

ADDRESS TO PROVISIONAL PARLIAMENT—5 FEBRUARY 1952

Session	—	Fifth Session
President of India	—	Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Prime Minister of India	—	Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru
Speaker, Provisional Parliament	—	Shri G.V. Mavalankar

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT,

We meet here today under unusual circumstances. Even as this Parliament assembles a new Parliament is coming into being at the bidding and by the choice of the people of India. The governance of this great country will be the high destiny and charge of this new Parliament as soon as it is fully constituted. But we cannot wait till then as the Constitution of India demands that there should not be too great an interval between two meetings of Parliament. There are also urgent and important matters which have to be disposed of before the financial year ends. We are meeting here, therefore, to consider these important matters and, more particularly, to pass votes on account authorizing expenditure for a part of the next financial year as also to vote Supplementary Grants for current financial year. My Government will bring forward such other urgent or non-controversial matters as can be disposed of in this session of Parliament. In the circumstances it would not be proper, and it is not the intention of my Government, to bring forward controversial matters whose consideration can be postponed. It will be for the new Parliament to consider all such legislation.

Two years ago our Constitution came into effect and the Republic of India came into being. In accordance with this Constitution, general elections all over this vast country have been held on a scale unprecedented in the history of democratic institutions. The pledge which the people of India took has been fulfilled and an act of faith has justified itself. Although the general elections are not over yet, I should like to express my appreciation of the efficient manner in which this vast undertaking was organised and carried through, by officials and non-officials, acting in close co-operation, and to pay my tribute to the scores of millions of our voters who justified the faith that was reposed in them by voting in a peaceful and orderly manner. I am particularly gratified at the keen and intelligent interest that our womenfolk have displayed in these elections all over the country by exercising their right to vote freely. This is a happy augury for the peaceful and co-operative progress of our Republic, based on the strength and good sense of our people.

While India has faced this great task successfully, I regret that the general state of tension in the world continues and there have been conflicts and outbreaks of violence in some countries with whom our relations are friendly. I must express my sorrow at the recent developments in Egypt, which have led to much destruction and unhappiness, and express my earnest hope that the problems that face that country will be solved peacefully and in accordance with the legitimate aspirations of the peoples concerned.

On the last occasion when I addressed you, I pointed out that the most significant feature of the age we live in is the emergence of the countries of Asia. That great upsurge continues and it is not confined to Asia but spreads to other countries whose people have yet to attain freedom. In Tunisia that same urge for freedom animates the people and our sympathies must naturally go to them. I earnestly hope that the spirit of the age, as exemplified in these movements, will not be hampered and will find fulfilment by peaceful methods. I should like to welcome on your behalf and mine the emergence of the independent State of Libya.

In Nepal this new freedom has had to contend again many difficulties and some people have been unwise enough to try to endanger the stability of the State. Fortunately they met with failure, and the Government of Nepal is determined to pursue its course of progressive reform. The bonds that tie India to Nepal were strengthened by a visit of the Prime Minister of Nepal to my Prime Minister to discuss many matters of mutual concern. As a result of this visit and the conversations that took place, decisions were taken to the advantage of both countries.

A Cultural Delegation, consisting of eminent men in science, literature and the arts, from our great neighbour, China, paid a welcome visit to India and were the guests of our Government. The Delegation toured extensively in India and thus added to the knowledge of each country of the other, which is so necessary to the growth of mutual understanding. It is my Government's intention to send a Cultural Delegation to China to convey to the people of China the good wishes of our people and their desire for friendship.

I am glad to inform you that we have concluded Treaties of Friendship with Iran, Turkey and Indonesia. An air link with Afghanistan has been established. Diplomatic relations at Legation level have been established with the Philippines; and the Indian Legation in Bangkok and the Thai Legation in New Delhi have been raised to Embassy level. We have welcomed in India Air Force Missions from Indonesia and Thailand. Negotiations for Air Agreements are taking place with Iran and Afghanistan. My Government hopes to conclude a Peace Treaty with Japan soon.

It has been my Government's earnest desire and consistent policy to cultivate friendly and peaceful relations with all countries and I am glad to say that policy is bearing fruit. I regret however that no solution has yet been found for the problem of Indians in South Africa. The United Nations have again considered this problem and appointed a Three-Man Commission to help settle this problem, which is of vital importance not only to India and Pakistan but also to the world. Any policy which is based on racial intolerance and domination cannot be accepted or succeed in the modern world and must lead to conflict, which might endanger the peace of the world.

The Kashmir issue is still being considered by the United Nations. I hope that this problem, which has already lasted for over four years, will find a final solution soon. That solution can only be in accordance with the will of the people of Jammu and Kashmir State. I am glad that a Constituent Assembly, representative of the people, has been elected and will soon commence the Work of framing a new Constitution for the State.

