

- (2) The Public Works (Extension of Limitation) (Delhi Amendment) Bill, 1972.

11.02 hrs.

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

NINTH REPORT

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJ BAHADUR) : I beg to move :

"That this House do agree with the Ninth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 3rd April, 1972."

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That this House do agree with the Ninth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House on the 3rd April, 1972."

The motion was adopted.

12.03 hrs.

MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS—contd.

MR. SPEAKER : The Prime Minister will now reply to the debate on the President's Address.

THE PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF ATOMIC ENERGY, MINISTER OF ELECTRONICS, MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI) : Mr.

Speaker, Sir, I find myself in rather a strange situation because, normally, I should have liked to make a scathing reply to the accusing remarks made from the other side, but I do not like to hit people when they are down, and it was obvious from several of the speeches made from the oppo-

sition side that they are indeed—some of them—in the depths of depression. One or two of the speeches that I listened to gave me the impression that the speakers had high fever or some such ailment...*(Interruptions)* I think, I am being very meek...*(Interruption)*.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour) : When you find fever in your opposition bench, naturally you are.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : If I can bring down the fever, then I shall certainly be happy.

Dr. Karni Singh, another friend opposite, is also in the Opposition and I think that the House knows that he is strongly opposed to our policies. No doubt he will remain opposed to them and he has, of course, to do so. But his speech was a balanced one, perhaps because he is a sportsman and has learnt to play the game.

Some hon. members spoke at length about democracy, but it seemed to me that, to them there is democracy while they are winning and things are on their side, but no democracy if they do, not win. Then something is wrong with democracy. It is for the House to judge whether this is a proper definition of the word. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : By use of official machinery...*(Interruptions)*

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : I do not want to enter into a controversy with the hon. gentleman opposite, but we all know that the Marxist definition of democracy has never been the same as that even of the rest of the Opposition. There is no point in entering into a controversy.

Some of our friends opposite have always been prophets of gloom, not recently but for many years, long before I became Prime Minister or came into the Government.

Some of these old habits are difficult to shake off. But, I do feel that to threaten violence in the manner it is sometimes done here or even to threaten mass Satyagraha is not very responsible talk. And certainly, you

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can't have mass Satyagraha against the masses.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur) : Without the masses.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : This debate has ranged over a number of days, perhaps longer than I remember in previous sessions. Many points made were common to those made in the Budget debate. A large number of subjects have been covered but I shall confine myself only to the broader issues. Many of the points have, of course, been replied to by Members who spoke from our own side and sometimes by the Members of the Opposition Parties also...(*Interruptions*). Members of Parliament are expected to have a slightly longer memory.

A few speakers stressed the point that instead of removing poverty we are removing the opposition. I don't think observations of this kind help to strengthen democracy because they indicate a certain lack of confidence in the judgment of the people. I refuse to take the blame for the failure of the opposition Parties at the polls.

SHRI PILOO MODY (Godhra) : We want you to take the credit.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : Well, as the hon. Member knows, I have publicly given them the credit, that much of our success is due to the mistakes they have made. I have no doubt...(*Interruptions*) I have publicly acknowledged this. I don't think that I should contradict...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Gwalior) : Including misuse of governmental machinery.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : Use of governmental machinery, fascist methods.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : We all know what methods were used by the CPM in previous elections. That is why I said earlier, let us not enter into these arguments.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : We were not in power at that time. We were not the ruling party.

MR. SPEAKER : Order please. Try to understand her.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : Fashions are always changing. The whole point of fashion is change. But the latest fashion now for the Opposition Parties is to talk about the rigging of elections and this, needless to say, to quote the phrase my father often used, is "fantastic nonsense". I repudiate all these charges totally and I am glad that some Members of the Opposition have themselves exposed the hollowness of these allegations.

It has also been said that we have exploited the Bangla Desh issue in the Elections. But I should like to remind the hon. Members that we have had elections even before this issue came up, before the war had begun or even before the public know about the movement in Bangla Desh. We know the results of those elections also...

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : In West Bengal.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : There was a General Election in West Bengal. The Bangla Desh issue did make a difference but what made a difference even more than what happened in Bangla Desh was the propaganda made by some Opposition Parties against our Bangla Desh policy. I might tell the hon. Member—I am sorry I am digressing a bit—I have received letters from people saying that they have consistently supported the Marxists but that they were so shocked by what was being said in this election that although they might not vote for Congress, they would not vote for the CPM.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : Signed ones ?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : Signed ones, with address and all complete.

