

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the House that leave be given to the hon. Member to withdraw his Bill?

SHRI S. N. MAZUMDAR: Sir, I object to it.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That leave be granted to the hon. the mover of the Bill to withdraw the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

#### THE INDIAN COINAGE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1953

SHRI KISHEN CHAND (Hyderabad): Mr. Deputy Chairman, I move:

"That the Bill to amend the Indian Coinage Act, 1906, be taken into consideration."

This is a very simple Bill, and it is my third and the last Bill. It is so simple that I think the Government will have no objection to accept it. I have received several letters from insurance and banking companies welcoming this measure. They say that, if this measure is adopted, they will be able to mechanise all their calculations work. The whole calculation of interest, simple and compound, will become very easy and can be performed by machine, leading to great convenience in sending out premium notices and such like things. Now, the machine, which deals with annas and pies, is very complicated. If the decimal system is adopted, it will become much simpler. In the present Indian Coinage Act there is a lacuna. I have read the Coinage Act several times and tried to find out how it is that we have got sixteen annas in a rupee. The Act does not say anywhere, nor is there any subsequent amendment to it by which we have fixed sixteen annas in a rupee. It is just a convention. Possibly it was done by an executive order that a rupee shall be divided into sixteen annas, an anna will be |

divided into four pice, and each pice will be divided into three pies

[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI B. C. GHOSE) in; the Chair.]

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA (Uttar Pradesh): Nadir Shah might have done it at the time of his invasion,

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: My hon. friend knows more about history than I do. He perhaps thinks that the rupee was in existence at the time of Nadir Shah. I beg to submit that my knowledge of history is not as extensive as his. This Indian Coinage Bill came into operation in 1906. It is only as old as 47 years and the whole coinage is regulated by it. I wanted to remove a lacuna and when we are making a legislation, why not give it a scientific basis. By dividing a rupee into 16 annas, in arithmetical operations and in the teaching of a child, a good part of his time is wasted in learning the conversion of annas and pies into fractions of a rupee and vice versa. If this decimal system is adopted *i.e.*, a rupee is divided into ten annas and an anna is divided into ten pies, it will become much simpler. I come from Hyderabad State and Hyderabad had a currency where an anna was divided into 6 pice and a pice was divided into two pies so that an anna had the same 12 pies, but the division of a pice was different so that a rupee had 96 pice. My suggestion is that a rupee may have 100 pice and if we agree to that, we shall be forced to divide a rupee into 10 annas and an anna into 10 pice. I had earlier moved a Bill that the weights and measures may also be decimalised and if that measure had been adopted and this measure is adopted, all our calculations will become extremely simple. The present division of 16 is peculiar to our country. No other country in the world uses the unit of 16 or divides its currency into 16. In England there are 20 shillings to a

pound. In all other countries the decimal system has been adopted and their currency generally has 100 cents. So I have introduced this simple Bill and in order to, somehow or other, connect up the size and the weight of a coin with our units of weights and measures, I have suggested that the size of a rupee should be such that it has a diameter of 10/3 cm and its weight should be 10 grams and so on. The coin will be simple, light and small in size and the differentiation between an anna coin and a pice coin will be conspicuous so that even at night, without seeing the coin, it can be distinguished. If these coins are adopted, there is no possibility of any mistake occurring when you are counting it without the use of light. The pice will have a central circular hole while the anna coin will not have any hole. So that distinction alone will simplify the counting of (1)Rs. Further this is not changing our currency. The entire urban population largely uses rupee and multiples of rupee. It is only for petty shopping purposes that you require these coins. These coins are only legal tender upto Re. 1 For higher payments you cannot use these coins. Therefore, if you make these changes in coins, it is not going to dislocate our life and it is not going to affect very much the life of the people. Therefore, I submit that this is an advantageous Bill, absolutely innocuous. It is going to bring much benefit to the country, and simplify the entire calculation work. Therefore, I would suggest that it should be adopted. Then I have suggested an amendment to section 13 of the old Act, because it becomes unnecessary now. It prescribes the weight of a rupee. It had prescribed that a rupee shall weigh 1 tola which is equivalent to 180 grains. When we are changing our rupee into cents, it will be far better if the weight of the rupee coin is also connected with the metric system and therefore, clause 3 has been introduced by which section 13 of the principal Act shall be omitted. With these few words, I commend this Bill to the consideration of the House.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI B. C. GHOSE): The question is:

"That the Bill to amend the Indian Coinage Act, 1906, be taken into consideration."

