

MR. SPEAKER: Yes, it is all right.

यह बात नहीं है इस तरीके की ।

This is not the way. Give me some other motion.

(Interruptions)

12-12 hrs.

MOIION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS-*CONTD.*

MR. SPEAKER: The House will now take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Prof. N.G. Ranga and seconded by Shri H.K.L. Bhagat on the 23rd February, 1982 namely:—

“That an Address be presented to the President in the following terms:

“That the Members of Lok Sabha assembled in this session are deeply grateful to the President for the Address which he has been pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on the 18th February, 1982.”

as also further consideration of Amendments moved thereto.

The Hon. Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

SHRI RATANSINH RAJDA (Bombay-South) : Have you announced the name ?

MR. SPEAKER: I do not have to announce the name. ‘Prime Minister’ is sufficient.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY (Calcutta-South) : I would request the Prime Minister to

say something about the food position in West Bengal.

MR. SPEAKER: No interruption.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI): Whenever we wanted to raise any issue about West Bengal, you have objected to it, even though at that time it was...

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: It is a question of supply of food by the Centre.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: Whatever it is, let us have one standard. Either we discuss West Bengal...

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: The Hon. Prime Minister should understand the plight of the people there. The rationing system has broken down there.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: The Food Minister is here. He has heard you and I am sure he will look into it.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY: (Bombay North-East): When President's rule is there.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: No, not while their party is active. How can that be ?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, a new year has begun and once more we have debated the motion on the President's Address. Parliament is a place or debate, but on some occasions, and specially on this particular occasion, I had hoped that Members of the Opposition would try to rise, even though temporarily, above their petty preoccupations, and use the occasion for serious discussion on basic issues and national problems and preoccupations. Am I wrong in thinking that on the whole the contributions to this debate have been disappointing ? Hon. Members

of the Opposition have indulged in their oft-repeated favourite criticisms and pet prejudices. They have a right to do so. That is why they are here and they would not be what they are if they did not.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY:
You rise above it.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI:
I have always kept above narrowness. In the earlier years, I used to ask the Opposition to place an alternative programme before the nation. I no longer do so. The country has stopped expecting this of them for no one now credits them with the capability of doing so. The country has realised that they have no interest in an alternative programme and are concentrating merely on the weakening, and if possible, removal of the Government, even though the Government has been democratically elected.

One Opposition Member derided the President's call for co-operation among Parties on the larger problems before our country. I do not think I need to repeat that Government takes this call most seriously. The Hon. Member attached a number of pre-conditions. One was that, I should give an assurance removing all doubts and apprehensions—these are his words, I think—about threats to the Constitution and the basic structure and about the freedom of the judiciary and the press. The only condition he forgot to attach was that he would support the Government only if his own people were in it !

I sympathise with the Opposition in the peculiar predicament they find themselves in, this year. With no shortage to cry about—even onions have not obliged them to shed tears—with no 'galloping inflation' to protest against, it has not been easy for the Opposition to find firing targets.

Out of sheer despair, they have to fall back on their stale phrases of 1977 and earlier and resurrect the dead bogies of 'dangers' to democracy, to the judicial system and electoral process, etc. Little do they realise that in doing this, they merely expose the contradictions in their own logic and in some cases, the hollowness of their political pronouncements.

Sir, we have proved our adherence to democracy, the sovereignty of the people and the sanctity of Parliament. I did not change my views when I was expelled from this House immediately after having been duly elected by the people.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY:
You also did the same thing. Have you forgotten ?

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI:
We have not done any such thing.

DR. SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY:
You did the same thing.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI:
On the contrary, the attitude to Parliament of some other persons has been oscillating, according to which side of the House they are sitting ! The system is the same one which gave them a majority in 1977 and us in earlier elections as well as in 1980. But these very persons do not hesitate to launch extra-parliamentary agitations, advocating a change in the entire system. It is they who pose a threat to the system, not us, and certainly not me. Even now their theoreticians are busy advancing new Agendas.

As for the judiciary, some harsh words were recently said about judges. They were not spoken by us but by self-appointed custodians of the judicial conscience. Why was this group angry ? Because the Supreme Court had upheld the Government's position on the appointment and transfer of judges. It seems that to

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these luminaries, a judge is right only when he strikes down what has been passed by Parliament or done by the Executive, and wrong on the occasions when he finds merit in national policies. This is not judicial balance. The danger to the judiciary comes from those who assign such a permanently negative role to the judiciary.

