

[Shri Somnath Chatterjee]

Sir, the Leaders of the Opposition has spoken about the minorities. Sir, what we have really not discussed in the House is the spirit of intolerance that has developed in this country. Such a serious matter has not been fully discussed. We are always running short of time on important issues.

Sir, as regards Standing Committees, more and more questions are coming and whether you like it or not you have to face it. It is very unfortunate that insinuations are being made even about the unanimous reports of the Standing Committees. If this is done, it will be very sad day for the functioning of Parliament. Sir, you appoint Chairmen of Committees and if insinuations are made even with regard to the unanimous reports, then it will be very difficult to function. Shri Shivraj Patil is here. We always appreciate the great contributions he made. ...*(Interruptions)*

DR. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (SOUTH DELHI) : Sir, we can discuss these things for days together. When the Congress was in Government, I was also the Chairman of a Committee. This matter can be discussed separately. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Hon. Prime Minister, Sir, this is the attitude of intolerance I spoke of.

MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI (GARHWAL) : Shri Chatterjee, you could not tolerate me for one minute and now you are preaching us tolerance. ...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN (VIDISHA) : New traditions are being initiated. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Sir, I feel this is somewhat a touchy subject. I would only say that it is for you to see that the Standing Committees can function in a manner which is contemplated by rules. I would not say anything more.

Sir, of course, I express my thanks to the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs. He is accommodative and has been helpful. I am sure I wish to express my sincere thanks to Shri Ram Naik who is a very good friend of ours. I thank all of you.

Sir, many of the urgent matters which we could not discuss in this Session, we will be able to do that in the next Session. Let us hope that with greater cooperation, we shall be able to serve people better through this House.

[Translation]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPA-YEE) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, First of all, I would like to congratulate you for the efficient manner in which you have conducted the proceedings of the House. Really you have a lot of patience. It is tested again and again and you succeed all the time. I believe that your patience will be intact and so shall the dignity of our behaviour will be maintained. As I was telling that Budget session is about to end and it is important.

18.00 hrs.

Usually the difference of opinion occurs on the Budget and it is not for the first time but it is probably for the first time that the opposition has decided to oppose it by making it an issue. It was not necessary. If we could run the Government, and make the future of the country without burdening our people then we could not have done the unpleasant job of earning unpopularity for us. Prices increase and it affects everybody that we have done it by making a balance and I believe that the people of this country will like it. After all we have come here after winning the confidence of the people. We had declared in our manifesto that...

SOME HON'BLE MEMBERS : The prices will be hiked.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I had told that we would consider about the burden which is being put on the nation and shall give it a logical form. I was surprised, when the main opposition party, which has the experience to run the country and which is waiting for coming into power again though their expectations are not going to be fulfilled, opposed it, but if we do not adopt a pragmatic approach in the economic field and remain involved in sectarian politics, then it will be very difficult for the nation to overcome the economic crisis. Yesterday, Dr. Manmohan Singh ji delivered speech in Rajya Sabha and it confirms this fact that intelligent people are also in ruling party, ruling party has also farsighted persons. ...*(Interruptions)* His speech can not be denied, it is a recorded thing. It should be read carefully. ...*(Interruptions)* Mr. Speaker, Sir, please excuse me, one thing I am unable to understand whether all the recommendations of all the standing committees be always accepted by the government.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : I never said that.

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : Then what is the problem? Do you know that today whatever you are talking

about the consensus report have our members also. They did not give note of dissent keeping in mind that they are not to give note-of-dissent, otherwise there may not be any such report which does not have comments of our members and they would not have expressed their dissent.

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Can you yield for a second? ...*(Interruptions)* A definite statement has been made with regard to the Committee of which I am the Chairman. Are you referring to that?

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I have made a general statement.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : I noticed, you were pointing your finger at me.

MR. SPEAKER : This is a valedictory reference.

...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA (GUNA) : There is no such tradition that note-of-dissent can not be appended. ...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : I do agree that the recommendations of the committee should be taken into consideration. The Government should take it seriously. Only on the basis of this you cannot say that the government should accept what you are telling - it is not necessary. I have also been in opposition and I am witness to how our recommendations were rejected, but we never complained about it.

I am thankful to the opposition that constitutional amendment was unanimously passed in this session. There are certain issues on which country is unanimous and it ought to be.

As far the rights of the scheduled castes and tribes are concerned, the issue of backlog regarding the promotion in service was raised and it was said that injustice was being done to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, there was some judgement of the court, but the entire House collectively changed it. We do not have majority in the House that we can get the constitution Amendment Bill passed on our own, but it is such an issue that the entire House was unanimous over it. Things were discussed regarding the grant of more financial autonomy of the states and giving more funds to them. For these too constitution was amended. The House cooperated in that. If the House is unanimous about similar issues, like national interest and universal welfare, then there should not

be any hesitation in it that we can unite and can support each other.

