

Open University Bill discussion postponed

By A Staff Reporter

Deputy Speaker Humayun Khan Panni Tuesday evening postponed discussion on the Open University Bill, 1992, following a three-hour unscheduled debate over the alleged procedural lacuna in the bill.

The Deputy Speaker's decision that came after strong arguments and counter arguments from the Opposition and Treasury bench members, apparently created resentment among the Treasury bench members, but drew cheers from the Opposition members.

The alleged procedural lacuna that President's recommendations have not been procured for the bill that involved expenditures from the public exchequer was first pointed out by Awami League member Jubed Ali halfway through the discussion on the bill Monday night. The discussion on the bill then was suspended abruptly by the deputy speaker.

State Minister for Law and Justice Barrister Aminul Huq at the sag end of the debate

could not convince the Deputy Speaker when he had quoted from Kaul's parliamentary practice that president's permission could also be procured even during the consideration of a bill.

The issue was again raised by Awami League member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim Tuesday and questioned the va-

lidity of the bill, as procedures required under the Constitution and Rules of Procedures of the Jatiya Sangsad had not been followed in connection with the introduction of the bill which was moved by Education Minister Barrister Jamir Uddin Sircar.

The argument of Sheikh Selim was supported by Awami League member Sudhangshu Sekhar Halder NDP member Salahuddin Kader Chowdhury, Jatiya Party member Advocate Fazle Rabbi, Ebadur Rahman, Chowdhury, Awami League member, Jubed Ali, Ganotantri Party member Suranjit Sengupta and Deputy Leader of the Opposition Abdus Samad Azad.

They claimed that the way the bill had been introduced was contrary to constitutional provision and rules of procedures. They demanded withdrawal of the bill and its fresh introduction.

Mr. Salahuddin Kader Chowdhury raised another question that no substantial motion should have been introduced.

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duced in the House by the Treasury bench before disposal of the no-confidence motion now pending before the House.

Mr. Suranjit Sengupta alleged that the Education Minister had practiced fraud up on the House by submitting a copy of the president's recommendation to the bill Tuesday. The allegation was later strongly protested by Barrister Sircar and Mr. Sengupta withdrew his remarks. The Education Minister said he had procured recommendation of the President to the bill on July 21, 1992, ten days ahead of the day on which the bill was introduced in the House. Barrister Sircar said he had already submitted a copy of the president's recommendation to the Parliamentary Secretariat.

The Education Minister lashed at Mr. Salahuddin Kader Chowdhury and Mr. Sengupta. Mr. Chowdhury, however later made a counter attack on Barrister Sircar.

Awami League member To-fael Ahmed suggested that the Education Minister should accept the mistake and withdraw the bill to introduce a fresh bill.

Commerce Minister M.K. Anwar argued that since the Open University Bill did not involve expenditures from the public exchequer the recommendation from the President for the bill was not necessary.

Workers Party member Rashed Khan Menon said the Commerce Minister's argument was contrary to the statement of the mover of the bill since he (mover) had sought recommendation from the President for the bill.

State Minister for Law and Justice Barrister Aminul Huq said recommendation of the President for the bill was very much there. But the question is whether that had been mentioned in the bill. "There can be mistakes. But any mistake or omission can be corrected even after the adoption of a bill under Rule 92 of the Rules of Procedures," he said.

Barrister Huq quoted from the Kaul to prove Mr. Salahuddin Chowdhury's

stantive motion wrong. He said the Open University Bill was introduced in the House well before the no-confidence motion.

Jatiya Party member Moudud Ahmed felt the Treasury bench should not suffer from "egoism" to accept any mistake. He admitted that the Opposition had also committed mistake by not raising objection to the bill at the time of its introduction pointing out its procedural lacuna.

Deputy Leader of the House Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury said the recommendation of the President and the Prime Minister had been obtained from July 15 and 21 respectively.