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Speech of Shri NARENDRASINGH MAHIDA, Secretary,
Swatantra Party, Lok Sabha Group - delivered on
10th May 1962 - on the General Budget.

Shri Mahida (Anand): Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the outset I would like to clear some misgiving about myself and my party. It is rather strange in this modern world that the Maharajas want to be commoners and the commoners want to be Maharajas. So, please do not be mistaken; I am a commoner since 1947, and do not have a misgiving about my turban or my dress.

Mr. Speaker: Every turbaned man is not a Maharaja!

Shri Mahida: But everybody takes me as a Maharaja. The real Maharajas want to be commoners. That is my complaint.

The Minister of Finance (Shri Morarji Desai): He was not a Maharaja at any time, there is no question of that.

Shri Mahida: Well, I am associated with the Maharajas.

But probably the treasury benches have more Maharajas than we have. Anyway, I am a commoner and I should like to give some facts about myself in the beginning, so that there may not be any misunderstanding and everybody may understand me properly and the party which I represent.

Mr. Speaker: That misunderstanding is removed. That was created because of the name beginning with the word "Maharaja". Now everybody knows.

Shri Mahida: Everybody takes me as a Maharaja. I am not a Maharaja at all. I was never one.

Sir, I represent a party about which there is a lot of misunderstanding that we are opposed to the Plan; that we are opposed to the Budget and so on. I think that, if my friends on the opposite side - on the Treasury Benches read our manifesto and our literature - they will find that there are many things common between us, except two or three points, one of which is about

socialism.

The talk of socialism is going on everywhere, and everybody talk of socialism. People have been made to understand that the Swatantra Party is opposed to progress. Well, Sir, I was a student of Harold Laski and as such how could I misunderstand socialism? I am opposed to the enforcement of 'socialism' to my country which is a western concept. I desire to change it, from socialism to humanism. I say that India is the greatest humanist country in the world. When we feed ants and give them flour, when we give dogs and cows food, when we even feed sparrows and crows, when it is such a humanist country, how can we ignore our poor common people who are dying for food? Sir, we all talk about the common man.

Even the rich Members of this House, talk about the common man. I represent the common man. I would like to draw attention particularly to the policy which has been adopted by the party in power towards the agriculturists. The Hon. Shri Deshmukh, who just spoke before me happens to represent the agriculturist classes also. I now refer about co-operative farming. We are not opposed to all co-operative movement - as it is being made out. I have been going about the villages for the last 17 years and mostly on foot, in my Gujarat area. I have come across many Cooperative farming societies, which are working at losses and the people have been clamouring to get out of the societies. They cannot yet find a remedy. Our Prime Minister has been saying that Co-operative Farming is not compulsory. I have many instances where villagers have approached us and begged us to show a way how they could get out of these co-operative societies. I beg to bring to your notice that the late illustrious Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad of Baroda in his State, started cooperative farming some 30 years back. When I visited a co-operative farming society of previous Baroda State couple of months back, the people informed us that the Baroda State had made rules that

the co-operative experiment may be tried, but not at the cost of the people. All the cost of the experiment should be borne by the treasury. Since the resumption of the present Government, now, the experiment is being made at the expense of the people. That is our objection. We are not opposed to any experiment in this country, but we must learn and change our ways from experience.

Our Prime Minister has said many a times that the Swatantra party belongs to a past age and that it is 300 years old. He can say anything as he likes. We are not so old as that. We were also, in the past, in the Congress. I was for 30 years in the Congress. What has made me leave the Congress is a different matter. The Congress policy as it is based today has more learnings to my friends on my right, the communists and that is our fundamental difference with the Congress. We are opposed to this Communist policy in the Congress - Statism and its ways, seeds of which are being laid today by the Congress and which will lead our country to total disaster. My Hon. friends the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister, whom I know personally and respect them, are good thinkers and planners. Their budget is also not bad. Somebody put it the other day that it is 'a Swatantra budget'. I can take compliment on that, if a Member of the Rajya Sabha has made such a reference. Of course, I can invite the Finance Minister to join us. We shall support him.

Shri Morarji Desai: What else could you do?

Shri Mahida: The Plan is, of course, on the pattern of the conditions prevailing in our country. We are all in agreement that the country must be brought out of the present poverty. To remove poverty, to look after about 400 million people with an additional 5 million mouths to feed every year, and to improve their standard of living, we must have a sound policy. On that, there is no disagreement among all the major parties in the country. The difference is only in the ways. In our enthusiasm we are trying to rob the rich and make them poor.