The food situation in the country is still causing us grave concern owing to the failure of rains over a large part of Western India and some areas in other provinces. Steps have been taken to import food from abroad. The 'Grow More Food' campaign is yielding good results and it is proposed to continue it intensively in selected areas. My Government is appointing a committee to enquire into the working of the Grow More Food campaign and to recommend comprehensive measures for its effective working and intensification.

The general economic situation of the country shows some improvement. The wholesale price index fell from 457.5 in April 1951 to 433.1 in December 1951. There has been a substantial increase in production in a number of industries, e.g. cotton textiles, jute, steel, coal, salt, sugar, cement, electrical goods, rubber goods, machine tools, small tools and diesel engines. There has been considerable improvement in the supply of cloth for internal consumption. There has also been an increase in foreign trade, but the balance of trade is still unfavourable to us and there is need for ensuring better adjustment between imports and exports.

Some new industries have been started, such as Linoleum, automatic looms, carding machines and aluminium powder. Sources of sulphur have been located and efforts are being made to make India self-sufficient in sulphur. The construction of a Machine Tools Factory and a Telephone Cables Factory has begun. A Penicillin Factory is being constructed; meanwhile a Penicillin Bottling Plant has been set up in Bombay*.

Agreements have been arrived at with some foreign companies for the establishment of Oil Refineries in India.

* Now known as Mumbai.

The great Fertiliser Factory at Sindri has started production and it is hoped that it will be in full production by the middle of this year. This will be of great help to our agriculture and is expected to bring about a considerable saving in foreign currency.

The management of the Visakhapatnam Shipbuilding Yard is being taken over by a new company in which Government will have the controlling interest. The foundation stone of the new Port at Kandla in Kutch was recently laid. This port, which is likely to grow rapidly in importance, will serve the whole of northern India.

I welcome the Agreement with the USA for aid amounting to 50 million dollars for development projects. I should like to express my special gratification that these projects are particularly meant to encourage food production and the development of community schemes such as Nilokheri, Faridabad and Etawah. The Agreement with the Ford Foundation for rural development is also very welcome.

Progress has been made for the welfare of labour. The Plantations Labour Act and the Minimum Wages Act are being implemented and action is being taken for legal protection against forced labour. A beginning has been made in the implementation of the Employees State Insurance Act. The Agricultural Labour Enquiry is nearing completion and action is being taken in some States for the fixation of minimum wages in agriculture. The Industrial Housing Scheme is being extended to Part B and C States. The Employees Provident Fund Ordinance, which was promulgated last November, is an important measure for providing assistance to the industrial worker in his old age and to the family in the event of premature death of the bread-winner.

I am glad to note that an agreement has been arrived at with Railwaymen for the setting up of a permanent negotiating machinery for dealing with disputes. The welfare of the country demands that our transport system must work efficiently and without interruption or obstruction and that any dispute should be settled by friendly negotiation. There has been a considerable improvement in the transport situation in the country. The part played by railways in the movement of foodgrains to deficit areas has been very creditable.

Since its publication a few months ago, the draft Five-Year Plan has been widely discussed throughout the country and many comments and criticisms have been received. The Planning Commission is giving careful consideration to the suggestions made and is now engaged in drawing up its final report which it hopes to complete in about three months time. My Government feel greatly encouraged by the wide interest aroused among all sections of the people and are confident that the people of the country

will participate fully in the implementation of the Plan, so that the country's human and material resources might be utilised to the fullest extent and the maximum contribution made towards the solution of our economic problems.

As I have already stated, this session of Parliament will undertake only urgent or non-controversial legislation. This essential legislation will include such Ordinances as have been issued after the last session of Parliament and the Presidential and Vice Presidential Election Bill. The Punjab Proclamation which was approved by Parliament on the 9th August 1951 expires after six months. It is necessary to renew this till such time as the new Punjab Assembly meets.

This is the fifth and the last occasion when I am addressing this Parliament. My first address to you was delivered a little over two years ago, on the 31st January 1950, soon after the Proclamation of the Republic of India. These two years of this young Republic of ours, to whose service we are pledged, have been full of travail and difficult problems. You have faced these problems with courage and the work you have done is now a part of the history of India. Some of you will come back to this historic chamber which is so full of memories, and some of you may not return. But whether your labour lies in Parliament or elsewhere, it is dedicated to the service of this country. It is only in this spirit of dedication and with the memory of the Father of the Nation to inspire us that we can be worthy of the high destiny that beckons us. Let us always remember the message of him who brought us our freedom, the message of unity and goodwill among all the people of India, of the abolition of class distinctions and of those based on birth, caste or religion, of the raising of those who have been suppressed or disinherited, and of the evolution of a peaceful, co-operative India which gives opportunities of progress to all her citizens. A chapter of our history ends and a new chapter will soon begin. May wisdom and tolerance of spirit be with you and the service of our Motherland ever inspire your efforts.