

RAJYA SABHA

(1978)

Point of privilege

Alleged disrespect shown to the House by a Minister by leaving in the midst of a discussion on a matter relating to his Ministry.

Facts of the case and action taken by the House

On the 21st March, 1978, during the course of discussion on a Calling Attention matter regarding the reported ruthless lathi charge and use of tear-gas by the police on demonstrators at the Prime Minister's residence in New Delhi on the 19th March, 1978, the Minister of Home Affairs (Shri Charan Singh), who had intervened in the discussion, left the House while the matter was still being discussed. Shri Bhupesh Gupta, a member, while bringing it to the notice of the Chair, stated,¹ inter alia,¹ as follows:

".....Sir, the matter is under discussion. The Home Minister was replying to the questions that were being put to him. He has partly replied and suddenly I found that he got up in the midst of the discussion and left the House even without seeking your permission. Sir, this is a very arrogant attitude. May be he has got some urgent business, but he could have sought your permission. It is an insult to the House. Sir, I would like to have your observations on the conduct of the Home Minister in regard to this matter."

Some other members also supported Shri Bhupesh Gupta and sought to move a motion of censure against the Minister of Home Affairs.

2. The Leader of the House (Shri Lal K. Advani), while apologising to the House. Stated² inter alia as follows:--

".....practically all the members who were to speak from the various parties had spoken and the Home Minister himself had replied to all the points that had been raised. It was only when Mr. Shahi was speaking at that stage he said that Mr. Patil (Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs) was there, he had been dealing with it right from the start, and from that point of view he went away. And if this is sought to be made issue, I feel, as the Leader of the House and also as member of the Government, it is my duty to see the something that has been done is without any disrespect to the House without the slightest disregard, disrespect or discourtesy. If there were any questions left, I am sure he would have been here. It would be fair for me to say that there is not the slightest intention of giving any disrespect to the House or to the Chair....Nevertheless, if the members feel that disrespect has been committed, I on behalf of my Government and party apologise and express my regrets."

3. The matter was, thereafter, closed.

1. R.S. Deb., dt. 1-3-1978. cc. 126-27.

2. Ibid., cc. 136-37.