

ALLOTMENT OF TIME FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTION RELATING TO DECIMAL COINS

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Before we begin the next business, I have to inform the hon. Members that, under rule 153 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha, the Chairman has allotted two and a half hours for the consideration of the motion relating to the Draft Notifications in respect of the nomenclature and denominations of decimal coins.

Dr. Raghubir Singh.

MOTION RE DRAFT NOTIFICATIONS IN RESPECT OF DECIMAL COINS

DR. RAGHUBIR SINGH (Madhya Bharat): Sir, I beg to move the following motion which stands in my name:

"That the draft Notifications of the Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs), regarding the nomenclature and denominations of the decimal coins to be issued under the Indian Coinage Act, 1908, laid on the Table of the House on December 1, 1955, be taken into consideration."

Sir, the parent Act relating to the introduction of the decimal coinage system was duly passed about six months back. Today, the motion that is before the House is as regards the details as to how that Act is to be implemented. The Notification which is under consideration is a draft Notification and so, I take this opportunity to put forward a few suggestions in respect of the terms and details given in the Notification, for the earnest and sympathetic consideration of the hon. Minister

Sir, the beginning that is going to be made by the introduction of the decimal coinage is going to have very far-reaching and vital effect on the

nation as a whole. This is going to be of vital importance to the future economic and industrial life of the nation. As we know, and as was clearly mentioned to us at that time, the introduction of the decimal coinage system is only the first stage in our progress towards the acceptance of the whole decimal system. It is obviously known that the next stage is going to be the introduction of the metric system of weights and measures, and that will follow soon. Sir, the need for uniformity in our standards, especially in respect of weights and measures cannot possibly be over-emphasised. As regards the introduction of metric measures, so far as the industrial undertakings are concerned, there are a good many concerns which have already begun to follow that system, for instance, the Bharat Electronics, the Hindustan Machine Tool Factory and the Rourkela Steel Plant.

There is, however, one point which I would like to mention here and that is, that the introduction of this decimal coinage and this decimal system is going to have very far-reaching effects on our phrases and terms that we use in our daily talk. I do not know what is the equivalent phrases or terms for these things in the South Indian languages, but here in North India, if anything is to be mentioned, it is always done in terms of rupees, annas and pies. If we want to say that such and such a thing is fully true, we say "सोलह आने सच्ची है". Or if we want to say that there has been a loss or gain, we say "रुपये में इतने घाटे". Similarly, we have the use of these measures also in our language. For instance, a *Bigha* consists of 20 *Biswas* and so we say, "बीस बिस्वा" which means cent per cent.

Now, it is obvious, that when we are giving the go-by to the rupees with sixteen annas, our terms of everyday usage will also be adjusted to the new decimal system of coinage and weights and measures.

What I mean to say is that when we consider this Notification, we have got

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to bear this in mind, that whatever we do has to be done after full thought and due care.

The main point I want to speak about in relation to the terms of the Notification is as regards the new unit which has been proposed in this Notification. There, the new unit is to be named the "naya paisa". In respect of that, I must say, that we owe that term to our hon. leader, the hon. Prime Minister, because I am sure, that but for his intervention on July 28th in the debate in the Lok Sabha, there would not have been any possibility of the acceptance of the word "paisa". Sir, in the other House he said:

"There is the *pisa*; there are other words. Of course, there is no question of changing the rupee. For my part—I do not know exactly what the terminology here is—I am inclined to think *pisa* is a good word and it will be a good thing if it remains."

Sir, these were his few words that made the acceptance of the word *paisa* possible. Of course, even when he was saying this, the hon. Prime Minister knew that there might be certain difficulties. He actually said:

"There might be some confusion, and some people may make undue profit by that confusion. One can consider that matter carefully how to avoid that."

I believe, it is on the basis of that mention made by the hon. Prime Minister, and the various difficulties that must have come before the hon. Minister for Revenue and Civil Expenditure, that he proposed the acceptance of this term "naya paisa". In respect of this also. I would like to place before hon. Members what the hon. Minister said, not only in this House, but also in the other House. He said:

"Our only difficulty would be that there must be an interim period of

three, four or five years, during which both the new and the old coins would be in circulation and so, there should be something to distinguish the new coins from the old coins, even as regards their names."