Hence people have voted overwhelmingly for us. They have voted before. Certainly

Bangla Desh has made a difference. But the plain fact is that they are full of confidence. They do believe that a beginning has been made. They do think that this Government is capable of taking determined and resolute action and this is why they have voted for us. I entirely agree with the friends opposite when they say that if we do not live up to all we have promised and if we do not deliver the goods, the people will not vote for us again. That is quite obvious and is part of democracy. This is the challenge before us all but it is not a challenge merely to the Government. It is important to us whether we form the government or somebody else does, but, what is more important is that what needs to be done for the Indian people, is done. If other people can do this, I shall not stand in their way.

It is often said that if a particular word or term is not repeated it is forgotten. Yesterday I heard a speech wherein it was stated that the word socialism had now been given the go-by. It has not been given the go-by—neither have socialism nor *garibi hatao* nor any of the slogans which we have been raising. All our programmes and the progress we make will show that they are not forgotten, but, it is true that slogans or words have to be viewed differently at different times. We have moved forward from our previous position. We are in the midst of implementing these programmes. We do raise slogans even now, but we are also fully involved in implementing them. Just because a particular Address does not make mention of a phrase or word this does not mean for a second that we have diverted from our basic objectives or even from our short-term programmes.

When we speak about the removal of poverty, we must also remember—in spite of what an hon. Member said yesterday,—that the concept of poverty and of the needs of the people is a changing one. People are demanding more than they did even 5 years ago. They are demanding more and the whole poverty line is a moving one. What might have satisfied people a few years ago is not going to satisfy them now and that is only right.

SHRI PILOO MODY : Moving upwards or downwards ?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : It is moving upwards, not sideways. (*Interruptions*) I would like to assure the House that I do not believe in regimentation. I think that it is good that we have people of different shapes and sizes, that we have different customs and cultural practices. They all add to the spice of life.

Progress has to be viewed in terms of the minimum requirements of the majority of our people who are poor, and not only in terms of the luxuries of a very few and even not, I would say, of the extras of the numbers who are in between. We have to make a far greater effort in helping those who are at the very lowest level. While I have said that the poverty-line has moved, I must confess that those who are at the very bottom have benefited the least and there are some who have not benefited at all. It was necessary to build an infra-structure and this is what we were concerned with all these years. I think that we have succeeded in doing this to a large extent and we are now at a stage when we can push forward with a massive programme to meet these needs and to provide the basic amenities to our people.

Hon. Members have in their speeches understandably voiced concern about prices and in the notices for amendments. Amongst our economic objectives, Government attaches very high priority to reasonable price stability. I do not claim that our attempts in this regard have been wholly successful.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : Not at all.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : I would request hon. Members, including even those sitting on the other side, to objectively analyse the factors which govern the price situation and not to exaggerate the extent of the price rise.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : What about sugar ?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : ... because, I think that such over-statements as are sometimes made only strengthen the inflationary psychology in the country.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : The second highest in the world. (*Interruptions*). How can we hear all this undiluted thing ?

SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN (Madurai) : He must hear all these things also.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : All psychologists say that when a person is frustrated, he should be allowed to speak... (*Interruptions*) otherwise there can be more dangerous explosions otherwise.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU : Face the issues.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : Economic analysts, many of whom were prophesying all kinds of dire consequences and a breakdown of the economy of India only a very short time ago, have now expressed welcome surprise at the manner in which we have been able to control the price line, in spite of the extraordinary expenditure which had to incur last year.

Of course, there has been a rise in prices. Nobody is denying this. But it is accepted that it has been contained within reasonable limits, and this is a measure of the success of the various steps which we took last year, such as the regulation of credit, the banning of forward trading in certain commodities, timely and selective imports of essential raw materials and above all, the mobilisation of larger resources to meet our commitments on refugees relief, defence etc.

Some hon. Members have asked why we need still require large resources since the refugees have now returned? But I do not think I need to dwell on this matter everyone is fully aware of the additional burdens which we still have to bear.

The policy we that have steadfastly followed since the beginning of the Fourth Plan of building up adequate buffer stocks of foodgrains has also paid dividends. In spite of floods in Northern India, and drought in some parts of the south, our stocks of foodgrains are now at a record level, and this augurs well for the stability of foodgrains prices and this will no doubt have a stabilising effect on the cost of living. But hon. Members must give deeper thought to this matter, because we must maintain a reasonable balance between the interests of purchasers and the consumers. I feel that farmer who

have large marketable surpluses should be willing to share some of their gains of increased productivity with consumers. The maintenance of higher prices for farm produce at artificially higher levels can only generate pressures for higher prices elsewhere in the economy and this cannot be in the interests of the farmers themselves in the long run. I hope hon. Members will take an integrated view of the whole problem of prices when they consider the question of remunerative prices for agricultural produce.

