

[27 July, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

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*Thursday, the 27th July, 2000/5 Shrawana, 1922 (Saka)*

*The House met at eleven of the clock, Mr. Chairman in the Chair.*

### SUSPENSION OF QUESTION HOUR

MR. CHAIRMAN: Question No. 61. (*Interruption*).

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have given notice of a motion for the suspension of the Question Hour and I would like to draw your attention to a fact which is very serious. It concerns not only the individual Members but also the dignity of the House. Sir, yesterday, an item was slated in the List of Business that Mr. Ram Jethmalani will make a statement explaining the reasons for his resignation from the Council of Ministers. That item was admitted, it was listed in the List of Business. Thereafter, that item did not come, and when the Chair, after transacting the business up to the items preceding that item, took up the next item, skipping that particular item, I raised a point of order under rule 23 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States and wanted to know the reasons why that particular item was skipped. Thereafter, we were told that the statement which the Member concerned, here Mr. Ram Jethmalani, forwarded to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat at 9.45 A.M., was running into hundreds of pages and it contained certain contents, certain statements, certain facts, certain observations and certain comments which cannot be permitted to be told in the House as per the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of this House. Therefore, a peculiar situation was created and the Chairman satisfied *himself* that the statement should not be made yesterday and we accepted that position because proviso to rule 23 says that if the Chairman is satisfied that there are reasons for deferring a particular item, that can be done and we satisfied ourselves. It was expected that the statement would come today because 24 hours have passed. But instead of that, there is no mention of that particular statement

in the List of Business for today. We do not know as to what has happened. But in between in the morning newspapers, we read: "supposed to be the statement, alleged to be the statement." Nobody is there to authenticate and it is stated there that he did not resign. He was sacked by the Prime Minister. Knowing fully well, Mr. Chairman said that this House has no responsibility so far as the Confidence Motion or No Confidence Motion on the Council of Ministers is concerned. That is the job of the other House. But surely, this House has the right to have information as to what actually happened. We thought that we are the privileged one, because the Minister who resigned belongs to this House. He will come to this House and explain the reasons which compelled him to resign from the Council of Minister, and we were quite happy when the statement was recorded that he is going to make a statement. Now, not only that, we are told, that too through the newspapers again—the Member could have come to the House, could have mentioned it, could have tried to take his colleagues into confidence—that if the Rajya Sabha does not give him time to make a statement by today, then, he should have the option to withdraw his offer. Sir, is Rajya Sabha a bargaining Council? Can any Member of this House take this House for granted that he would like to make a particular statement and can he fix a deadline that if he is not allowed to make his statement by that particular deadline, he withdraws his offer? Nobody forced him. As per the practice, the Member concerned may opt to make a statement; he may not opt to make a statement. But surely, he cannot take the House for granted and make an issue that unless by such and such time, he is allowed to make a statement, and if this information which you are having is correct, that the contents of the statement which he tried to make, cannot be allowed as per the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of this House, am I to believe that a senior lawyer, who happened to be the Law Minister of the country, did not know the rules of the Rajya Sabha, did not know the procedure, did not know what part of the statement can be allowed as per rules or what part of the statement cannot be allowed? Is it not a case of clear manipulation? If somebody tries to open a bargaining counter with the Government or with somebody saying