Further on, he said:

"there is likely to be some confusion among the public."

And so, he said:

"That is the only difficulty and to make some sort of distinction between the new coin and the old coin.....",

we have to do something. Further on, he added:

"How can you differentiate the new one from the old one if you call both of them *paisa*? After four or five years, the old coins will be removed, but even then this will be called cent *paisa*."

When again the question was under discussion, he said finally:

"I have already stated the technical difficulties, particularly for the interim period during which both the old coins and the new coins will be current. For that particular period, we will have to see that the least amount of confusion and difficulty for the people may be caused. Simply out of the anxiety in my mind that only the least amount of confusion is caused, we like to have this power, and later on we shall select the new name."

Obviously from this, I can see that the hon. Minister was thinking that now, he would introduce the term or prefix 'naya' and that later on, he would drop it, for he himself said previously in this House:

"We have no objection to retaining the name *paisa*."

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR) in the Chair.]

This is what he has said:

"We do not like to create any more confusion than is absolutely necessary. We have no objection to retaining the name *paisa*."

And he has added:

"Members should realise that it will not be possible just in a day to withdraw the old coins and put new coins on the market. It will be a slow process and it may take three or four years to complete the withdrawal of the old coins."

So in this connection, when this point was being discussed, he said that in the beginning, there will be a new name "*naya paisa*" or something like that, and later on, that name will again be modified.

Now, my contention in this respect is this. My humble submission to the hon. Minister would be that the remedy that he has found, namely, putting in the word "*naya*" before "*paisa*" will not solve the problem. In this respect, I would like to read out a few lines from what a revered Member of this House has written somewhere. I am reading from what Kakasaheb Kalelkar has written:

"नई दिल्ली वाला दिमाग कहेगा कि
'नया पैसा' जैसा नाम चलाओ।"

He means this, Sir, that those of us who live in New Delhi cannot but think of the addition of the word *naya* as a prefix to all these terms. My submission in this respect is that if the old coins would be remaining in use, the use of the word '*naya*' would be acceptable. New Delhi can continue to be so called, so long as there is an Old Delhi but, as we know, Sir, the old *paisa* will duly disappear after some time. Therefore, if we are going to use this new prefix of *naya* here, the difficulty would be that after five years, when the old *paisa* is withdrawn, then we will not only have to change the term used in the Notification, but will also have to withdraw

the coin that is now going to be introduced. My submission, therefore, is that the introduction of this prefix is, in my opinion, wholly unnecessary, and I will tell you the reason why it is so.

It has been emphasised in the quotations from the speeches of the Minister that I have read earlier, that there is going to be some period of confusion. The Minister wants to save the illiterate and the rural people from any deceit or any deception, so that they may not have to bear any loss. The point is, will the mere use of this word *naya* or the imprinting of it on the new coins, solve the problem? I emphatically say, Sir, that it is not an answer to the problem because, whenever we take out a currency note, do we try to look in as to what exactly is written on the note for finding out its denomination? We do not do that. When we take out money, do we always read what is written on the coins? No, we do not. It is the look of the thing that makes us guess and decide about its denomination. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to how an illiterate man is going to read the new name on the new coin when he cannot read? Hence, the difficulty is not going to be solved merely by the addition of this word *naya*. The only thing that an illiterate can do is to have a look at the coin, and that is why, when this Bill was discussed here, I pleaded with the hon. Minister that for heaven's sake, he should change the look of the coins so that the rural people and the illiterate persons will have no difficulty in recognising, or using the new coins. That is why, even the use and imprinting of the prefix '*naya*' on the coin is not necessary.