Sir, untouchability is disappearing from the social arena but it will not be a wise step to restart untouchability in political field. The need of the hour is that we should collectively work. During Budget Session, there were several occasions when it was evident that in spite of apparent differences, there is solidarity among us on the important questions. For example as far as the question of Sri Lanka is concerned, we did not discuss it in detail but overall the entire nation is unanimous over the issue of Sri Lanka and the entire nation wants that the peace be restored and the unity and integrity of Sri Lanka be maintained. But we continuously seek the advice of the opposition on such issues and discuss with them. Today itself, I discussed internal situation of Kashmir with Congress delegation. Yesterday a Congress delegation took pain to pay visit my House. They gave their memorandum and I replied to them, but grievance is still there that I did not accept suggestion. Yesterday I had told and today once again I am telling that our only fault is that we are in the government. But there is no justification, reason to it. There are certain issues like the matter related to the economic field where nation is in serious economic crisis, so some harsh decision had to be taken.

Sir, it was expected that the government will change the decision under pressure - we are not pleased to take this decision, but whatever has been decided has been decided after deliberation and that is why we are adamant to it. We will find a way out to satisfy our friends. I would like to assure you for that.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Information Technology Bill has been introduced in the House. Before that I wanted to introduce a Bill regarding the freedom of information but it could not be introduced, but that Bill is ready with us. As far the legislative Business is concerned, we have done a lot of work in this Budget session and I feel that was not possible without the support from all corners. At times I felt that probably it has been decided that in the morning, matters of the public importance will be allowed to be raised and in the evening concrete work will be done. That is why the House continued to sit late till night and all of us gave our cooperation. The Secretariat certainly has some difficulties, and Mr. Speaker, Sir you too have to come. Today probably Deputy Speaker, is not present in the House. ...*(Interruptions)*

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : He is on tour

...*(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : He has gone to Brazil. Now many Members are preparing to go there. A demand has been put forward by the lady members, that during the previous government all the lady members of Parliament were sent on foreign tour, they were sent to China. Similarly it should be done this time. I will accept it if there is a consensus, I will have to accept consensus opinion.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, once again extend my heartiest congratulation to you.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Hon. Members, today, we come to an end of the Third Session of the Thirteenth Lok Sabha which commenced on 23rd February, 2000 with the Address by the hon. President to Members of both the Houses assembled together in the Central Hall. During this Session, the House had 38 sittings, spread over 211 hours and 30 minutes.

This being the Budget Session, a substantial part of our work related to financial business. The House passed the Railway and the General Budgets for 2000-2001. As has been the practice since 1993, the House took a brief recess to enable the Departmentally-Related Standing Committees to examine and report back to the House on the Demands for Grants in respect of the concerned Ministries. The House, which had adjourned for this purpose at the end of the sitting on 16th March, 2000, re-assembled on 17th April, 2000 whereafter the financial business was completed. The Standing Committees of the Lok Sabha submitted 69 Reports on Demands for Grants of various Ministries and Departments. As many as 150 Members participated in the discussion on the Railway Budget and 65 Members took part in the debate on the General Budget.

The House also passed the Motion of Thanks to the President for his Address on 25th April, 2000. The discussion on the Motion lasted over eleven hours with 25 Members taking part in it.

Substantial legislative work was also completed by the Lok Sabha during this Session. In all, the House passed 26 Bills. Some of the more important Bills passed include the Constitution Eighty-ninth and Ninetieth (Amendment) Bills; the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Bill, 2000; the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions (Amendment) Bill, 2000; the Designs Bill, 2000; the Mizoram University Bill, 2000; the Information Technology Bill, 1999; and the National Housing Bank (Amendment) Bill, 2000.

The House held meaningful discussions on four impor-

tant matters of public importance under Rule 193. These related to: the participation of some State Government employees in RSS activities; the drought situation prevailing in various parts of the country; the rise in prices of essential commodities; and on the Statement made by the Minister of External Affairs regarding the hijacking of Indian Airlines plane IC-814.

Five important matters were raised by Members by way of Calling Attention and the concerned Ministers made Statements in response to these Calling Attentions. In addition, 23 Statements were made by Ministers on different matters. Three Half-an-Hour Discussions were also raised in the House. As regards the Question Hour, out of the 740 Starred Questions listed, 98 Questions were orally answered in the House. While written replies were given for 8061 Unstarred Questions, two Short Notice Questions were also taken up by the House.

In respect of Private Members' Business, 60 Private Members' Bills were introduced. Of these, two Bills were discussed by the House which were later withdrawn with the consent of the House. One Bill remained part-discussed. Two Private Members' Resolutions were also discussed by the House which were subsequently withdrawn with the consent of the House. One Resolution remained part-discussed.

Members also made use of the provisions of Rule 377 to raise 225 matters in the House. Besides, as many as 281 Members raised matters of urgent public importance during the 'Zero Hour'.

One of the most significant developments during this Session has been the constitution of a Committee on Ethics which will oversee the moral and ethical conduct of the Members and examine the cases referred to it in respect of their ethical or other misconduct. I am confident that the constitution of this Committee, while further strengthening our Committee system, will also add a new dimension to ethics in public life.

As the hon. Members would have noticed, we have been able to transact substantial business of great import during this Budget Session. A good amount of this work was transacted during the second part of the Third Session.

On several days, the House sat late into the night to complete the listed business. All this was made possible of the full cooperation that I have received from all sections of the House. I am extremely grateful to the hon. Leader of the House, the hon. Leader of the Opposition, the leaders of various Parties and Groups in the House as also the Chief Whips and Whips for their kind cooperation and the courtesy they extended to me and to my colleagues, the hon. Deputy