It is this very way that we are opposed. By looting on the the rich and making them poor, we cannot feed all the entire people in this country. So, my only plea is, why do you kill the hen which lays golden eggs. I think the major part of the tax-payers are richer elements. I do not represent them. Tax them as much as you like. But, do not kill them. Let them survive. If they want to travel in the first class, let them travel in the first class. Tax them heavily. I am not opposed to that. We say, as commoners, as we are all now in this country, there is no distinction, what-so-ever, you can take away all the privy purses. I have no objection to that. I do not get one; nor have I any claim to one. Now, if the Princes are having privy purses, it is for the Princes and this House to decide among themselves what they should do. I particularly mention this as it is hammered at us, as if we represent the Princes. We do not represent the Princes. We represent the common people. Our turban should not be misunderstood, because, I can show my friends on the opposite side that thousands of people like me, wear turbans in my area - people who are farmers, who are mazdoors. to cover the losses the Government had ^{incurred} Our socialist pattern is only a pattern. If there is real socialism in this country, I am sure, my richer friends on the Treasury Benches would not have remained there. in order This socialist pattern, I consider, is a farce on our country. In the name of socialism, you are showing something to look forward to the poor people, but, in return, they get nothing. Yes; they have got some roads somewhere and some electricity. Their lot is not improved. If we go to the villages, there is a cry for education now. There is a cry for better standard of living. How to improve them? We are opposed to the private priority given to the heavy steel industries. We say that more money is spent on heavy industries than on education.

We are of the opinion that if Frezura has to succeed in this country, if democracy has to be maintained in this country, let private enterprises also be there. Let them also live.

in this country. A sum of Rs. 520 crores has been spent on the steel plants put together. While Rs. 135 crores will be the entire expenditure in the Five Year Plan on primary education in the country. Steel is important no-doubt. But, I say, education is more important. What things should we plan first? We say let us have heavy industries too in this country. But, priority should be given to education and agriculture. I plead with the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister that for the sake of heavy industries, agriculture should not be neglected. Nor should education be neglected.

About the controversy of the private sector and the public sector, we do admit that we have a mixed economy- As for the ~~results~~ performance of the public sector, if I may point out, this is what has been published. One of the Hon'ble Members did say that the Swatantra party would not miss such an opportunity and I would not.

"Hindustan Shipyard is not able to sell the ships because ships are available at a lower price from abroad. The result is that in order to offer a competitive price, the shipyard has to sell ships at a price which does not even cover the cost. In order to cover the losses the Government had to pay a heavy subsidy from year to year. The total amount of subsidy received by the shipyard by 1960-61 was Rs-456 lakhs, which indicates the burden the taxpayer has to bear in order to enable the State enterprise to remain in existence. There are various other enterprises like the Sindri Fertiliser Factory, the Hindustan Aircraft etc. which are also making very heavy losses and yet ^{we} are continuing them with these losses. If the experiment succeeds, we shall be pleased to welcome it. But, with the facts that are being presented to us today, it is being said that the public sector would ultimately go over to the private sector. We say that the public sector may function, but, let the private sector also function. Let there be a healthy competition. We are of the opinion that if freedom has to succeed in this country, if democracy has to be maintained in this country, let private enterprise also be there. Let them also live -

and let them choose their own way of life, rather than have things forced upon them in the name of socialism.

I must also admire our Government for opening the Ashok Hotel. What is more necessary in this country an Ashoka Hotel or implements for farming ? What is more necessary in this country air-conditioning machines, water-coolers or something else ? We deal in such luxuries and yet we talk about socialism. When people in my region clamour for water in the summers, the Government says there is shortage of money. Yet we see new water-coolers established in the Government Houses and in the Government offices.

The Minister of Finance (Shri Morarji Desai) ; They are more used by your friends.

Shri Mahida: We see also air-conditioning machines in these places, when people are burning under the sun, and putting in hard labour for their livelihood. While our Hon'ble Ministers talk to us, or rather teach us, to have simpler ways of living. This will not do now in this country. We shall not tolerate these things. We the agriculturists and the common people shall not tolerate this kind of higher living and simple talking. I should say that it should be quite the reverse of that. We still have huge Rashtrapati Bhavan and vast staff to maintain it ; body-guards, horses, carriages and canopy - all the show of the Britishers. And yet you tell us to live simply, when we have no food to eat; when we have no cloth to wear ; and you ask us to tighten our belts. For whom shall we tighten our belts ?