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR FINANCE (SHRI A. C. GUHA): Mr. Vice-Chairman, I think the hon. Member need not have taken the trouble of trying to convince the House about the utility or the advantages of having a decimal coinage system, it is known that the decimal system is more convenient than any other system either in coinage or in weight and measurements. In this connection I may add that India can claim the proud position of having given the world the decimal system. Zero is the invention of India and the system of arithmetic now known in Europe as the Arabic system is really an Indian invention transmitted to Europe through Arabia. So it is not anything new to the genius or tradition of our country. Government is also aware that.....

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: Then why not accept it?

SHRI A. C. GUHA: My hon. friend: will please wait a bit. Government is also aware of the advantages of such a system. As early as 1944 the Mint Master of India made a proposal for having Indian coinage on a decimal system, as part of the post war programme and the then Government sent a memorandum to the Provincial Governments, to the different Chambers of Commerce and the different departments of Government, the scheduled banks and also to the then existing Indian States. That was in 1945. Since then it was under the consideration of the Government and a Bill was also introduced in the Central Legislature in 1946. Then the partition of the country and the subsequent events intervened.

6 P.M.

The then existing Central Legislature also suddenly ceased to exist and the Bill naturally lapsed. Again, the Indian Standards Institution took up this matter in 1949 and a special com-

[Shri A. C. Guha.] mittee was set up to consider this question. Then also the consensus of opinion was that we should adopt the decimal system of coinage. While giving general support to this proposal, the experts of the sub-committee pointed out also certain practical difficulties. I hope the Members will easily realise what the difficulties are. The hon. Member has stated that as he has, in his Bill, agreed to retain the simple nomenclature of rupees, annas and pies, he feels that it will not affect our monetary system. That is not at all true, Sir, It will surely affect our monetary system.

SHRI S. MAHANTY (Orissa): How?

SHRI A. C. GUHA: The major point for consideration of the sub-committee was the difficulties and inconveniences this system is likely to produce particularly in the rural areas. So, the proposal of that sub-committee was to implement the scheme within a period of fifteen years, the change over to take place in several stages spread over a total period of fifteen years, the first period being devoted to publicity and propaganda, the second period to the introduction of the metric system of weights and measures in Central and State Governments and public bodies and the final stage for the final change-over. Sir, as mentioned in the recommendation of the sub-committee and as we find also in the Bill, as introduced by the hon. Member, this decimal coinage system would have to be preceded by the decimal system in weights and measures. Sir, you will please see that the hon. Member has suggested that the weight of a rupee shall be ten grams and its diameter shall be 10 cm.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: It is a misprint. It should be 10/3 cm.

SHRI A. C. GUHA: I think it is 10 cm.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: No, they have corrected every copy that they have distributed.

SHRI A. C. GUHA: Yes, it is 10/3. This Bill, as he has worded it, connects the coinage system with the decimal system in weights and measures. These two questions are inter-related and I think it may be necessary first to introduce the decimal system in weights and measure.

I hope, Sir, in view of the general acceptance of this policy by the Government, the hon. Member may not press this Bill. It is still under the consideration of an inter-Ministerial committee and unless the committee submits its report and the practical difficulties in introducing such a measure are considered, it would not be possible for the Government to accord their support to this Bill.