In regard to the fixation of prices of manufactured goods also, we should give up the cost-plus approach which has in the past made things easy for inefficient producers because they are not forced to resort to more prudent management of resources and to reduce their costs. So, whatever decision we take on individual prices, these should subserve the interests of the national economy as a whole and not seek to benefit any one section at the cost of the other.

I fully support the emphasis which hon. members have laid on the urgent need to multiply employment opportunities. A major break—through on this front in the next three or four years is absolutely essential if we are to establish the viability of our political and economic system.

More the any other factor, it is unemployment which aggravates poverty and creates frustration particularly amongst the young and educated. A more egalitarian social order cannot be built unless employment opportunities for gainful employment are more widely distributed. A high rate of economic growth can itself solve some of the problems of unemployment. But I do not subscribe to the proposition that only a high rate of growth can solve our problems and that we can afford to leave unemployment to the tender mercies of such growth. The experience of many developed countries has shown that unemployment and high of growth can and do co-exist in many of these countries. We should not get enmeshed in economic jargon on these matters. An entirely new outlook has to be evolved. In this I hope we shall have the co-operation of all. I hope soon to call a meeting of the Leaders of the Opposition so that we can exchange views on some of these matters.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA (Begnsarai) : What has happened to the Committee on Planning ? There used to be a Prime Minister's Committee on Planning.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : That was a very long time ago and much water has flowed down the Ganga and other rivers since then.

Therefore, full employment or fuller employment is one of the central objectives of our plan. Special programmes have to be undertaken to supplement the opportunities for employment generated by the Plan. Hon. members know that a number of programmes of this nature were initiated earlier. I know that all of them have not gathered momentum, but they are now beginning to do so, and I think their effect will soon be felt.

The Budget also shows further evidence of Government's earnestness in tackling this problem. The Annual Plan for 1972-73 provides for an appreciable increase in development outlays in the public sector and this should bring about material improvement in the tempo of economic activity in the private sector also. The additional provision of Rs. 125 crores made in the Plan will enable Government to implement a number of new employment-oriented schemes which would, at the same time, meet some of the basic needs of our people such as drinking water supply, housing, roads and so on.

As I have said earlier, as we gain experience, as we implement these schemes successfully, more employment opportunities will automatically open out we shall be able to harness our enormous manpower, skilled as well as unskilled and dovetail employment with programmes for the removal of poverty.

But for all this, we need massive investment which can only come out of higher domestic savings, hard work and increased productivity. This will be feasible only if all of us accept the imperative need for greater efficiency and set about achieving it in all sectors of our economy. I have been repeating—and I hope I will not be misunderstood if I say it again—that those who

are employed have a special obligation to the unemployed. I do appreciate the difficulties, I do sympathise with the difficulties of those who have demands; but at the same time, if we are to give in to the demands of these limited numbers we do take away from the resources available for the very much larger number who are seeking employment. So let not one group of people, even though they may not be affluent, be exploiters of the unemployed. Workers, particularly those in the organised sector, should recognise that by keeping the wheels of industry moving without interruption, they can make a very significant contribution to economic growth and thus to the creation of greater employment. If we have called for a moratorium on strikes and lock-outs, it is not for the benefit of those who control industrial units; it is for the benefit of the nation and specially for those who are the least privileged sections.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Alipore) : What about a moratorium on prices and profits ?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : It all goes together. If production rises, then that will affect prices.

The President's Address has emphasised self-reliance as one of the major objectives of high priority. Our friend opposite has reminded us, although we needed no such reminding, that none of these objectives are new objectives. If he takes the trouble to read my speeches, I have said this almost in every speech I have made, whether to limited audience or to vast public gatherings. The Congress has stood for self-reliance from the beginning; the Congress has stood for socialism and all these things. But, as I said earlier, when we said these things earlier, they were not on the horizon; they were only distant goals. Now we have moved forward and we are very much closer to the goal. So, the slogan is the same; the objective is the same; but naturally as we proceed towards it, the attitude has to change; new programmes and new steps have to be undertaken.

The hon. Member opposite gave such fulsome praise to my father yesterday, a few minutes ago I said that Members of Parlia-

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ment should have better memories; but perhaps they are privileged not to have any Memory. Quite often they contradict themselves. I remember some of the speeches when my father was Prime Minister, and I do not remember having the same fulsome praise in those days. In fact, the criticism was very much on the lines of what the hon. member said yesterday. (*Interruptions*). Anyway, I welcome the support which the hon. Members and the people at large have extended to our policy of self-reliance. (*Interruptions*).