I know the difficulty of the hon. Member in finding out a name. I can realise his difficulty, especially because I know that he comes from a part where these coins have been in use or have been current for more than 150 years. But those of us who come from those areas where the coins

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have changed more than once during the last fifty years, know as to how this difficulty is overcome. As I mentioned earlier, the rural and illiterate people are clever enough, ingenious enough to find out easily a name of their own. I think, those Members who come from Hyderabad State will be able to vouch for that. In Hyderabad there was the British currency as well as the Nizam's currency. They found out a name to distinguish the two; the Hyderabad currency was called Hali rupiah-paisa and the British currency was called Kaldar rupiah. Similarly, in this region comprising of Malwa and Rajasthan, the States had their own currency, in addition to the British currency. The British currency was called the Kaldar paisa, and the State currency was called kutcha paisa, or was given the name of the State. Therefore, my submission is, that in spite of whatever name my friend may give, the name that will be current will be the name that may be coined by the rural people, and they are sure to coin some name or other for their own use, and for their own recognition. Therefore, the Minister's trying to add this prefix 'naya' is wholly unnecessary, and is only going to cause the Government of India unnecessary additional expenses, because all these coins that are now going to be imprinted with this word naya will have to be withdrawn and fresh coins minted. Let the Government of India be saved of this unnecessary trouble and unnecessary expense.

The second point that I want to make in this connection is this. In the Notification, there are only two names mentioned and they are paisa and rupee, "Hundred paisas make one rupee". Now, my submission in this respect is, that if you want to have a decimal system, you should know that decimals go up in tens. I would have expected you to say somewhat like this: "Ten paisas make one coin and ten of those coins make one rupee". I had expected that, and I pressed that point previously. Here,

I would like to remind the hon. Minister as to what he promised in this respect in our House. May I remind him that on the 26th August 1955, he said in this very House:

"I think even now our idea is that we should retain the anna and most probably it will conform to one-tenth of the rupee instead of being one-sixteenth".

At that time, I think, his difficulty was about the name. Though he had not said anything definite, he had that in his mind, and probably, finding it difficult to discover a suitable name, he changed his mind.

In this connection, I would like to remind my hon. friend that if he is very keen to help the rural and the illiterate people, he should bear, what I am going to say, in mind. He probably knows that the rural and illiterate people cannot count in numbers more than twenty, because they always count in terms of twenties. A unit of 20 is called a kori. If you were to ask him as to how many sheep he had, he will say, one, two, three or four koris. This means that, he can generally count only up to twenty. Imagine his difficulty when he has to count his paise up to 89 or 79. Cannot my friend realise the difficulty of that illiterate man who lives in the village, who cannot make up all these long additions and subtractions? Can he not save him all that inconvenience by having just one additional name? Let him accept one name for this intermediate coin and all the difficulties will be solved.

Now, I can solve his other difficulty too. As I pointed out earlier, he was thinking of the anna and probably my hon. friend thought that when a new paisa was already going to be there if he were to add the prefix 'naya' to an anna too, it would be rather too long a story. We had suggested a new word. You know, Sir, we are now going back to old names. We have already heard the change of the name of 'Banaras' into 'Varanasi', and

probably we shall not be astonished, if we hear 'Patna' changed into 'Pataliputra'. If my hon. friend is keen to have a good word, let him satisfy the South Indians who feel that their names are being completely ignored. Actually this word 'anna' has been derived from the word 'panam'. South Indians used it, and it used to be a coin, something similar and about, I think, two annas' worth. So, Sir, from its value in that way, we will by no means be making it cheap. In Southern India—and I believe any hon. Member who is a Tamilian will be able to tell us—they use the word 'panam' as an equivalent for 'wealth', for what we call in Northern India 'Rupiya-Paisa', which is a term indicating wealth and money. So, Sir, what I would earnestly suggest and submit is, that if this word is accepted, he can easily have it thus that ten paisas are equal to one panam and 10 panams are equal to one rupiya.

SHRI S. C. KARAYALAR (Travancore-Cochin): May I tell the hon. Member that 'panam' was only a mythical name, and it never existed as a coin.

DR. RAGHUBIR SINH: It may be a mythical name, but I think, if I mistake not, there was a coin to that effect. (*Interruption.*) It may be a Sanskrit name, but I think, there was a coin to that effect. Dr. Mookerji is not here to support me.