Lastly, Sir, this Bill pre-supposes or will surely lead to some expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India in minting new coins, in printing postage stamps and railway tickets etc. and, as such, this comes under the mischief of article 117(3) of the Constitution. Also, I should like to point out that rule 52(1) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States also requires that this Bill should have the previous sanction and approval of the President and I am afraid the hon. Member has not got that approval. Technically also this Bill should not be entertained by this House and I hope, in view of what I have stated about the attitude of government in this matter, particularly when just at present an inter-Ministerial committee is looking into this question, he may be agreeable to withdraw this Bill.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI B. C. GHOSE): I presume that the hon. Deputy Minister is not taking the technical objection.

SHRI A. C. GUHA: Yes. Sir.

DR. A. R. MUDALIAR (Madras): Mr. Vice-Chairman, I shall be very brief. I am particularly anxious to dispose of the technical objection that

my hon. friend, the Deputy Minister, has taken with reference to the previous sanction of the President being obtained because it is somehow a Money Bill. I have a feeling, Sir, that the Government is over-working this provision of Money Bill and uses this criterion to be a .....

SHRI A. C. GUHA: I never stated that this was a Money Bill. I said that the passing of this Bill will involve expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India for which previous sanction of the President was necessary.

DR. A. R. MUDALIAR: That is the point that I was having in mind. Practically, every measure of any importance that is introduced by a non-official Member of the House will at some stage or other, in its operation, require the expenditure of Money by the Government. It is a peculiar theory for me to hear that in this sense it is a charge on the Consolidated Fund and, therefore, the previous sanction of the President is required. I have not come across this sort of technical objection in my career in the Legislature of the Centre during the last 25 years. This question of the Consolidated Fund and the previous sanction of the Governor-General or of the President being required is no new provision that has been introduced in the Constitution Act. It is a very old provision and I am sorry that this sort of interpretation has been put forward.

I raise no criticism of any ruling that has been given either by the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman. I am too loyal a Member of Parliament to raise criticism of rulings that have been given, but I wish to point out that the mere fact that the passing of a Bill may at some stage or other require Government to do something or other and that requirement would in its turn necessitate the Government spending some money is not levying a charge on the Consolidated Fund and, therefore, does not come under the mischief of the constitutional provision. It does not require the

President's previous sanction for that purpose. We should like to know which Bill there is, which has been before the House, which may not at some stage or other, if the intentions of the Bill are to be carried out, require the Government to spend some money on it. At a later stage a Bill is going to be moved about suppression of immoral traffic. I should like to know whether that Bill can be taken into consideration and adopted and seriously given effect to by Government without either the State Governments or the Central Government spending some money in the direction of carrying out the provisions of the Bill. It was not the idea, Sir, when this provision in the Constitution was embodied that any possible expenditure from the Consolidated Fund would require the previous consent of the President. It was that a direct charge on the Consolidated Fund cannot be prescribed without prior approval and that was sought to be avoided by the provision that was enacted in the Constitution and not this indirect and possible and amorphous charge on the Consolidated Fund which is being trotted out time after time by the Government as a fatal objection to the introduction of a measure. At this rate there will be no non-official Bill which can be introduced in this House without getting the previous consent of the President. I do not suggest that it should not be obtained; I do not suggest that it may not be forthcoming, but I feel that in many cases hon. Members may reasonably hold that a charge on the Consolidated Fund was not being contemplated by the Bill and, therefore, it need not have the previous consent of the President.

Now coming to the provisions of the Bill itself, as the hon. Deputy Minister has pointed out, this Bill was contemplated in the year 1944. I remember very well the then Finance Member taking the trouble in getting this Bill accepted by the Government of the day and his circulating it for public opinion. The hon. Deputy Minister has stated that this matter is under the consideration of the Gov-