There have been stringent charges of our wanting to postpone election in West Bengal. Leaders of the ruling front and some friends here seem to have little to do except issue statements every day that the Centre wishes to introduce President's Rule. Perhaps, this is wishful thinking on their part. All the democratic parties in the State, some of whom in this House are represented on the benches opposite have asked for the electoral rolls to reflect the correct state of the electorate. This is the basic condition for establishing the credibility of the electoral system. And to ask for this—and that too following established legal and statutory procedure—becomes “anti-democratic” in the twisted logic of some people. The Hon. Member just now has also raised...(Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER: This is very bad. Nothing goes on record.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: My Party is not. I am not entering into an argument here but this is not at all so. (Interruptions)**

MR. SPEAKER: This is very wrong and very illogical.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: We have also heard a great deal about the postponement of the bye-election in Garhwal. Opposition Members are at their worst on this issue, displaying contradiction and blatant absurdity. When the Election Commission ordered the postponement of

the bye-election on the ground that police force from outside had been inducted into the State and other such reasons, the Opposition hailed the decision as truly democratic and a great vindication of the sanctity of the electoral system. But when on a subsequent occasion the same Election Commission postponed the bye-election on the ground that arrangements for an orderly pool had to be ensured, the same Opposition Members shout hoarse about dangers to democracy and the electoral system. Does this mean, Sir, that democracy is safe and the election system retains its sanctity only when decisions of the Election Commission go in favour of the Opposition Parties? The Opposition hails one decision and wails at another, and on both occasions blames the Government! (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: It is very illogical.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: If you are short of sticks to beat the Government with, please do not select those which break in your hands and hurt you more.

The growth of violence is indeed cause for great concern to us all. Caste tensions increased in the late Seventies with the coming to power of certain persons and groups who have been known to think along, and encourage, caste divisions. The Congress has always believed in dealing fairly with every group and region within a State and in holding them together. The Congress as a party has repudiated the theories of class-war and caste-war and has stood for the reconciliation of conflicting interests. This was Gandhiji's approach, Jawaharlal Nehru's approach and that of Sardar Patel and Maulana Azad. This is our inheritance. I do not deny that some

Congressmen might occasionally have also abetted caste tension, but this we deplore and take action against. We try our utmost to give an equal chance to all the various groups which constitute our nation.

We have a special duty to the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Their safety and welfare are basic to our very system. We are determined to help them as well as all those who, because of poverty, have been denied opportunities and their rightful place in society.

The Address has been criticised for not referring to Mizoram or the rest of the North-East. The nation has been dealing with understanding and firmness with misguided elements in that region, who are indulging in underground and hostile activities. We are trying all possible methods to bring them into the mainstream of national politics and economic development. Indeed, in the last two years, the tempo of development in all of the North-East has greatly improved.

I do not want to go into many details, but Hon. Members will be interested to know that the total allocation in the Sixth Plan for the five States and two Union Territories is Rs. 2,387 crores. Central assistance is over 80% and the *per capita* outlay in the North-East is Rs. 1,393, as compared to a much lower figure elsewhere. The allocations for 1982-83 are substantially higher than those in 1981-82. Additionally, the North-East Council has a Sixth Plan provision of Rs. 340 crores.

As for Mizoram, we have had long talks with Mr. Laldenga. Some of his conditions no Government could accept. The situation in the region is under control. I am deeply grieved that tragic incidents, like the recent ambush of security forces in Manipur do occur. I am sure the House will join me in expressing sympathy with

the families who have lost their loved ones and bread winners.

As regards Assam, the House is aware of the patience and consideration we have shown. We shall not waver from reason, compassion and constitutional responsibility, even if the other side does not fully reciprocate. The President could have made a stronger reference, but we did not want to say anything that might mar the climate for negotiations. Some people are becoming restive and even accusing me of drift. But we shall persevere with patience. Most Opposition parties are now associated with the discussion and are aware of the complexity of the problem.