'look, you accommodate me, you try to help me, otherwise, I am going to spill the beans', can this forum be used for that purpose? Unless, Mr. Chairman, this issue is cleared it will be very difficult for us to transact any business and cooperate in the transaction of the business of the House. Now the question is, first, the Government comes. Here, the Prime Minister is present; he can clarify the position at least on one point, whether Mr. Ram Jethmalani was sacked or whether Mr. Ram Jethmalani resigned from the Council of Ministers. At least, somebody should authoritatively tell us as to what is the position. What is the position in regard to the statement? Why has this happened? Why these types of statements are coming through newspapers? The point is whether there is any remedy so that this House is not manipulated and somebody, being a Member of this House, does not use it to further his political career or advantage. Till this issue is sorted out, Mr. Chairman, Sir, most respectfully, I would like to submit that let the Question Hour be suspended and let the Members give their views. It is a question of the prestige and dignity of the House and see how this House is being manipulated. It must be resolved; the House should not be allowed to be manipulated by any individual, however powerful he or she may be. There was no compulsion on Shri Ram Jethmalani to give a notice to the Rajya Sabha Secretariat that 'I would like to make a Statement'. He gave a notice. Thereafter, he told the Secretariat and many of us are in personal knowledge, that he would send the statement sufficiently ahead. At 9.45, this statement comes, and this statement contains so many things, which cannot be allowed as per the rules. Then what is it but a glaring example of manipulation; manipulation to further the political career and interest of certain individuals. Can this august forum be utilised for that? This is matter on which I do hope the Members will give their opinion, and this issue should be sorted out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, for giving me permission and I do hope the Question Hour would be suspended and this issue taken up immediately.

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU (West Bengal): Hon. Chairman, Sir, it is indeed very serious to see the turn of events. This is difficulty for us. For whatever reasons, this item was listed yesterday. Therefore,

some authentic version should come, either from the Government or from the Chair, as to how the events have happened and how we could allow ourselves to be put in this ridiculous position. That Member is claiming privately that he has been sacked but the Government is saying that he has resigned. Parliament is now in session. Therefore, an authentic version should definitely come from the Government, on the floor of the House, giving us the details as to how all these things have happened. On the other hand, we should clear ourselves about the fact that he cannot be allowed to make that personal explanation. It is because of the fact that his statement and the procedures he adopted do not comply with the rules of business of this House. The position of the Rajya Sabha, as an institution, gets totally undermined. Therefore, Sir, in the interest of this House, to protect the traditions of this House and the institution, something has to be done. I think, Sir, it will be proper for the Government to explain the position, as well as some explanation from the Chair as to how this unfortunate and unseemly development has taken place, which is threatening the very reputation and the very prestige of this very great institution.

**श्री नरेन्द्र मोहन (उत्तर प्रदेश):** प्रश्न पहर को समाप्त किया जाए यह बात मेरी समझ में बिल्कुल नहीं आ रही है। इससे पहले आपने कई बार व्यवस्था दी है कि प्रश्न को हम किसी भी स्थिति में समाप्त नहीं करेंगे। जो जेठमलानी जी और विपक्ष के बीच में बातें हुई हैं वह बाद में रख ली जाएं। प्रश्न यहां यह नहीं है, यहां पर प्रश्न यह है कि प्रश्न पहर के बारे में आपके द्वारा जो व्यवस्था दी गई है।.....(व्यवधान)

**SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE:** We are not concerned.  
(Interruptions) We have nothing to do with Jethmalani.  
(Interruptions)

**MR. CHAIRMAN:** Please sit down (Interruptions) वह बात अलग है। मेरी बात सुनिये, मैंने आज बोलना नहीं था। नरेन्द्र मोहन जी ने जो कहा कि जेठमलानी जी और विरोधी दल के बीच में क्या बातचीत हुई, उसके बारे में। देखिये, बातचीत विरोधी दल से जेठमलानी जी की क्या हुई है, जेठमलानी जी के यहां से क्या हुई है, इससे मेरा कोई ताल्लुक नहीं है। जो बात मेरे से हुई है, मैं उसकी बात कह सकता हूं। उसके चलते हमें जो करना है, वह करना चाहिये। अगर मेम्बर यह फील करते हैं कि हाऊस को मेनिपुलेट किया जा रहा है तो वह बहुत सौरिय बात है। हमारे पास उन्होंने परसों नोटिस भेजा कि मैं एक स्टेटमेंट