SHRI S. C. KARAYALAR: There was a coin called 'fanam' in the Travancore currency. There was one, but the hon. Member is referring to the 'panam' that existed in South India other than Travancore-Cochin. That was a mythical coin.

DR. RAGHUBIR SINH: I never thought that Travancore was outside South India. Now, Sir, all I have to say is that my suggestion for the acceptance of the word 'panam' is duly supported and corroborated by no less a man than Shri Rajaji, who is considered to be one of the brainiest men

in India. I do hope, Sir, that the hon. Minister will give this request of mine, which is duly supported by Rajaji, due and thoughtful consideration.

Now, Sir, I want to come to the question of the dimensions, that have been put in here. As I have said before, the question of dimensions and shapes is of vital importance. I invite a reference to the memorandum on the metric system in India by Pitambar Pant and the long debate on the policy that should be followed in respect of the shape and size of these coins. There were two opinions there. One opinion was that the new shapes and sizes should be completely different from the old ones. Another view was that the new shapes and sizes should be just similar to those of the existing coins. Now, Sir, I find that the Government of India has accepted partly both the things. The person who advocated that the new coins should have new designs suggested that the new coins should be related to the new measures, while the person who wanted the same designs wanted it to be related to the weights.

Now, I find that the new decimal coinage is in effect introduction of new designs, but it is related to weight. I believe, very few persons know that our original silver rupee, that we had in India, was related to our Indian weights and was related also—subject to correction, Sir—to the British measures. The original silver rupee used to have a diameter of one inch, and therefore, for ordinary measurements, if you just put 12 rupees distinct in every way from the existing one foot before you.

Sir, I would again urge the hon. Minister to make the new coins of a shape and size, which will make them distinct in every way from the existing coins.

Sir, I have got before me a statement, which I got from his Ministry, which gives a description and all other details of the existing coins and also

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of the new decimal coins. There, I find that the existing coin of half-anna is cupro-nickel in composition, square in shape, measures 0.778" each side, and is 45 grains in weight. I also find that one of the proposed new coins is very much similar to this one. The new coin is the 5-unit piece, cupro-nickel in composition, square in shape and measuring 22 mm. equal to 0.866" each side, and weighing 4 grams, equal to 61.72 grains in weight. Sir, you will note that the new coin is only 0.088" larger than the existing half-anna piece. I would like to point out that there is on the other hand, rather a very big difference in the value of these two coins. How can an ordinary villager differentiate between these two coins when the new one is not appreciably bigger than the old one? As you can see, the old one is less by nine-hundredth of an inch. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, if he can tell me, if he himself will readily be able to make a distinction between these two coins.

In this connection, Sir, I will tell you an actual experience. In 1942, when I was in the army, it was just then that one-rupee and two-rupee currency notes were introduced. I had these one-rupee, two-rupee notes and five-rupee notes mixed up sometimes, when I was in a hurry, and there were occasions when by mistake, I gave two-rupee notes for one-rupee notes and five-rupee notes for two-rupee notes. Sir, when that is the condition of a person like me, who has experienced difficulty in this respect, imagine the condition of an ordinary villager. I believe, Sir, and I would suggest it with all the emphasis at my command, that something should be done to change this coin, which I may call the new five paisa coin.

Then, I find that there is the new coin of two paisa (two units), cupro-nickel in composition, eight point scalloped in shape, and measuring 18 mm. or 0.709" each side. The size of this coin is just less than three-quarters of an inch. Will it not be

quite difficult for an ordinary man to handle it easily, specially when this coin is mostly going to be used? The one paisa coin is not going to be used so much as this two paisa coin. Therefore, I have a suggestion for the hon. Minister. Probably, he must be remembering that about 30 years ago, there used to be in currency a bronze coin. It used to be a half paisa coin, and was ordinarily called *adhela* or *dhela*. Can he not possibly think of replacing this coin by a bronze coin of a bigger size? For obviously, the bronze coin of bigger size can be more conveniently and easily handled.