[Dr. A. R. Mudaliar.]. eminent, that an expert committee has examined the question and that that committee has suggested that a period of 15 years must elapse before these measures are adopted. Firstly the idea is, there should be propaganda. Since 1944 this matter has been before the public. Propaganda and yet more propaganda has been carried out. I remember some vital objections to this measure having been raised by various important persons. I believe Mahatma Gandhi himself was not in favour of this measure. There can be no better propaganda than that, which was obtained by giving out Mahatma's opinion to the world and to this country in particular. Where is the necessity for further propaganda? We are saying that time cannot wait, that measures can be introduced and passed, that the tempo of public opinion has changed, that there is no point in waiting for this or that measure and that it is required absolutely in the interests of the people. Measures are rushed through—82 Bills in the last desession. How many more Bills in the Budget Session. I dread to think. When these measures are introduced in the morning, passed in one House in the afternoon and in the second House perhaps in the evening, I wonder why 15 years should elapse before this measure is considered as "being possible of introduction. The position in the rural areas has been adverted to. We all know the rural areas' let not the Government take-shelter under the rural areas that the rural people do not understand the decimal system. They understand it much better than many of us. They appreciate it much better. They will understand it in course of time that today one rupee is 16 annas but six months later the rupee will have 16 annas. It will not be difficult for the rural man to understand this proposition. After all it is the small change that counts in the decimal system; and at this time of the year when money has so much depreciated, when rupee is the normal tender, very rarely small coins are required and small coins are coined for only a limited purpose. It seems to me that it is

is highly artificial to suggest that fifteen years should elapse for this I have the greatest respect for the expert committee but as a layman, who knows as much of the rural life as the members of the expert committee, I think the rural population can be allowed to take care of themselves and that the measure can be introduced much earlier than the 15 years. This is a system which has been adopted\* elsewhere. This is a system which according to the Government, is useful. The hon. Deputy Minister said that there could be no question about that. There can be no difference of opinion about it. There need hardly be any arguing in favour of the system or any necessity to proclaim the beneficent effects that will result from the adoption of this system. After having said all that, he says that 15 years must elapse. After all even if in 1948 or 1949 this measure was first contemplated, five years have already elapsed. At least the propaganda stage is over. Let the hon. Deputy Minister say that within a few years it will come into operation. Let him say that the Bill will be introduced next year with a provision that it will come into force five years later. That itself will be a period of propaganda. Now, I am not an obstructionist, tending merely to criticise the Government. I hardly venture to do that. There are many things with which I do not agree, but I have not taken the position of an opposition Member. I think this is one of those measures which are required, which is necessary, which will bring us into line with other countries, which would make it easier for business and industry to transact their business, which will make it easier for the school boy and the college student to understand his mathematics better under the decimal system than under the present system. Things have changed and I appeal to my friend, Mr. Saksena, who is deeply rooted in the traditions of the past and for which I honour him very greatly, sometimes to uproot himself from that distant past and make himself a vigorous plant of the present age.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA: I am a \*revolutionary and a modernist. If you think that I am deeply rooted in conservatism, you have hopelessly misunderstood me.

DR. A. R. MUDALIAR: I am very glad that Mr. Saksena is so modernist and I am sure, notwithstanding party labels, he will vote in favour of this measure now.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA: No guarantee on that score.

DR. A. R. MUDALIAR: There is a way in which to propagate this. The best way of propagating an idea is to enact the measure and to put it on the Statute Book and to give effect to it five years later. It will give us all the time to educate those who want to be educated—if they are not already educated, to popularise the ideas and to make them understood by everybody and also to see that the transitional period is utilised to withdraw the coins now in circulation and issue new coins. I am aware, it is earnestly under the consideration of the Government. The Government will now be a little more energetic after hearing the speeches of hon. Members and will take it up in all seriousness. I believe my hon. friend cannot give a reply at this moment. I trust it will be put before the Minister for Finance and then before the Cabinet and then the Cabinet will decide that. If a measure of this kind is necessary, useful and of benefit, it should be put on the Statute Book and some time should elapse before effect may be given to it, say, five years later. In that sense, I support the Bill.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA: A very compromising proposition.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI B. C. GHOSE): Let me first dispose of the point of order.

SHRI A. C. GUHA: Sir, I would like to dispel some wrong impressions. Certain statements have been made

and put in my mouth by the hon. Member which are not quite correct. I was not saying that it would take some 15 years; that was the recommendation of the committee. A committee was set up by the Indian Standards Institution and that committee has carefully considered that question. I only suggested that we will take about 15 years.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI B. C. GHOSE): A point of order has been raised by the hon. Minister that the Bill comes under the mischief of article 117 (3) of the Constitution.....

