

[Mr. Speaker]

confident that their experience in Parliament and talents will be amply availed of in such fields.

I wish you all good-bye and God-speed. Jai Hind!

**The Prime Minister and Leader of the House (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru):**

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you have been pleased to say many generous things about the Member of this House and, to my great embarrassment, about me. You have spoken in generosity but, anyhow, so far as I am concerned, I should like to offer you my grateful thanks, and I am sure I speak on behalf of the House also, when I offer you their thanks for your kind words.

It is befitting that on this occasion, when this Parliament stands at the edge of its own dissolution, there should be some valedictory references to our past. Since you have been good enough to make a reference to the work of this Parliament, I am taking the liberty of saying also a few words on this occasion, certainly on my own behalf and possibly reflecting the views and ideas of other Members also here.

We have gone through, during these five years, a tremendous amount of work and, as you have said, speeches have covered, I do not know how many millions of pages; questions have also been asked and, altogether a vast quantity of paper has been consumed. Yet, the historian of the future will probably not pay too much attention to the number of speeches or the hours which the speeches have taken or to the number of questions, but rather to the deeper things that go towards the making of a nation.

17 hrs.

Here, we have sat in this Parliament, the sovereign authority of India, responsible for the governance of India. Surely, there can be no higher responsibility or greater privilege than to be a Member of this sovereign body which is responsible for the fate of the vast number of human beings who

live in this country. All of us, if not always, at any rate from time to time, must have felt this high sense of responsibility and destiny to which we had been called. Whether we were worthy of it or not is another matter. We have functioned, therefore, during these five years not only on the edge of history but sometimes plunging into the processes of making history.

We have lived here, as indeed people have lived all over the world, at a moment of great change, transition, and sometimes of vast upsets and revolutionary processes. We have not only been part of that world drama but we have had our own drama also. And it would be interesting for someone to take a rather distant view of this drama of these five years and more so as not to be lost in the innumerable details which confuse, but rather to see this broad current of history in motion in this country, how far has it moved, what changes has it wrought, how far has it laid stable the foundations of this republic of India which we created, which the people of India created, a few years back. That is the important question; not so much how many speeches we have delivered or how many questions we have asked, important, no doubt, though speeches and questions are as bringing out the method of our working—the parliamentary process to which we are addicted.

We choose this system of parliamentary democracy deliberately; we choose it not only because, to some extent, we had always thought on those lines previously, but because we thought it was in keeping with our own old traditions also; naturally, the old traditions, not as they were, but adjusted to the new conditions and new surroundings. We choose it also—let us give credit where credit is due—because we approved of its functioning in other countries, more especially the United Kingdom.

So, this Parliament, the Lok Sabha, became, to some extent—not entirely, but to a large extent—rather like the

British Parliament or the British House of Commons whether it is in regard to our questions or our rules of procedure or methods of work.

Now, parliamentary democracy demands many things, demands, of course, ability. It demands a certain devotion to work as every work does. But it demands also a large measure of co-operation, of self-discipline, of restraint. It is obvious that a House like this cannot perform any functions without the spirit of co-operation, without a large measure of restraint and self-discipline in each Member and in each group. Parliamentary democracy is not something which can be transplanted in a country by some wand or by some quick process. We talk about it but we know very well that there are not many countries in the world where it functions successfully. I think it may be said without any partiality that it has functioned with a very large measure of success in this country. Why? Not so much because we, the Members of this House, are exemplars of wisdom, but, I do not think, because of the background in our country, and because our people have the spirit of democracy in them.

We have to remember then what parliamentary democracy means. In this world of change and tremendous ferment, more so than in ordinary times, change is essential; change and adaptation to new order. Even when the old order was good, it has to yield place to new lest one good custom should corrupt the world. It has to change. So, change there must be, change there has to be, in a country like India which was more or less changeless for a long time, changeless not only because of the country being a subject country under the imperialist powers,—I do not mean to say that there was no change then, but basically the dynamic aspect of the country was limited, restricted, caged and confined by foreign domination—changeless also because we had fallen into the ruts of our own making, in mind, in social framework and the rest. So we had to take our souls out

both from the ruts and from the disabilities and restrictions caused by alien rule. We had to make rapid changes in order to catch up. So, change was necessary even for survival and, of course, for progress.

But, while change is necessary, there is another thing that is also necessary; that is, a measure of continuity. There is always a balancing of change and continuity. Not one day is like another. We grow older each day. Yet, there is continuity in us, untrained continuity in the life of a nation. It is in the measure that these processes of change and continuity are balancing that a country grows on solid foundations. If there is no change and only continuity, there is stagnation and decay. If there is change only and no continuity, that means uprooting, and no country and no people can survive for long if they are uprooted from the soil which has nurtured them and given them birth.

Now, this system of parliamentary democracy, therefore, embodies, I think, these principles of change and continuity, both. And it is up to those who function in this system, Parliament, Members of the House and the numerous others who are part of this system, to increase the pace of change, to make it as fast as they like, subject to the principle of continuity, because, the moment that continuity is broken we become rootless and the system of parliamentary democracy breaks down. Parliamentary democracy is a delicate plant and it is a measure of our own success that this plant has become sturdier during these last few years. We have faced grave problems, difficult problems, and solved many of them; but, many remain to be solved. Indeed, there is going to be no end of the problems that will come to us, because problems are inevitable when you grow. It is only those who are stagnant that have few problems, and if there are no problems, that is a sign of death. Only the dead have no problems; the living have problems and they grow with problems, fighting with problems and overcoming them. It is a sign of the growth of this nation

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

that not only we solve problems, but we create new problems to solve.

So, these five years have passed and we are at the end of this chapter of our history; and, the very end suddenly merges into a beginning and we begin afresh, because ends and beginnings are only of our own conception. There is only continuous life of a nation. We may pass out of this House or pass out of our lives, but the nation goes on. Therefore, here when we stand at this end, which is also a beginning, we indulge in retrospect and we indulge in prospect. Again, standing on this edge of the present, we look back on the past, but we look forward even more to the future. We may think of many things that we have to do to carry on the great work that we have undertaken and undertake new labours; but, above all, we have to remember how stable, how deep, are the foundations of this democracy that we have sought to serve and to build up in this country, because ultimately it is on the strength and depths of those roots that we will prosper, not by the number of laws we pass, not by our external activities, but on the strength of character and grit and the capacity of service that we develop in this country.

Parliamentary democracy involves naturally peaceful methods of action, peaceful acceptance of decisions taken

and attempts to change them through peaceful ways again; it is no parliamentary democracy otherwise. It is essential that we, who talk and who believe in the quest of peace so much, should remember that the quest of peace and the quest of democracy can only be made through methods of peace and not through any other. We have a great united country, a country which is dear to us, and of which we are proud. But being proud of it does not mean that we should close our eyes to the grave problems we often have to face in the country and the disruptive tendencies that raise their heads and challenge the democratic process which this Parliament represents. It is in the measure that we put an end even in our thinking to these disruptive tendencies which divide us and which tend to break up the unity of India that we will have strengthened our country and laid sound foundations for the future. So, Sir, I would like to thank you, again.

May I, as Leader of the House, express my respectful thanks to all the Members of this House for the great courtesy and consideration which they have shown me during these past five years.

Mr. Speaker: The House now stands adjourned *sine die*.

17-16 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned *sine die*.