MR. SPEAKER : Order please.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : We must be clear as to what we mean by self-reliance, because every word is given different meaning. No nation, not even the most affluent one, can insulate its economy. All nations are inter-dependent to a certain extent; they must share services and goods, and India certainly will need considerable time to absorb improved technologies and equipment from outside. But we want to pay for those goods and services, increasingly through our own export earnings, and we must always see that through this outside and, whether it is of knowhow or material, other influences should not infiltrate. We shall always be vigilant about that.

Our increase in exports is largely dependent on the economic policies of developed countries; and in particular, on the provision of fair opportunities of access to their market. So, in co-operation with other under-developed countries, we shall seek just solutions for our own trading problems. However, in the ultimate analysis, the success of our export promotion efforts will be determined by the overall efficiency of our own economy and the extent to which we can keep down our costs.

Import substitution is equally important. The President's Address has identified some of the specific sectors in which import substitution is of critical importance. To give examples, the production of an extra million tonnes of steel in the current year is well within our reach if all those engaged in this industry, management as well as labour, will bend their energies to this task and function

unitedly for the achievement of our national goal. (*Interruptions*) I can assure hon. Members that the Minister is certainly bending all his energies.

Much is said about the grant of industrial licences to the large houses. Our policy is quite clear on this. We are not going back on it. What has been done is that when there is no suitable medium or new entrepreneur and when no one comes forward in what are called the core or heavy investment sectors or export-oriented industries, in such cases, we have granted industrial licences to the large houses, after satisfying ourselves that they can set up the capacity for the production quickly. This is especially so in regard to backward areas, because otherwise it would mean that we would not be able to set up any industry in those areas and this would not only not help the backward districts to forge ahead, but it would also entail loss of production and involve larger imports to meet rising domestic needs.

Our vision of development is not confined to simple economic development; we feel that it should inculcate pride and contentment in work; it should not only give a sense of participation but genuine/involvement to every Indian in the shaping of the country's future.

My hon. friend opposite said yesterday something about hippies. If he knows India at all he should know that this is not a new phenomenon for us. We have our own varieties, we do not call them hippies; perhaps they do not look like hippies. Nevertheless, they do exist and they have been rightly or have wrongly hallowed by history. I personally am an obsession with cleanliness. Also I have nothing to say for those who are drug addicts. However this question should not be oversimplified. We must realise that many of these hippies have taken positive stands on various issues. Some have become hippies to avoid, for instance, going to Viet Nam to bomb the innocent... (*Interruptions*) I personally do not think that a hippy is in any way worse than somebody whose livelihood is dependent on the exploitation of others, who may observe the outward forms of society but indulge in other undesirable activities. I cannot speak for all hippies, I do not know whether they

all think alike. But certainly some of them are attempting to get away from what is known today as the "concrete jungles" of the big cities of the affluent countries and the limited values of the acquisitive society.

As I was coming to the house an hon. Member on our side requested that I should say a word about the dacoit menace. We are all aware of the seriousness of this problem. Perhaps you know that the Home Ministry is having talks with the concerned states looking into this problem. There are many other matters which are also of importance which I am not going into because it would take too long.

I come now to foreign policy and our unilateral offer of ceasefire. I am not going into the question of who supported and who did not support this measure. Members of the Opposition, or at least representatives of all parties were called. When this discussion came up on an earlier occasion the other Opposition members contradicted what some have said; I am not going into that matter again.

Our unilateral offer of a ceasefire has been welcomed in all international circles, all over the world; not only that I have also no hesitation in saying that it has been widely praised within our own country among all sections of the people. The Jan Sangh stand on this matter is typical of its extremely chauvinistic, immature and anti-philosophy of life. So enthusiastic was the popular feeling about the role which the Soviet Union played during the whole crisis of Bangla Desh that even the Jan Sangh was compelled to desist from talking against them. But now they seem to have reverted to their earlier passion for bating the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is a friend of India, and we value their friendship. However, any one who imagines that we shall allow ourselves to be dictated to by third parties in our negotiations with Pakistan or in any other matter, foreign or domestic, is quite off the mark. Let me make that quite clear. The Government of India have consistently spoken for and wanted normalisation of relations with Pakistan, and we continue to want it. I took the initiative this time by saying that I would be prepared for talks, and indeed we are in direct touch with Pakistan. One must