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: May I give an explanation to the point of order?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI B. C. GHOSE): YOU have already done that. I think a distinction should be made between Bill, which, if enacted, will directly involve some expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India and those which, if passed, may indirectly involve some small expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India. I think that if a Bill which involves a direct expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India is to be considered by this House, then it requires the previous recommendation of the President. As this Bill does not involve direct expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of India, I do not uphold the point of order.

SHRI RAMA RAO (Andhra): Sir, I am speaking to the Bill. We are grateful for your ruling just given and for the strong and vigorous protest Dr. Ramaswami Mudaliar has made in defence of the rights of the House. All Members, to whatever party they belong, must vindicate the rights of the House. I am glad to hear that the decimal system was Indian in its conception. This blessed dot used to frighten me at school. However, I am prepared to concede that this Bill will do some good, at any rate, it will help industry and trade. I am prepared to accept the opinions of our very high men in our country on a number of matters, but not on all things. I feel that Gov-

[Shri Rama Rao.] emment should come out at an early date with an effective measure of reform as promised; and I hope that the assurances and promises of the hon. the Deputy Minister for Finance are not going to keep company with many of the promises that are made with regard to the Hindu Code Reform. It has been said that the zero also is India's gift to the world. It must have been so, because the greatest gift of Government to the Bills of the non-official Members of this House today is, we know, a great zero. (.Laughter.)

SHRI C. G. MISRA (Madhya Pradesh): Mr. Vice-Chairman, this decimal system has been the oldest system. In fact there is a mention about this system in the Vedas and in Vedic literature. This decimal system was used in the olden times by Aryans.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: We can't hear.

SHRI C. G. MISRA: Sir, this is the oldest system that has been in vogue from the oldest times, I might say from the beginning of the creation of the world. In fact this system is prevalent in most of the European countries. So if this decimal system is adopted here, it would be very convenient for use in all branches of life. That is all I wanted to say, Sir.

SHRI M. MANJURAN (Travancore-Cochin): Mr. Vice-Chairman, the hon. the Deputy Minister has given no reason for opposing the Bill except an objection that he raised which has already been ruled out. When the Government, Sir, thinks that such a thing is good and when public opinion has never been expressed against it, this delay is not understandable. I feel it is mere jealousy on the part of the Government that leads them to oppose a measure of this type, the principle of which is accepted by them and which according to them was under their consideration for about nine years. When after long expectation nothing comes out and

if a private Member takes the liberty of introducing the Bill and substantiating the necessity for passing it, we do not understand why there should be any opposition. This Bill could have been immediately accepted. So much cost out of the Consolidated Fund of India or any fund could have been avoided by merely one word from the Government saying "Very well, we accept this." Now suppose the Government is going to bring this Bill again after some time, what would be the cost of debate that will take place? It would cost at least a thousand of rupees. Why should this Bill not have been accepted by the Government when it was approved by them? The public has no objection to it. The only objection Government raised is that it would take a long time for people to understand the decimal system. When we have made them understand the complicated multiplication system, I find that they would understand this decimal system much quicker. When we made them understand that 12 pies make one anna, 16 annas make one rupee and 192 pies make one rupee it would be on the contrary easier for them to take to the decimal system. On the other hand, if the Government says that public cannot understand it properly, I am afraid this Government has never understood our public. I am afraid this Government has never understood the people. What is the difficulty in their understanding it? A sweeping statement, that Indians are fools, will not do. Who says that they will not understand it? They understand the present complicated system. In order to justify their stand, the Government do not mind throwing against the people any damnation that comes to their mouth. This attitude is against public interest, according to me. It is better that we stress that our people are quite intelligent. We should legislate on the basis of the intelligence of the Indian people rather than relying on the intelligence of the legislators alone. The people of this country have sent us here as their representatives, and I think that, if it is contended that they will not

