and

the opposition parties but the actual practice proves beyond any shadow of doubt that such talks are pure propaganda stunt, as far as West Bengal is concerned. You will not accept this thing, I know, but you will get the essence of it. Only the Congress<sup>1</sup> leaders of Midnapore District have been put on the Employment Exchange Advisory Board. At Kharagpur in the same District the Communist MLA from the area has been deliberately left out. Similarly, the Employment Exchange Advisory Board at Raniganj has been packed with Congressmen; we have been left out. Take the case of the Social Education Schemes Committee in the 24 Parganas District; that again has been filled with Congress leaders and the Communist M.LAs. and others have been left out although the majority of seats from that District are held by the Communists. That is the tendency that we find. Once you give the power in the hands of the bureaucracy, this is what happens. The moment you want to extend the field of authority, they will see that none but they enter the field. Here I am not making a political issue out of it; I only say that this tendency is there. Now, we suggested to the Prime Minister in the Consultative Committee on Food consisting of four or five members that there should be Food Advisory Committees at every level, State level, Centre, district level, taluq level etc. so that at least in the matter of food administration people may be drawn into, people from different walks of life, having different shades of opinion. As far as West Bengal was concerned, they never accepted it. There was a State Food Advisory Committee which was made into a farce and all the opposition members except perhaps the P.S.P. have resigned including 3 M.Ps, and a number of M.LAs. Opposition has come out of the Tripura Food, Advisory Committee also. We find we have no power; we could discuss nothing there. I had attended some meetings and I know that actually no power is given. The same is the case everywhere. Now, look at Krishi



[Shri Bhupesh Gupta] Bhavan. In the matter of food, power must be concentrated in the Krishna Bhavan itself; the Secretaries must handle it and also the Ministers. But the people are starving. The people are eager to co-operate and help to solve the problem but they are not drawn into. This is a serious weakness of our entire political system, parliamentary system if you like. I do not think that we are living in the 19th century when parliamentary system means that some people should be talking and passing laws while others should be kept down suppressed and not given opportunities to live but kept at a distance from the administration. We are functioning in a parliamentary system in modern times when it is necessary to bring it in line with the growing consciousness of the people, in line with the growing desires of the people, so that they become more and more the masters of their own affairs. This is a process of history. Therefore, Mr. Deputy Chairman, decentralisation has become a life and death question for our parliamentary institutions if they are to succeed. Now, it is not a mere question of delegation of powers; I make it very clear. Power should be given, constitutionally guaranteed if necessary or otherwise by legislation, to the various institutions and various bodies so that the people concerned whether in an area or in certain spheres of activity— industry, economic activity, commercial activity, cultural activity and the like—can have full powers, responsibilities and authority. This is most important. Parliament should supervise; the Assemblies should supervise it. They should lay down the broad policy. And once the broad policy is laid down, the other bodies are there, the numerous organs and institutions under this parliamentary system, to assume the responsibilities and they should have authority and financial resources to discharge their responsibilities. Thereby you set the masses in motion to discharge their responsibilities, to build up institutions and carry on the function of government

This is how we view this matter but it is exactly the opposite that is happening. Authoritarian trends are growing not only at the Centre but also in the States. We know how the States' autonomy functions. We have seen it. State autonomy is a small pie for some of them. The States view the district boards and other things as if they are mere appendages. In States like West Bengal they are asked to do whatever the Council of Ministers decide, not what they think should be done, that is to say, the local bodies. Now, we are degrading our institutions, whereas we should build them up with care and attention by giving them responsibility and authority. We seem to be on the reverse gear. If that trend is not retarded and if that process is not reversed, I think our Parliamentary institutions and the set-up that we want to have will suffer serious set-backs, for which the nation will have to pay the penalty. Therefore, decentralisation is the issue today and I think that all members of all parties should discuss this matter and come to conclusions and formulate measures to that effect. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Sekhar.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Have the Congress members struck?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: They are not enamoured of this Resolution. I do not know about them.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: But there seems to be a strike.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA (Uttar Pradesh): In spite of Kerala, we extend support to our friends on the opposite.

SHRI N. C. SEKHAR: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I rise to support the Resolution. At the same time, I am surprised to see that not a single Member from the Congress side has risen either to oppose or support this Resolution. This is surprising as the

Planning Commission as well as the Prime Minister of this country have been very eloquent on this question of decentralisation, that is, giving more power to the local bodies, at the lower rungs, in order to carry out not only the administration but also the developmental activities so as to benefit the common people. This will enable the developmental activities to be carried out to a complete success. We have before us examples as to how the development schemes are being carried out under the auspices of the bureaucracy and also as to how the developmental activities are carried out with the support of the people, under certain committees. In my State I have my own experience. The question of decentralisation of power has been discussed and a committee was appointed to go into the question. It made certain recommendations, with certain dissenting notes. Recently I read in the newspapers that the Rajasthan Government is taking measures to decentralise power, that is, to vest more power in the local bodies like the Panchayats and district council. If the press report is correct, it says that the intention of the Rajasthan Government is not to over-centralise power but to decentralise power not only to local bodies, that is, Panchayats as well as district councils, but to help the Government to carry on its functions at all levels. If the report is correct, even the Bill now before the Rajasthan Legislature suggests that the head of the district council should be an elected member, not the Collector.