Many references have been made to corruption in public life. Some Opposition speakers are trying to create the impression that corruption has become a problem only now, and that the corrupt are only in the Government. I earnestly appeal to all sections of the House, whether in the Government, in the ruling party, or in the Opposition, to deal with this issue without partisan bias or political motives. Corruption is corruption, whether practised by a person in power, or person aspiring for power, or any other, and we have to fight it at all fronts and at all levels. There is no sense in taking a 'holier than thou' attitude, focussing on certain individuals and instances. Corruption anywhere will pollute the whole system and must be treated as a symptom of a wider malady. I should like to assure the House and the nation that we shall continue our relentless war against this evil at all levels and at all times. I appeal for the co-operation and support of everyone in arousing the moral consciousness and strength of the whole nation in this task.

A greater proportion of the Address this time was devoted to the economic situation. Rightly so. We want the people to

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know what has been achieved in the last 26 months through sustained, unrelenting, even grim toil, to put the economy back on its feet. We have, at the same time, built capacity for further growth in the immediate future. Is it negligible to increase irrigation by 2.5 million hectares, as we have done in each of the last two years, and by the 3 million hectares we propose to do in each of the next three years? Is it negligible to increase the production of petroleum by more than 60 per cent within a year? Our engineers, our technologists, are building this country. All they need is comprehension, support and encouragement from the Government and the people. Ours is a Government which gives that support. Let us all be proud of these men and women—and of our farmers and our industrial workers—who are literally our nation-builders.

It is nonsense to make out that we are unsympathetic to the working class. Workers are beginning to understand who are their real friends and well-wishers. Are they the wild-eyed Opposition politicians who exploit them for political ends, or we who are making every effort to help them towards a better future? Wasn't this clear from the flop of what was pompously called Bharat Bandh?

We have a mixed economy. The public sector occupies the commanding heights of the economy and serves our social objectives. It operates side by side with a developing and viable private sector which should find its prosperity also in working for the realisation of our social objectives. I can assure the House that my Government has not deviated from this basic policy. We are liberalising our economy but only in those areas where controls and restrictions were becoming counter-productive. During the early years of our development many controls and restrictions were necessary to protect our relatively undeveloped

weak economic base and nascent industry. Today our situation has changed. Our industry has become strong, our economy has become self-assured. We now compete with some of the most developed countries in major areas of economic activity. We can absorb the most sophisticated technology without deviating from self-reliance. The liberalisation of controls and regulations provide a positive support to our strategy of growth and development. Large houses now can operate in areas of our social priority, the core sector, in industries which generate export and in areas with the largest impact on economic development and generation of employment. Similarly, foreign investment is welcome in areas of high technology, in consonance with our policy.

An Hon. Member quoted certain statistics in a vain attempt to show that we are still where we were last year. The present trouble regarding our economy is indeed that in 1977-79 it was pushed back by several years. It has taken us all this time to get it back to its position in 1976-77. In many areas it has not yet regained its earlier buoyancy.

An Hon. Member has referred to the per capita availability of cereals and pulses in 1980-81 as being 459.5 grams—or less than what was achieved in 1978-79. He did not tell the House that in 1975-76 the per capita availability was 453.3 grams. In 1979-80 it came down to 416.9 grams. However, I am not blaming the Government of which he was a distinguished Member, for I know that there was drought at that time. But, also I do not have to apologise for the fact that within one year after our coming into office the per capita availability has been raised to 459.5 grams. What we have to realise is that availability figures will fluctuate from year to year because of droughts and weather conditions. But can any one deny that in the last 15 years,

our cereal production has increased more than 70 per cent ?

We were also asked why we had imported wheat even though we had a good harvest, and why prices had increased even though there was no further increase in international oil prices during the year. The reason is not far to seek and I have explained it earlier. Even though the grain production in 1980-81 was 130 million tonnes, it followed a very low harvest of 109.7 million tonnes in 1979-80. Stocks had been depleted and we exercised prudence and foresight in importing wheat at a time when world prices were very low to bring the buffer stock back to the required level of a minimum of 12 million tonnes.

As for prices, oil is not the only commodity we import. There are items such as fertilizers, edible oils, oil seeds and different kinds of raw materials required for domestic production. One must also remember that the consequences of international price levels do not cease operating.

Not only I, but knowledgeable people all over the world, will be amused by the accusation that we lack talent. Our talent is the talent to build, to know how to serve the people and to retain their confidence. It is indeed said that the only talent of the Hon'ble Member and some of his colleagues is the talent to destroy, and to try to weaken the morale of our people. Even in this debate the Words used were "The response will be dynamite !"