Finally, I come to the last coin of one paisa. This coin will be a bronze one, as proposed, circular in shape, and having an outside diameter of 16 millimetres. That means, it will be 0.630". I find that unfortunately, this new paisa coin is going to be somewhat smaller than what we call the present pie piece, which is also a bronze coin, circular in size, and which measures only 5/100" more than this new one paisa coin, in outside diameter. I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to how many pie pieces are in circulation today. I know that this coin is almost out of circulation and that it is not being generally used. In fact, it is not worth anything in actual practice; you cannot buy anything in the market with it. Still, they are in circulation. Any ordinary villager will easily confuse himself between the new paisa coin and the present pie piece. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to do something to vary one from the other. For that also, I have a suggestion. Is it not possible to have a scalloped eight point bronze coin of a size like the present pie? Would it not be suitable for ordinary use? I have read a remark made by one of the prominent experts in this respect, where he had suggested that the one paisa coin would probably have to be produced in aluminium alloy in order to avoid excessive metal cost. I know that the proposed paisa coin is not very small, compared to the other similar coins they have got in other

countries. For the information of the House, I may just quote some details in this respect. The Russian small kopek piece is 1.5 cm. in diameter; the ten-cent piece of Netherlands is 1.5 cm.; the Pfennig piece of Germany is also 1.5 cm. As compared to these, our one paisa coin is at least a little more than $1/10$ " larger in size. But I feel that this one paisa coin, as it has been proposed, is not going to be very helpful nor very convenient for ordinary villagers.

In this connection, when designs and other things are being discussed, I would like to bring to the notice of the hon. Minister the question of the present slot machines, and I would like to know from him what he has thought about them. I find that all the slot machines work either on existing one anna coins, or two anna coins, and in this new arrangement, there is no proposal for any coins having similar designs which could be possibly used in their place. That means that all these slot machines worth thousands and thousands of rupees will have to be either scrapped or drastically altered. I would like to know whether this question has been given any thought, when especially very lately, the Railways also have introduced—and I believe, the Post Offices too have these slot machines—where you put in a coin and you get stamps or postcards or railway tickets. Therefore, this question should be given due thought.

Sir, I have dealt with some of these points. I personally do not think it necessary to make any definite suggestions, except the few in such general terms that I have made for the hon. Minister's consideration, because I do not know what is going to be the policy in respect of weights and measures. I quite understand that the new coins will have to be adjusted—aligned to, and suitably related to the new weights and measures. I do hope that when he gives some consideration to these suggestions of mine, he can very easily find out some suitable designs.

Finally, I want to refer to one aspect of this problem and that is about the urgent need of educating the people in this respect. I must say that this aspect also was not ignored by the hon. Minister, for on 29th July 1955, in his speech, he has laid down a programme. He said:

"In more concrete terms, the programme would comprise the following:

(i) the Government of India to introduce the decimal system of currency in which weights and dimensions of coins should be related to the metric system;

(ii) intensive education and propaganda, including teaching in elementary and secondary schools, and in technical and engineering institutions; schools to keep samples of all standard metric weights and measures;

(iii) press and radio publicity;

(iv) public speeches and press conferences....."

Sir, the programme is a very good one, but I have to say that we make our programmes, but in respect of publicity, I am afraid, whatever be the department, whether it is education and social welfare, whether it is Information and Broadcasting Ministry, or whether it is, unfortunately as it happens in this case, the Finance Ministry, the Government of India has no imagination, and it is very lax in its execution in this respect. This programme was laid down before the other House some seven months back, but what is the position today?

