

[Sh. Piyus Tiraky]

they are in connivance with such people. Government employees are also in league with them. Even Shopkeepers are hand in glove with them, and if you do not have sufficient power to check this menace then leave it to the public and see how the black money is unearthed. Let the Government declare it openly that they do not have sufficient power and leave the rest to the public and then see whether the problem is solved or not.

So far as the question of direct and indirect taxes is concerned, the Government have reduced direct tax after giving a thought to this unto but the indirect taxes have adversely affected the people. For example the price of petrol, has been increased. It has affected the price structure of every other commodity. This has been a major cause behind the rise in prices. This rise in prices has resulted in increased expenditure in the budget of the poor people. My submission to the Government is that this unto should be given due consideration otherwise villages would be deserted as people would migrate to cities. People are fleeing the villages because they fear that they might have to starve there. This will stop the developmental work which is going on. It may also lead to law and order problem. The incidents of theft, robbery and pickpocketing are increasing due to this very reason. It will become difficult for the people to move out of their houses after sometime. The country is facing this problem merely because prices of essential commodities have sky-rocketed. All the Members of this House whether they belong to the Opposition or the ruling party are unanimous that prices will have to be checked as there is no other alternative to this. The burden on the common man will have to be reduced. The Government will have to do it.

15.31 hrs.

[English]

RESOLUTION RE. POLL REFORMS -  
CONTD.

MR. CHAIRMAN: We shall now take up Private Members' Business—Further dis-

cussion on the Resolution moved by Shri L.K. Advani on the 29th December, 1989. Mr. K.D. Sultanpuri may now speak.

[Translation]

SHRI YUVRAJ (Katihar): Whenever the Private Members' Business has been taken up we have discussed this Resolution on poll reforms. It should be wound up now and the next resolution by Shrimati Rajeshwari should be taken up. This Resolution has taken the entire allotted time of the House and it is still continuing. Kindly take a decision in this regard. I request you to wound it up and take up the other Resolution.

[English]

MR. CHAIRMAN: I am not the competent person to take the decision.

SHRI G.M. BANATWALLA (Ponnani): But he has moved a motion. (*Interruptions*). He is entitled to move a closure motion. He says that the question be put now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, it is not the time. We have got 39 minutes more. After that, we will decide whether it is to be put. Yes, Mr. Advani.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI (New Delhi): Sir, there is no question of exceeding the time limit because there is no time limit as such in the case of non-official motions. But in this particular case, if the House agrees, we can certainly have the Minister respond to the entire debate.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): Once, Mr. Banatwalla's Resolution went on for a long time.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI : Yes, it has happened. This is the fourth Friday that we are having this and there have been occasions in the past where even Nath Pai's Resolution went on for months on end. So, there can be no objection to it. But I have little doubt that as a large number of Members have contributed, if one or two more wish to contribute,

then after that the Minister may be asked to respond, and then I will speak.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT (Almora): I have a suggestion, Sir. Time can be extended by one hour for this Resolution. Then the next Resolution can be taken up because there are a few speakers from our side also who are very keen to speak on it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now we have got 39 minutes more. So, if the House is agreeable to conclude it by that time, then it is all right.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT: You extend it till Five O'Clock, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Okay. If the House agrees, we will extend it up to Five O'Clock.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Agreed.

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: The Minister may be asked to reply at 4.15.

*(Interruptions)*

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister can speak at 4.30 p.m. and after that you can reply.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT: There should be time rationing also, Sir.

SHRI Y.S. MAHAJAN: There should be rationing of time, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, yes. Now, Mr. Sultanpuri may speak.

*[Translation]*

SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI (Shimla): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I rise to support the Resolution moved by Shri L.K. Advani. Elections enjoy an important position in democratic system and it is a very good system. Members of Panchayats, Zila Parishads and Legislative Assemblies are elected with this system. But there are some drawbacks in our electoral system. Today people with muscle and money power in villages and

cities are growing more powerful. These people allure public with the help of money power. Thus they are weakening democracy in our country. They make every effort to remain in power at any cost so as to derive maximum political benefit. Today the people living in the villages also know about it. There are big Zamindars in rural areas. They want that the members of their own families only are elected to all elected bodies be it Panchayats or the Assembly or the Parliament. Such a mentality is developing in these people. As regards reducing the effect of money power is concerned, state funding of elections is absolutely necessary. However, only an organised or a registered Party should be allowed to take part in the Elections. Now a days a large number of independent candidates take part in elections. The number of independent candidates are much more.

