

LOK SABHA DEBATES

Vol. IX

First day of the Fourth Session on Eleventh Lok Sabha

No. 1

LOK SABHA

Thursday, February 20, 1997/Phalgun 1, 1918 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Forty-Seven minutes past Twelve of the Clock.

[Mr. SPEAKER in the Chair]

NATIONAL ANTHEM

(The National Anthem was played)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I welcome the hon. Members to the Budget Session.

.....(Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA (Ferozabad) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the officers sitting in the gallery did not stand while the National Anthem was being played. It is an insult to the nation. (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : It is enough.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I have said, sorry.

1250 hrs.

MEMBERS SWORN

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Secretary-General may call out the names of Members who have to take oath or make affirmation.

Members Sworn

Shri Sunder Lai Patwa (Chhindwara)

Shrimati Satwinder Kaur Dhaliwal (Ropar)

Shri Bhanu Prakash Mirdha (Nagaur)

Shri Ajit Singh (Baghpat)

1255 hrs.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

[English]

SECRETARY GENERAL : Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the President's Address* to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on the 20th February, 1997.

President's Address

[Translation]

Honourable Members,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the first Session of Parliament in 1997. I felicitate the new Members and extend to you all my best wishes for the successful completion of the budgetary and legislative business that lies ahead.

This is my first address to Parliament after the present Government assumed office. The Common Minimum Programme of the United Front contains the basic agenda on crucial areas of national development, equity, social justice and secularism. It is a bridge for our society and people towards greater prosperity and well-being. It contains specific policies and guidelines for strengthening our federal structure, empowerment of disadvantaged sections, especially the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, the Other Backward Classes and the minorities, for providing basic minimum services and for eradicating poverty and ignorance. The Common Minimum Programme also lays emphasis upon evolving policies for rapid economic growth by attracting massive investments in industry and infrastructure.

This programme thus strikes a fine balance between economic growth on the one hand, and concern for equity and distributive justice on the other. The Government is fairly committed to achieving these objectives.

Under our democratic federal polity, coalition governments can be stable and promote durable socio-economic development. The Constitution has excellent features defining the relations between the Union and the States. The Government will respect the constitutional provisions without any discrimination and endeavour to strengthen the arrangements for a cooperative approach to our national problems. We are sure that all States will extend their cooperation in preserving these institutions and in making their deliberations more useful for the Union and the States.

The Government has imparted a measure of dynamism to the Inter-State Council, the National Development Council, the Planning Commission and also held periodic conferences of Chief Ministers. The Inter-State Council at its meeting on October 15, 1996 accepted a majority of the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission for implementation by the Government. A Standing Committee, which shall be a permanent Committee of the Inter-State Council, has been set up to review the remaining recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission, especially those relating to devolution of financial powers to the States and

*President delivered the Address in Hindi [Also Placed in Library. See No. LT-1309/97].