Just about a week before I left my home, in April 1956, for this place, one day in the evening, a bunch of High School boys, who had just appeared for their High School examination, were sitting and chatting with me. Referring to the States reorganisation proposals, they chuckled and told me, 'Look, even after having passed our Matriculation Examination, we will have to learn once again a new Geography of our country. Well,

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I had my retort. I told them: "Don't you think your job of receiving new education ends there. You will have now to learn a new Mathematics also". And Sir, that frightened them quite a bit, because you know that Mathematics is rather a frightful thing for the school boys in general except those brilliant ones who readily get their distinction in that subject. They did not know what I was talking about. So I had to explain to them that they will have now to forget that 12 pies make an anna and 16 annas make a rupee, and all that sort of thing, that all the old yardsticks will have to be thrown into the fuel box, and that now onwards, we have to think of something which continues and ends in circles and zeroes in tens. They knew nothing about it, and I had to explain to them in detail all about the new decimal coinage, and metric weights and measures. They asked me queerly enough, "Why all this new trouble for us? I tried to explain to them the exact idea behind this new move. If this is the condition of the High School boys, what difficulties must there be and will continue to be for decades to come in the rural areas? One fine morning, the New Delhi Secretariat will announce that the new coins are being introduced. Let me tell you explicitly that one swallow does not make a summer; so also a few speeches and some broadcasts on the All India Radio from here and there will not do.

In this connection, I have a suggestion to make; otherwise the hon. Minister will say that I am only being destructive. I have a very definite suggestion to make and if he carries it out, I am sure, that what he wants could be done before very long. My suggestion is that a short note on the new decimal coinage should be prepared in a simple language. Let this be translated into all the fourteen regional languages, and let copies of the note be sent to each and every village school master. Along with this pamphlet have a small short letter—printed of course—addressed to them,

bearing the signature of the hon. Minister, saying that here is the literature on the new coinage, and asking them to tell the boys all about it. If the school master gets such a letter signed by the Minister, that will have a tremendous effect. The village school master will then obviously think himself to be a very important person and in many respects, his importance cannot possibly be denied or doubted. With that letter and pamphlet in his hand he will go from cottage to cottage telling the people all about it. It is only thus that you can reach the common man, and without reaching the common man, this message, this ideal, this new programme, cannot possibly be carried out. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR): Motion moved:

"That the draft Notifications of the Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs) regarding the nomenclature and denominations of the decimal coins to be issued under the Indian Coinage Act, 1906, laid on the Table of the House on December 1, 1955, be taken into consideration."

SHRI KISHEN CHAND (Hyderabad): Sir, I have an amendment. Sir, I move:

"That at the end of the Motion, the following be added, namely:—

'and having considered the same, this House recommends that the coin of 10 *naye* paise shall be called on *naya* anna and a coin of 20 *naye* paise shall also be issued and that the diameters and weights of the said coins shall be—

One rupee: Nickel, circular, diameter 30 mm., weight 10 grams, serrations 200.

$\frac{1}{2}$ rupee: Nickel, circular, diameter 25 m.m., weight 5 grams, serrations 150.

1/2 rupee: Nickel, circular, diameter 20 m.m., weight 2.5 grams, serrations 100.

1/5 rupee or 2 naye anne: Nickel, square, side 17.5 m.m., weight 2 grams.

10 naye paise or 1 naye anna: Cuprinickel, (10) scalloped, diameter 20 m.m., weight 5 grams.

5 naye paise: Cupronickel, circular, diameter 17.5 m.m., weight 2.5 grams.

2 naye paise: Cupronickel, (10) scalloped, diameter 15 m.m., weight 1 gram.

1 naya paisa: Bronze, circular with concentric hole, diameter 15 m.m., weight 1 gram.

and that the reverse of the coins of one rupee, 1/5th of a rupee and 1/10th of a rupee shall bear as given below:—

सौ नये पैसे - १० नये आने = १ रुपया
रुपये का पांचवां भाग - २ नये आने
= २० नये पैसे

रुपये का दसवां भाग = १ नया आना
= १० नये पैसे

and that the remaining parts of the notifications shall remain."

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR): The motion and the amendment are open for discussion.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: Mr. Vice-Chairman, I have moved an amendment about the size and weight of the coins. While moving the motion, the hon. Mover of the motion has clearly explained the position.

The VICE-CHAIRMAN (Shri S. N. MAZUMDAR): You will continue tomorrow. The House stands adjourned till 11 A.M. tomorrow, the 10th May.

The House then adjourned at five of the clock till eleven of the clock on Thursday, ~~the~~ the 10th May, 1956.