देना चाहता हूँ। यहां जब सवाल उठा था तो मैंने कहा कि मैं उनको फोर्स नहीं कर सकता स्टेटमेंट देने के लिए, यह उनकी अपनी मरजी है वह स्टेटमेंट दें या नहीं दें। जब उनकी चिट्ठी आई तो उनका स्टेटमेंट साथ नहीं था it was only a letter. तो सेक्रेटेरियेट ने उनसे पूछा कि स्टेटमेंट आपका साथ आना चाहिये था वह नहीं आया। उन्होंने कहा it will be well in advance आपको मिल जाएगा। In good faith क्योंकि आनरेबल मੈम्बर हैं, उन्होंने इस्तीफा दिया है, उनको अपनी बात कहने का हक है तो आर्डर पेपर में डाल दिया गया। उन्होंने परतों सारा दिन बयान नहीं भेजा, whole day, till night नहीं भेजा। कल सेशन शुरू होने से पहले किसी को इतना नहीं था कि सब पढ़ कर जब कर ले और उसको पढ़ ले क्योंकि उसके साथ 17 पेज का लैटर था और 87 पेज के अनेकार थे। उस अनेकश्रर में खुद उनके हाथ से भी लिखा हुआ है प्राइवेट, कानफिडेंशियल, सिंक्रेट, बहुत कुछ लिखा हुआ है। जब वह हमारे पास आया क्योंकि वह मिनिस्ट्री के कानफिडेंशियल, सिंक्रेट है तो नेचुरली हमारे सेक्रेटेरियेट की यह जिम्मेदारी थी क्योंकि वह अब मिनिस्टर नहीं हैं तो वह मिनिस्ट्री से पूछें कि इन कानफिडेंशियल सिंक्रेट डाक्युमेंट्स से मतलब क्या है, क्या आपकी मरजी से भेजे हैं या क्या हुआ है। मैं और ज्यादा बात नहीं कहना चाहता क्योंकि मेरे पास एक बजे आए थे। सेक्रेटेरियेट उनसे बात कर रहा था कि वह डाक्युमेंट्स की बात है इसको कैसे हम कर सकते हैं सारा देखना पड़ेगा, आपका स्टेटमेंट उसके अनुसार देखना पड़ेगा, रूलज़ के मुताबिक देखना पड़ेगा तो कहने लगे कि अच्छा डाक्युमेंट्स उसमें से निकाल देते हैं। तो यह कोई तरीका नहीं है सीरियसली बात लेने का। उसके बाद बात खत्म हो गई। अब यह हमारी जिम्मेदारी थी हमने वह सारे डाक्युमेंट्स मिनिस्ट्री वालों को भेजे और मिनिस्ट्री वालों को कहा कि आप इसका जवाब दीजिये कि कौन से सिंक्रेट डाक्युमेंट हैं, कौन से ओपन हो सकते हैं, कौन से नहीं हो सकते हैं क्योंकि यह जिम्मेदारी हमारी हो जाएगी कि हाऊस के सामने सिंक्रेट डाक्युमेंट्स रख दिये गये, किसी ने देखा ही नहीं है। अब तक मिनिस्ट्री से हमें जवाब नहीं आया। लेकिन उनका इमीडियेट रियेक्शन यह था कि सिंक्रेट डाक्युमेंट फॉर्म मिनिस्ट्री के पास कैसे हैं। जब यह सिंक्रेट डाक्युमेंट मिनिस्ट्री के हैं और मिनिस्ट्री ने जब रिज़ाइन कर दिया तो उसके पास नहीं होने चाहियें। लेकिन हमने कहा यह बात हम नहीं सोचते। आप हमें लिख कर जवाब दीजिये। हम उनके जवाब की इंतज़ार में हैं इसलिए हमने आगे कोई एक्शन नहीं लिया। जब उनका जवाब आया तो उसके मुताबिक उनका सारा लैटर और उनके सारे डाक्युमेंट्स को एग्ज़ामिन करने के बाद हम कहेंगे कि आप स्टेटमेंट कौन सा कर सकते हैं, कौन सा नहीं कर सकते, कौन सा ठीक है और कौन सा ठीक नहीं है। यह हमारी सिचुएशन है। हमें कोई अखबार के जरिये हैसल कर दे कि आज अगर मुझे इजाजत नहीं मिली तो मैं नहीं दूंगा। Nobody, no hon. Member, no institution in the country, can cow down the Chair of this House to

