

Congressmen clash in Rajya Sabha

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THE Rajya Sabha today witnessed an unprecedented rumpus in the Congress Party when two of its senior members clashed bitterly towards the close of the resumed debate on the controversial Hazari report.

The clash came most unexpectedly after Mr. Arjun Arora, a trade unionist from Kanpur, had made certain remarks against his party colleague, Mr. Babubhai Chinai, a business man from Bombay.

The clash of personalities soon developed into one of ideologies with Mr. Arora receiving unsolicited support from the left Opposition throughout the 40-minute wrangle.

Mr. Chinai's case was also fought by some of his party men but the Vice-Chairman, Mr. Akbar Ali Khan, was unable to make up his mind for a long time whether a word used by Mr. Arora was unparliamentary or not.

NET RESULT

He called for the record but they did not conform to what Mr. Arora claimed to have stated. Thereupon the Vice-Chairman ordered the immediate expunction of the remarks in question and refused to allow any more points of order to be raised.

But that was no happy end to an unhappy episode. The SSP member, Mr. Raj Narain, lodged his protest against the Chair's ruling and asked Mr. Arora to repeat those remarks. Otherwise, he offered to do that.

Earlier, Mr. Arora refused to withdraw his remarks when a suggestion to that effect was made by Mr. A. M. Tariq, another Congress member. Mr. Arora curtly replied he had not heard Mr. Tariq.

BALANCED APPROACH

The net result of the uproar was that Mr. Arora, who shares the honours evenly with Mr. Chandrasekhar for bringing the Hazari report for discussion in the House, could not continue with his speech that he had just begun with a criticism of Mr. Chinai's sympathy for and support to Birlas.

The day's debate itself was less vehement than yesterday's. A majority of the speakers today pleaded for a

balanced approach to the issues raised by Dr. Hazari in his report. Many saw no point in "Birla-baiting" when the system of licensing itself was defective. Fewer were the demands for bank nationalisation or high-power parliamentary inquiry into licences issued to Birlas.

Mr. Dahyabhai Patel (Swa.) felt that the Congress should not have brought the report for discussion in the House because the malpractices mentioned therein were the result of Congress policies. In his view, the discussion had been raised only because Birlas had worked against the Congress in some States.

RIGID STAND OPPOSED

Mrs. Yashodhara Reddy (C.) could not understand the "Birlaphobia" of some members. She read out extracts from Dr. Hazari's book on the corporate private sector to point

out that the author was not against monopolies under all conditions.

His views on monopolies were qualified, and even his report on industrial licensing had been prepared under severe limitations. She, therefore, saw no reason for taking up any rigid stand on the issues raised in the report.

Mr. Suresh Desai (C.) said nearly 9,000 industrial licences were issued during the period taken up for study by Dr. Hazari. Of these, only 375 went to Birlas and that too in the form of approvals. How could this cause any foreclosure of capacity, he asked? At a time when this group was being invited by foreign countries to set up industries there, he regretted that it should be maligned within this country.

The Minister will reply to the debate tomorrow.

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