Mr. Speaker : The Hon'ble Member's remarks may be addressed to the Chair.

Shri Mahida: I am addressing you, Sir, but, at the same time, my eyes also go over to the other side. I look to you mostly, but, at the same time, my purpose has been to convince the other side also. I am sorry, if I have addressed the other side directly.

We get rare occasions to speak. So, my plea has been, and I particularly want to emphasise this, that the charge on the Swatantra Party, that it represents the rich is baseless and false. We shall prove this in time to come, that it is utterly vindictive. If there is no harm when the Congress invites Maharajas and richer classes in its fold, well, we shall also invite Maharajas and the ordinary classes to our fold. Let them all come. Let there be a good

healthy competition between the Congress and the Swatantra Party. A time will come in this country, when I think the Socialists and the Communists will have to join or support the Congress and the others like the Jan Sangh, the Hindu Mahasabha and such others will have to support the Swatantra Party. We want such a time to come, when there will be two parties only. Then only an alternative Government will be possible.

Shri S.M. Banerjee : That will never come.

Shri Mahida: If such a time does not come, it is a sad thing ; we shall remain divided in this House and in the country. If it is possible, it is good. We shall play the game well. If it is not possible, we exist as we are, But, nevertheless, let me at the same time explain that we are behind our nation ; we are behind the Government when they are fighting the Chinese or opposing the Pakistanis. We have also thus a national policy.

Shri Ram Sewak Yadav (Bara Banki): You ~~always~~ remain behind, and still you want to remain behind.

Mr. Speaker: Order, Order.

Shri Mahida: We are not anti-nationals or reactionaries, as is being put by others. If we were reactionaries, then the Congress would not have harboured us for all these years-. We are opposed to Statism, the control of all aspects of ordinary life being taken in the hands of the Congress Government. That is our main contention. Of course, we respect the Congress. In turn we also desire to see that the compliments are returned. We still have affection for the old Congress. Because it was mainly the old Congress which was instrumental in bringing Independence to this country. And they have done a lot of good too for all of us, otherwise we would not have been sitting in this House as we are doing ~~today~~ now. Let there be no misunderstanding on that point - that we are trying to run down the Congress unnecessarily or that we are against the Congress totally. We are with all nationalist forces in this country,

I have my individual opinions too. I am personally opposed to those who further try to divide our country into north and south or into other regions. I am also personally opposed to those who quarrel over languages. I am also personally opposed to those who -

quarrel over languages. I am also personally opposed to those who quarrel on rivers and hills, boundaries, quarrel for reservoir and lakes sites, and make petty affairs of this country. Of course, politically, if the Congress and the Muslim League can join hands, then, Sir, politically, the Swatantra leaders also may have to join hands with others. I have no quarrel about these election arrangements. But my main contention is that the Swatantra Party is a nationalist party of the first order and second to none. There should not be any doubt about it. It should not be made to appear, that it is full of reactionaries. It should not be made the laughing-stock, inside or outside the House. In times to come, we shall see what progress the Swatantra party makes.

But, now fundamentally, talking about the General Budget, I congratulate the Finance Minister on giving a little relief here and there, as for instance, relief given in freight rates for transport of furnace oil, so badly required in my region - owing to coal shortage. I would further request him, however, to reconsider the tax levied on tobacco and tea. Although I do not consume tea or tobacco and it does not affect me personally, I must state that Gujarat is a tobacco-growing area. About 22 per cent of tobacco in this country is grown in Gujarat. The richness or the wealth that we see in Kaira District of Gujarat for the last twenty years is also on account of growth of tobacco. So, I hope that the Finance Minister will reconsider about the tobacco taxes, and help these people to consume piris or cigarettes. There is a similar case in regard to tea also. Fortunately or unfortunately, the people in Gujarat consume greater amount of tea than other States. So, a remedy may be given to them by concessions on tea and tobacco whereby they may not be affected much.

The other day, I had pleaded for the third class passengers, and I repeat that the needs of the common-man should be considered more. His needs for education, for agriculture etc. should be heard more than they are being heard in this House, rather than the preference given to matters of industries alone. That is my humble submission.