do whatever he likes इसलिए सिचुयेशन इस वक्त यह है। इसके मुताबिक किसी को कुछ कहना है तो कह दीजिये। यह सिचुयेशन आज है। हमने अभी तक इजाजत नहीं दी है। हमें मिनिस्ट्री का जवाब नहीं आया। उसके बाद हम उनको लिखेंगे कि क्या सिचुयेशन है कितना आप दे सकते हैं और कितना नहीं दे सकते हैं। यह तथ्य की सिचुयेशन है।

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL (Bihar): Mr. Chairman, Sir, what you have said just now concerns this institution. It does not concern an individual Member. It concerns the dignity of this institution and I am saying this apropos Rule 241, which talks about personal explanation of any Member of the House. If I may be permitted to read it out...

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamil Nadu): Sir, has the Question Hour been suspended?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no.

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: 'A Member may' ...*(Interruptions)*... The hon. Chairman has said that let this matter be discussed...

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is reflection on all of us on the whole House, on the Chairman, on the Secretariat—that some people feel how we have been manipulated. I do not think we can be manipulated. This House cannot be manipulated, this institution cannot be manipulated, the Chairman cannot be manipulated, the Secretariat cannot be manipulated. The sovereignty and the dignity of this House are supreme. We are not suspending the Question Hour because this is the question of the dignity of this house, of the Members of this House and the behaviour of this House.  
*(Interruptions)*

श्री नरेन्द्र मोहन: मुझे आपकी व्यवस्था स्वीकार है। अब क्वेश्चन आवर... (व्यवधान)  
चलना चाहिए... (व्यवधान)

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: I am deeply obliged, Mr. Chairman, Sir. If I may be permitted to read rule 241, it says, "A Member may, with the permission of the Chairman, make a personal explanation ...*(Interruptions)*

श्री नरेन्द्र मोहन: आपने व्यवस्था दे दी है।

श्री सभापति: मैंने कहा है लेकिन...(व्यवस्था)

श्री के० रहमान खान (कर्णाटक): चेयरमैन ने एलाउ किया है...(व्यवधान)

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Sir, it says, "A Member may, with the permission of the Chairman, make a personal explanation although there is no question before the Council, but in this case—which is very important — no debatable matter may be brought forward, and no debate shall arise." So, when Mr. Jethmalani came to you for the purpose of giving his personal explanation, he was well aware of the contour of this rule. He very well knew that no debatable matter may be brought forward and no debate would arise. He knew that in the statement, which he had filed before you, he couldn't make any allegations that might be the subject-matter of a debate. And he told you, Sir, as you have informed, that he would give a statement much in advance. Yet, we are told, it was only the next morning, at 9.45, that he sent the statement, with 87 annexures, and all the annexures apparently —now we know it through the Press—related to matters which are not debatable matters. They cannot be discussed in this House. The hon. Member knew it very well. So, we have to look at the intent of the hon. Member. When he came to this House, he wanted to manipulate the proceedings of this House so that these matters, which cannot be discussed, are brought to public knowledge, to denigrate not only this institution, but also the other institutions of this country. That is what all the Members of this House are to be concerned with. You have also mentioned a very important fact, namely, that when he appended some documents with the statement, they included certain secret documents, which he himself had marked as 'secret documents'. Now, are we to believe that an hon. Minister, when he either resigned or was asked to demit office, carried with him copies of secret documents so that he could use them for manipulating this House for his personal purposes? Are we to believe that, Sir? We know very well that, *per se*, this is a very serious criminal offence not only under the Official Secrets Act, but also under other statutes of this country. The hon. Member is a leading lawyer. It is not that he is innocent. He was aware of all this and yet