Can the National Security Act and the Productivity Year go together ? It was asked. I counter with another question. Can Bharat Bandhs bring productivity ? The accusations that Government is running after multinationals and giving freer rein to large business houses are just so many empty words. The revised Twenty-

Point Programme has also been criticised. So was the previous one. The programme does give importance to production but not at the cost of social justice. A close and dispassionate examination of the 20-Point shows its fine balance between production and welfare. In fact, even a little clear thinking is enough to understand that there can be no welfare without production. I am reminded of my father's words on the subject, in the early years of our independence when he said, "socialism without higher production would be a low-level, poor socialism".

All countries—capitalist, communist and socialist—are stressing production today and with good reason. Regulations, whose only virtue is restriction on production, do not make us more socialist. We intend to pursue our all-out efforts to produce more oil, more electricity, more fertilizers, more foodgrains and more of the basic needs of our people.

Had we earlier produced more oil, the crisis of the seventies would not have hit us so badly. At that time there were many people on the opposition benches who gunned for Shri K.D. Malviya but they hit our self-sufficiency. If we do not even now move ahead swiftly, future crisis will find us more vulnerable.

Rapid progress now is essential. We should not hesitate to avail ourselves of whatever investments and technology we can secure. Our Government and our political system are strong enough, technologically and otherwise, not to allow our self-reliance to be mortgaged by outside funds and know-how.

This is what we call operation forward. The Janata Party's strategy was movement into the past. Our's is forward into the future. I do not know whether the communist parties want to go forwards or backwards.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: Forward and faster.

(Interruptions)

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: The strengthening of our economy and technology is particularly important because of the nature of the dangers which surround us. Some people seem incapable of realising the gravity of the present situation. Recently at a conference I said that "if by any chance a nuclear warhead should sneeze, billions would suffer". This might happen even without Heads of Governments wanting it. Too many nuclear submarines are prowling around in too many areas. With the general increase of militancy all around, Europe has suddenly woken up to the peril it faces from the sum total of increasing armaments. But it is not Europe alone that is menaced. The strategic calculations and preparations of others increase the threat to us. That is why we have so persistently deplored the arming of Pakistan and the militarisation of the Indian Ocean.

Many of the amendments deal with Pakistan. A few weeks ago when the Foreign Minister of Pakistan visited Delhi for discussion, I said that pact or no pact India would not attack Pakistan. That sums up the principle and conciliatory policy we have always adopted in regard to Pakistan. Pakistan's policy became apparent again when, within a few days, its representative, speaking at the U.N. Human Rights Commission made untenable charges against India, bringing up Kashmir.

All this reveals Pakistan's obsession. Let us show them that we do not suffer from any such obsession about them or others. We cannot underrate Pakistan's potential for trouble, nor should we exaggerate it. It is ridiculous to charge me, who has gone so far in seeking friendship, of being lukewarm in dealing with Pakistan's offer.

I am sure Hon. Members realise that however, strenuous our efforts, our ultimate success will depend on improvement in the international economic environment within which we operate. Along with other developing countries, we have inherited an iniquitous economic order. I focussed attention on this in Melbourne and in Cancun and I am again taking the initiative in convening the New Delhi Consultations to strengthen the collective bargaining power of developing countries in securing justice and equity in the International economic system. We must pursue this with vigour.

Hon. Members, we are not an island. Even islands today are not cut off. We are battered by the storms which arise in other parts of the world, be they economic, military or whatever. We cannot control events but we can prepare ourselves not to be over-whelmed by them. That is my philosophy as an individual and for my nation. Strength has never come from comfort or the smooth path but from the most strenuous of efforts, and as individuals and as a nation, we must aim not merely at economic progress, vital and urgent though that is, but at building men and women who cannot easily be swept from their moorings, men and women who can hold their own and keep their heads high in the face of adversity and be able to seek from it opportunity and success.

I appeal to the movers of the 766 Amendments, the largest number ever, to withdraw them. I commend the Motion to the acceptance of the House.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: A number of amendments have been moved by Members to the Motion of Thanks. Shall I put all the amendments together to the vote of the House?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: (Rajapur): It will mean mass massacre.