Similarly, in Kerala the dismissed Government had introduced two Bills in the Legislature: one, the Panchayats Bill and the other the District Councils Bill. The Panchayats Bill as adumbrated vests more powers in the Panchayats. Now, there are the Panchayats, district boards, municipalities and such other local bodies. They are there. But the power vested in these bodies is, so limited that they could not go beyond certain stipulated functions, that is, construction of village

roads, conducting certain private schools or municipal schools, collecting certain items of revenue, but no new items beyond these. Now, according to the Bill which was before the Kerala Legislature, the Panchayat was to be elected on the basis of adult franchise by the local people. The power vested in the Panchayat is to collect revenue also and 25 per cent of the revenue is to be allotted to the Panchayat to carry on its local administration. There, the Panchayat is vested with the power of carrying out local developmental activities within the Panchayat and also education, health service and all such activities which are necessary and which are now vested in the hands of the Collector, a single individual. From the Collector it goes to the tehsildar, from the tehsildar it goes to the development officers. In the elected Panchayats not only the elected representatives of the people will be there, but also the Development Officer. In our place we call the Collector of revenue as 'Adhikari' or village munsif or something like that. Now, if that Bill was adopted as law, he has to function under this Panchayat Board. Also, the development officers will have to attend the Panchayat Board meetings. These officers who are vested with certain function to carry out in the locality have to attend the Panchayat Board meetings. The Panchayat Board will discuss and decide on the basis of the power vested in them. Even though it has not been brought into force, we have given certain facilities to certain Panchayats in our areas by special rules. Because of that, the development officers found it very easy to enlist local support. The local population itself came forward with suggestions to the development officers through the Panchayat. Even though it is not allowed in the Act, informally they said the development officer, the tehsildar, the revenue collector, the village officer and the elected Panchayat people should sit together and discuss, for which the programme has to be prepared by the officers in consultation with the local represen-

[Shri N. C. Sekhar.]

tative people. Then, they will discuss and decide as to how certain construction of a bridge is to be carried out, certain construction of a canal is to be carried out, how agriculture should be developed. These problems are discussed, decided upon and then carried out. This is found to be very successful. Similarly, at the district level, the district councils have to come into being, with an elected non-official member as the chairman of the council. Of course, the Collector has to be an *ex-officio* member as well as the administrative authority there within the council. In this way, if we take steps all over India, not merely in one or two States, if all the States and the Central Government take steps to see that more power is vested in the local elected bodies at all levels, then certainly the Government will find it very easy to get the support of the people. Now, making Innumerable speeches alone, for getting the co-operation of the people, co-operation of all the parties, will not do. These speeches are found to be not cutting ice, because everything is in the hands of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy will not succeed in getting the support of the people if it functions in the old way. As my friend, the Mover of the Resolution pointed out, the present administrative set-up is nothing new. It is the old bureaucratic tradition, where the people had nothing to do with the administration. That is how bureaucracy functions. In this set-up you make speeches for the co-operation of the people, but you will not be successful in enlisting the co-operation of the people, except of certain people who are in power. Therefore, it is high time that we took administrative steps and legislative steps to vest more power in the local bodies, that is, decentralisation of power, so that the local bodies as well as the people work together not only in the administrative sphere but also in the developmental activities at all levels and in all respects. Therefore, I entirely support this Resolution and I request the other Members to support

it and pass it, so that Government can take steps immediately for the benefit of the entire country.

**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS FOR THE  
WEEK COMMENCING  
31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST, 1959.**

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMEN-  
TARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYA, NARAYAN  
SINHA) : With your permission, Sir, I rise  
to announce that Government Business for  
the week commencing Monday, the 31st  
August will<sup>1</sup> consist of—

(1) Further discussion of the motion  
moved by Shri Bhupesh Gupta  
regarding food situation in the coun-  
try.

(2) Further consideration of the  
motion for the concurrence of the  
House in the recommendation of Lok Sabha  
for reference of the Dowry Prohibition Bill,  
1959 to a Joint Committee.

(3) Consideration and passing of the  
Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh (Transfer  
of Territories) Bill, 1959, as passed by Lok  
Sabha.

(4) Consideration and return of the-  
following Bills as passed by Lok Sabha:—

Appropriation (No. 4) Bill.

Appropriation (No. 5) Bill.

Appropriation (No. 6) Bill.

Central Excises and Salt (Amend-  
ment) Bill.

(5) Consideration and passing of the  
following Bills:

Criminal Law Amendment Bill.

Oil and Natural Gas Commission Bill,  
as passed by Lok Sabha.

(6) Consideration and return of the  
Kerala Appropriation Bill, as passed by  
Lok Sabha.

(7) Consideration and passing of the  
Andhra Pradesh and Madras (Alteration of  
Boundaries) Bill, as passed by

i Lok Sabha.