he released those documents to the Members, and other institutions had, in fact, no chance to give an explanation on what he had said. So, the Government owes it to this country, apart from this House, to explain as to what they have done during the last 48 hours, after the resignation of the hon. Member, who was a Minister in their Government and who had placed secret documents, which ought not to have ever come before the public. The hon. Prime Minister is here; it is his duty, and I would request him, in fact, to give an explanation as to what the Government is thinking to do, as to what action it will take because, unless that is done, this House will not be satisfied. Apart from this, the dignity of the House must be maintained.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think what he has said is understandable. The situation, at present, is that we have sent all the points, which the hon. Member has made, to the Ministry of Law. We are expecting a reply. The Government's reaction will come in the Ministry of Law's reply. *(Interruptions)* Let me tell you, so far as...*(Interruptions)* If you want to ask any specific question ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Yes, Sir, they were all secret documents.

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): Under which rule? How can he ask specific questions?

MR. CHAIRMAN: The basic point is that we have...*(Interruptions)* sent a copy of those documents to the Government ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: It has been published in the press. ...*(Interruptions)* I am sorry to interrupt, but I want to make one point clear. ...*(Interruptions)* You are talking about the documents that came to you... *(Interruptions)* These are the very documents which has been published in today's newspapers. The Government knows about it. The Prime Minister knows about it. ...*(Interruptions)*. We want an explanation from the hon. Prime Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*



SHRI SURESH PACHOURI (Madhya Pradesh): There is a mention of the document. ...*(Interruptions)* जरा पूछ लीजिए अपनी पार्टी के .....*(व्यवधान)*

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Yes. ...*(Interruptions)*

\*श्री मोहम्मद सलीम (पश्चिमी बंगाल): यह तो सिर्फ सरकार ही बता सकती है कि कौन सा डाक्युमेंट कंपीडेंशियल है और कौन सा नहीं है। ...*(व्यवधान)*

श्री कपिल सिब्बल: यह हम नहीं बता सकते।...*(व्यवधान)*

\*श्री मोहम्मद सलीम: प्रधान मंत्री जी यहां पर हैं। A section of the Cabinet led by the Prime Minister ...*(Interruptions)* प्राइम मिनिस्टर मंत्री जी को एवार्ड करते हैं। यह उनका प्रेरोगेटिव है। वह किसी को बर्खास्त भी कर सकते हैं, रेजिगनेशन के लिए भी बोल सकते हैं। लेकिन हम जिस मोड़ पर पहुंचे हैं वहां व्यवस्था के ऊपर एक प्रश्न चिन्ह लग गया है। सिर्फ हमारी संस्था के ऊपर ही नहीं बल्कि व्यवस्था के ऊपर भी प्रश्न चिन्ह लग गया है। मंत्री जी को ओथ ऑफ सीक्रेसी दिया जाता है। अब उसके बाद वह डाक्युमेंट आपके पास भेजे हैं तो यह आपने अच्छा काम किया कि जिम्मेदारी के साथ उन्हें आर्थेटिकेट करने के लिए सरकार के पास भेज दिया। लेकिन जब प्रैस के पास जाता है, पब्लिक के पास जाता है.....*(व्यवधान)* अभी सदन यहां चल रहा है, प्रधान मंत्री जी यहां मौजूद हैं, प्रधान मंत्री जी कम से कम यह तो बताएं कि अभी अगर पूरा खुलासा नहीं भी कर सकते हैं तो यह जिम्मेदारी उनकी है कि वह यह बताएं कि इसे क्लैरीफाई करने के लिए, डाउट दूर करने के लिए कब तक यह स्टेटेमेंट लेकर आयेंगे?

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: I really fail to understand what kind of a statement you want from the Prime Minister? What has he got to do with this?

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: A person who is a Member of the Council... *(Interruptions)*.

