

On Monday September 26, 1955, the Hon'ble Mr. M. C. Chagla, Chief Justice, and Mr. Justice Tendolkar, presided in the First Court where the members of the Bar had assembled.

The Hon'ble Mr. M. C. Chagla, Chief Justice, addressing the members of the Bar said :

The Advocate General, Government Pleader, and members of the Bar. We are all very deeply grieved at the death of Mr. Ratanlal Ranchhoddas. His name associated with that of Mr. Dhirajlal Thakore is a household word and many generations of lawyers have known that name and respected it. Gentlemen, the Judges are always indebted to the members of the Bar for the assistance they give in Court, but there is another important kind of assistance which also the Judges get and that is from those who have written text books and elucidated the law, and I think there is hardly any Judge in the State of Bombay and perhaps in India who is not indebted to Mr. Ratanlal, again associated with Mr. Dhirajlal, for the text books they have written which we constantly use and which are constantly referred to. Mr. Ratanlal not only devoted himself to law and dedicated himself to law, but he was a man who lived a full and rich life. He had travelled all over the world, he had seen many institutions, met with many persons and gained rich experience. It was always a pleasure to talk with him when he would relate the rich anecdotes in which he had taken part. I vividly remember that only last April when he gave his usual annual dinner, where we were all present, that he seemed to be full of life and I told him : "I think you have many more years of useful life before you." I did not then realise that the cruel hand of death would knock him down and he would pass away from our midst. The institution of the Bombay Law Reporter which was started by Mr. Ratanlal and Mr. Dhirajlal is an institution unique in India. There is no Law Reporter which has such an official complexion as the Bombay Law Reporter has in this State, and both Mr. Ratanlal and Mr. Dhirajlal always aimed at perfection in the publishing of this Law Report, and the Bombay Law Reporter is cited in these Courts with the same authority as the official Law Reports.

Gentlemen, on this sad occasion, our hearts must go out to the son of Mr. Ratanlal and the other near relations he has left behind. But our hearts must particularly go out to Mr. Dhirajlal Thakore. I do not know of any association in legal history which is more unique than the association between Ratanlal and Dhirajlal. They have been friends for 72 years, not only friends in law, but intimate friends. Well, somebody has got to go before and Mr. Dhirajlal's consolation is this that he was by the bedside of Mr. Ratanlal till the end. Many of us when we pass away only leave a memory, sometimes a recollection, of some kind act done. But Mr. Ratanlal has left behind him a great institution, the institution of the Bombay Law Reporter, and a large number of text books, with which his name will always be associated.

Mr. M. P. Amin, Advocate General said :

My Lord, I fully associate myself with all that your Lordship has said regarding Mr. Ratanlal. He was among the senior lawyers at present in Bombay. He completed 83 years and was running his 84th year and except for the last few days before his death he was actually at his table doing his usual work in connection with the Bombay Law Reporter. He was born in 1872, and started practising at a time when most of us were not even born. During those days of stalwart lawyers and in spite of all the difficulties, he had a good practice. His practice was confined to the Appellate Side, he appeared in many important cases even in those days. The Bombay Law Reporter was started in 1899, and, though it made a small beginning, today in 1955 it is a Law Journal which has acquired considerable importance and usefulness to the members of the Bar. Mr. Dhirajlal, his life-long and sincere friend, joined him in the publication of the Bombay Law Reporter, and both of them actually worked to make the Bombay Law Reporter a complete success. Latterly, Mr. Ratanlal's son joined them as sub-editor and with the joint effort of the three, today we find that the Bombay Law Reporter is a Journal which gives very useful and valuable information. The Journal section in particular is very interesting. Lawyers

not only know what the law is so far as the decided cases are concerned, but they also get general and practical knowledge of law in its various aspects. On account of his merits Mr. Ratanlal was enrolled on the Original Side in 1926, though we know that thereafter also his activities were confined to writing text books and editing the Bombay Law Reporter. All the books which he and Mr. Dhirajlal have published have not only been useful to the members of the Bar, but they are very useful even to those who appear for law examinations. These books contain a clear and lucid exposition of law classified under important heads and yet brought in a narrow compass. Some of the books that he has written, particularly the Law of Crimes, even the busiest practitioner reads with great advantage. So far as the Bombay Law Reporter is concerned, we are looking forward every fortnight to see the new number in order to see what new cases have been reported. The method of drawing the head note is indeed wonderful. One has only to read the head note in any particular reported case in order to find all the information that one wants. Even if one studies merely the head note he knows all that is decided in the case.

My Lord, Mr. Ratanlal was indeed of a very amiable nature. Even though he was so far advanced in age he had a kind word to say for even a junior lawyer. He was well informed and well read. Everyone who came in contact with him indeed looked up to him with great respect. We wished he had lived for some more years in order to contribute further to the success of the Bombay Law Reporter. Anyway God had destined otherwise. May his soul rest in peace!

Mr. H. M. Choksi, the Government Pleader, said :

My Lords, I beg to associate with everything my Lord the Chief Justice has said and the Hon'ble Advocate General has said. Mr. Ratanlal has died at a ripe age of 83 surrounded by his children, grand-children, and great-grand-children. To him nothing could be more happier than a death of that kind. He has left memories which are very rich. He has endeared himself to everyone who came into his contact and left a name and reputation which is the envy of the Bar. He started his practice in 1895. The Bombay Law Reporter was started in 1899. Then began his commentary on the Indian Penal Code, Law of Torts and Law of Evidence, and ultimately it enlarged into the famous book "The Law of Crimes" which is of help in all Courts of law all over India. His has been a unique career. He has travelled widely, imbibed great culture, and his friendship with Mr. Dhirajlal has been phenomenally unique. Such a friendship is not known even among two brothers and they together have carried on the work for the last 60 years very intimately more than brothers, and have carried the burden of editing the Bombay Law Reporter, and also writing and publishing books on law. Our deepest sympathy go to the family of the deceased. May his soul rest in peace!

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