learn from past experience, but I do not think that one can keep harping on the past. I hope that India and Pakistan can both now turn their backs on the era of conflicts and confrontation. Whatever some short-sighted people might say or do, I think that this nation as a whole does desire to live in peace with Pakistan, and indeed with all its neighbours. We have never had any quarrel with the people of Pakistan. They have long suffered, and I think their only mistake was that they believed all the lies that were told to them about India. Perhaps even now they do not have a correct appreciation of our attitude, of what we are in our own country or our desire for friendship with our neighbouring country. I should like them to know that we do not propose negotiate in any spirit of arrogance, we do not wish to humiliate any one. We should like to discuss matters in a spirit of friendship and co-operation. We have believed that the triumphs of peace are greater than those of war. It is peace we seek, a peace which is enduring, so that we can concentrate on our own affairs, on our own war on poverty.

Negotiations cannot be conducted through speeches or public postures. Channels of communication are available for the exchange of ideas. I believe that Pakistan, Bangla Desh and India, working together in a spirit of co-operation and good neighbourliness, can be a source of strength to one another. We have not become independent to become pawns in other people's hands. If we work together, we can become stronger within our own country, and contribute to the strength of the sub-continent and, I would say, to all the developing countries.

To come back to the national scene, I said earlier that we have had many prophets of gloom and doom.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA :
And bloom.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI : If you can think of any other matching or rhyming word, I am willing to accept it.

But one by one, we have proved them wrong. There were people who thought that we could not become independent through

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non-violence, there were people who thought that a democratic system could not have a planned economy, there were people who thought that adult franchise would not work where there are large numbers of illiterate and so on and so forth. There were people who thought we could not survive the split in the party, the Bangla Desh crisis. The list is a long one, but one by one we have shown that this country has a sound base and the people are determined to solve their problems in our own way.

My Hon'ble friend opposite, Shyamnandan Babu is a well-read person. So, I hesitate to quote something to him. I am not good at remembering names of authors, but yesterday when he was speaking a verse came to my mind. I do not remember who has written it. But it says—I am not quoting the poem; I am just telling what it is about: An old man is complaining. He is saying, the steps are so steep; the passage is so dark and other such things. The sympathetic listener pays great attention to him and then remarks, "Well, this may be so. But it is strange that no complaint has come from you!" Age is not merely a question of years; it is a question of one's outlook. There is no doubt that in the country today, there is a mood of optimism. There is a mood of confidence. There is a feeling that while the problems are tremendous, they can be solved. Today nobody asks, "Can you do this? Can India do this?" Whether from outside or inside, whether experts or ordinary people, the question is, "When can this be completed?" This in itself shows a major step forward.

Too long have some in our country played the game of our enemies by persisting in minimizing our achievement, by denigrating our leaders in short, in sapping the confidence and will of our people. We are passing through critical months. (*Interruptions*),... I am not talking about myself; I am talking about previous years. We are neither at war, nor are we completely at peace. Perhaps we are in for a long period of a testing of nerves. In this situation, it is imperative that we all remain calm, cool and united and also that we do not forget the war at home, which is the war against poverty.

A new outlook is needed in dealing with all the old problems as well as with the new challenges which our development and growth are throwing up. Can the hon. Members of the opposition rise above their frustration and try to look beyond the horizon, so that we can fight and win this battle together?

We must deal with the problem of economic and social transformation with the same determination that we showed in meeting last year's challenges. This is, as the President has stated, on less heroic and no less essential. In fact, it is a bigger challenge and has to be met at several levels and on many fronts. I sincerely hope that when you recover from the shock of the last month or so, we can all sit down and once more work unitealy for the welfare of our people.

Sir, I request the House to adopt the Motion of Thanks.

MR. SPEAKER: There are a number of amendments. First I will take up amendments Nos. 1 to 9 moved by Prof. S. L. Saxena. He is not here. I am putting his amendments Nos. 1 to 9 to the vote of the House.

Amendments Nos. 1 to 9 were put and negatived.

MR. SPEAKER: There are 4 amendments by Shri N. Sreekantan Nair, amendments Nos. 10, 11, 12 and 13. Is he withdrawing them?

SHRI N. SREEKANTAN NAIR (Quilon): No, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: I will not put amendments Nos. 10, 11, 12 and 13 of Mr. Sreekantan Nair to the vote of the House.

Amendments Nos. 10 to 13 were put and negatived.

MR. SPEAKER: I will now put amendment Nos. 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 moved by Shri K. S. Chavda to the vote of the House.