\*श्री मोहम्मद सलीम: जो मैबर हमारे एक्सप्लेनशन देना चाह रहे थे रेजिगनेशन के बारे में उन्होंने अपने रेजिगनेशन के बाद प्रैस में, पब्लिक में जो स्टेटेमेंट दिया वह प्राइम मिनिस्टर पर एक्यूज करके दिया, तो अब प्राइम मिनिस्टर क्यों करेंगे? वह प्राइम मिनिस्टर के मंत्री हैं।

SHRI HANSRAJ BHARDWAJ (Madhya Pradesh): Sir, I want an

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\* Transliteration of the speech in Persian Script is available in the Hindi version of the Debate.

explanation. (*Interruptions*) He has made a serious allegation against the Prime Minister. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: He has not made any allegation against the hon. Prime Minister (*Interruptions*)

श्री मोहम्मद सलीम: हमारे चेयरमैन साहब अभी बोले हैं सीधे हाउस से ....(व्यवधान) सुनिए, चेयर से यह कहा गया है कि यह secret documents marked 'personal', secret and confidential' हैं। रेजिप्रेशन करने के बाद वह हमारे यहां सदन में भेजे हैं और आप कह रहे हैं कि सरकार कर रही है। जो तमाम डाक्यूमेंट्स और फाइल्स वे जो प्रैस में भेजे हैं या हमारे यहां भेजे हैं Those were all confidential, secret and personal document (*Interruptions*) Some back door manowuvering is going on. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: In the press it was stated: 'The Prime Minister has to choose between a no-nonsense Minister and a phiant Attorney-General' This is what was said in the press. ....(*Interruptions*) This no-nonsense Minister has taken some documents from the Government ...(*Interruptions*). The Prime Minister is here, still no statement is allowed to be made in this House. (*Interruptions*). What is the Government going to do about the secret documents that have been taken away? That is the crucial question. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN: ....after they have been submitted, Mr. Sibal should not drag the Prime Minister. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: The Government is squarely responsible for a previous, erstwhile Minister who took away the official documents which were secret. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU (Karnataka): I would like to know whether it is a free-for-all situation now. (*Interruptions*).

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\* Transliteration of the speech in persian script is available in the Hindi version of the Debate.

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: It is the Government which is helpless. *(Interruptions)*. We are not helpless. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Anyway, the Minister of Law is here. *(Interruptions)*. We had sent to the Ministry of Law our ...*(Interruptions)*. So, he can intervene.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): We had received a communication from the Secretariat yesterday and we shall, very shortly, in the next one hour or so send our response. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI HANSRAJ BHARDWAJ: Has he taken away your files? *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI ARUN JAITLEY: We are examining all those documents and we will be responding to it in an hour or so. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: In that case I would like to submit, let us wait for the reply from the Ministry, because this is a serious matter. After obtaining the reply from the law Ministry, if you feel satisfied that this matter can be taken up now, then it would be taken up. And till such time the House should be adjourned. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI P.N. SIVA (Tamil Nadu): He cannot say that.

श्री नरेन्द्र मोहन: सभापति जी, यह आप की व्यवस्था के विपरीत बात की जा रही है। विधि मंत्री जी ने स्पष्ट कर दिया है कि वह एक घंटे में आप को सारी जानकारी दे देंगे और एक घंटे के बाद अगर आप उचित समझें इस पर चर्चा करा लें। ...*(व्यवधान)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Arjun Singh. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ARJUN SINGH (Madhya Pradesh): Sir, I would like to

say one thing. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: It is up to the Chair whether Question Hour should be suspended or not. If the Chair decides to adjourn the House, we will not come in the way. But, please hear the viewpoints of other Members also because they have to put forth their own viewpoint. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: You should also speak.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Arjun Singh, do you want to say something?

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Let me complete, Sir. *(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let Mr. Arjun Singh speak first.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Okay, Sir.

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: Mr Chairman, Sir, I would like to draw the attention, and particularly the attention of the hon. Prime Minister. We are all, I can use the word, 'touched' by your concern to uphold the prestige and dignity of the House. We all agree with the sentiments expressed by you. If the Prime Minister had not been here, we could have adjusted with any other Minister. But, incidentally, he happens to be sitting in the House, at least he can share your concern. Silence on this matter will not help.

SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI (Uttar Pradesh): Silence is concern. *(Interruptions)*

श्री अर्जुन सिंह: खड़े होकर बोल दें न। ....(व्यवधान)...

SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI: He is as much concerned with the dignity of the House as Mr. Arjun Singh is, as everybody else is. When the Chairman expresses the concern, he echoes the sentiments of the House. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: This is a theory which you will regret having mentioned now. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI: This is not just a theory. Indirectly, you want everybody else to be involved ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: No. I do not want everybody to be involved. *(Interruptions)*. This Government wants to bunk the issue. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI: This Government is as much concerned with the dignity of the House as anybody else. *(Interruptions)* He will speak when there is a proper occasion. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: Are you the Attorney for the Prime Minister? *(Interruptions)*

SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI: I am exercising my right as a Member of this House. As Mr. Arjun Singh is speaking, so am I. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Sir, a senior Member like Mr. Chaturvedi getting up and speaking on behalf of the Prime Minister, this is something unacceptable. We have one of the most articulate Prime Ministers in this country. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI: Shri Arjun Singh is so concerned about the dignity of the House as if others are shorn of this concern. He is blaming the Prime Minister. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: I did not say that. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI: He is blaming the Prime Minister only because he has not expressed himself. Let the Minister for Law, Justice and Company Affairs expresses himself first. As and when the occasion arises, the Prime Minister will express himself. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: Are you speaking on behalf of the Prime Minister? *(Interruptions)*

SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI: Everybody is speaking. Six Members from the Congress Party are standing and four from the CPI (M) (*Interruptions*).

श्री संजय निरुपम: सर, आप की रुलिंग है कि क्युश्चन अवर सस्पेंड नहीं हुआ है, इसलिए क्युश्चन अवर चलना चाहिए। ....(व्यवधान)

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: You please designate Mr. Chaturvedi as the Attorney of the Prime Minister. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI: Like other Members, I am also articulating my viewpoint. (*Interruptions*) They are asking to suspend the Question Hour. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: Question Hour is a separate thing. (*Interruptions*)

श्री मोहम्मद सलीम: चेयरमैन साहब, कल भी ऐसा हुआ हाऊस में, आपने अलाऊ कर दिया बोलने के लिए लेकिन बोलने नहीं दिया गया। ....(व्यवधान)....

SHRI T.N. CHATURVEDI: The Question Hour should never be suspended. ...(*Interruptions*)...

SHRI ARJUN SINGH: I am not yielding ...(*Interruptions*)...

प्रधान मंत्री (श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी): सभापति महोदय, मैं समझता था कि यह मामला त्याग-पत्र देने वाले मंत्री और आपके बीच में है, लेकिन मुझे इसमें घसीटा जा रहा है। नियमों के अनुसार और उनका सिम्बल साहब ने उल्लेख किया कि त्याग-पत्र देने वाला मंत्री जिस सदन का सदस्य है, उसमें वक्तव्य दे सकता है। आपने संबंधित सदस्य को वक्तव्य देने के लिए कहा था, उनका नाम भी ऑर्डर-पेयर में आ गया। लेकिन, सर, आपने नियमों के अनुसार जब कसौटी पर कसकर देखा तो मुझे ऐसा लगता है कि आप इस नतीजे पर पहुंचे कि इस तरह का वक्तव्य सदन में नहीं हो सकता। अभी सीक्रेट डायुमेंट्स की बात उठाई गई है। यह गंभीर मामला है, लेकिन जो डायुमेंट्स छुपे हैं, वे सीक्रेट हैं या नहीं हैं, इसके लिए जांच करनी पड़ेगी और यही हमारा कानून मंत्रालय कर रहा है। एक घंटा इंतजार कीजिए, सारे तथ्य सामने आ जाएंगे।

SHRI KAPIL SIBAL: Thank you, very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think now we can continue with the Question Hour. Please let us take up the Question Hour.