The other day I read a news report that as many as 89 candidates were contesting election in the by-elections to be held in Ambala, Darba Kalan and Meham constituencies in Haryana. You can well imagine how a large ballot paper will be required to be printed for this and how much money will be spent thereon by the Government. I think that the security amount to be deposited by the Independent candidates for contesting elections should be raised to at least Rs. 10,000 in order to discourage non-serious candidates from contesting elections. Only organised parties should be allowed to take part in elections. Besides, some provisions would also be made for other parties. What should be those provisions? These include erection of common plat-forms from where all the political parties, be the Congress Party, or the B.J.P. or the C.P.I. or for that matter the C.P.M. or any other parties address the public and inform about their programmes and manifestoes, etc. At the time of elections all political parties make false promises to the people. In order to win public support, a particular party made a promise that they would make available sugar at Rs. 5/- a kilo, yet another party the B.J. P. made a promise that if the people cast their votes to B.J.P., they would make available rice at Rs. 2 a Kg, flour at Rs. 1.50 a Kg. and salt at

[Sh. K.D. Sultanpuri]

a price of 25 paise a kg. Such false promises were made in Himachal Pradesh. Promises should be made keeping in view the economic condition of the country and taxes should also be realised from the people accordingly. The democracy would be weakened if the parties win elections on false assurances. We have to strengthen the country and it could be done only if we desist from making false promises to the people. I would also like to say that the posters pasted on the walls by one person are torn off by the other. This is not proper. A law is required to be made to this effect that no one tear-off posters of anyone so that public could be able to read all of them.

There is wide spread use of liquor during elections. This menace is spoiling our future generation. Today, the situation has come to such a pass that elections even in schools and colleges are full of party-politics and students are being exploited. I would like that some steps should be taken to check this situation. A serious thought should be given to it. I would like to make one more point. While inviting leader to form the Government, opportunity should be first given to the leader of the largest party, which could form the Government. It is not so that the combination of a number parties are given opportunity to form the Government as is being seen today that various parties supporting the Government are beating their own drums. The C.P.I. says that their programmes are the best, so are the B.J.P., the C.P.M. and the Janta Dal which are praising their respective programmes. Allegations are being levelled against each other. Do they think about the country? Do they ever think to move the country forward? Will their eloquent be wasted in levelling charges against the Congress (I) Party? The ruling Party becomes happy when allegations are made against the Congress Party by its friendly parties. They should stop levelling false allegations. Now the people know the reality of this Government. That is why the popularity of the Government among the masses has been gradually decreasing. Today, we are

not discharging our duties in the manner expected from us by the people. All of us are intellectuals and understand all the things very well. The masses have entrusted a great responsibility on us to run the country and we should shoulder it, no matter whether we are in opposition or in the ruling party. We cannot run the Government with the help of falsehood.

Now a days we are bound by the rules and regulations made by the bureaucrats. All of us raise our voice against them in the House, but outside the House, no one takes it seriously. Who-so-ever becomes a Minister, he gives reply on the same pattern that the matter is being looked into. In this process the period of five years is spent and many ministers come and go during the period and the work suggested by the public representatives are not accomplished. I shall be happy if you give me any instances where works suggested by any of the public representatives had been done by the Government. A proper arrangement should be made for this purpose. All the political parties should sit together and think about it as to how they can fulfil the promises made by them to the public. We are to enlighten the masses. Today you can see the difference between the salary of a bureaucrat and the income of a poor man, we the M.P's also get a lot of facilities here. We are provided big houses to live in but no one takes care of us outside Delhi. The big bosses of the Parties get respect, but no regard is shown to the ordinary leaders. Unless the public representatives are given due regard they cannot deliver good. Unless we stop fighting with one another, the country would continue to suffer. A mention has been made about booth-capturing. By whom it is done? This is done by the rich people, which can go to the Supreme Court, the High Court or to the District Court. The poor people, Harijan—Adivasi people are not allowed to cast their votes. Persons whose sole purpose is to earn more and more money are elected.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, if we are to strengthen the country, we have to amend the electoral system. Although, I do not have any hope

from this Government, even then, I would like to suggest the Government to make amendment in the electoral system. All of us will cooperate the Government in this matter. It would be a commendable task. All the political parties should make concerted efforts to amend electoral system so as to fulfil the responsibility entrusted upon us by the people and to strengthen the nation.

I am very grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak and expressing my views in the House.

DR. S.P. YADAV (Sambhal): Hon. Mr. Chairman Sir, I would like to raise two points in the context of the Private Members' Resolution on electoral reforms that has been moved by hon. Shri Advani.

Mr. Chairman Sir, the irregularities we see in our electoral process these days is just due to a general degeneration of our national character. It has come to my notice that the first stage where irregularities occur is when party tickets are distributed to various people for monetary considerations. If our rational leaders behave in this manner, corruption is bound to flourish.

Secondly, a lot of money is spent during elections to win voters, merely a drink of alcohol and by transporting them to the polling booths in their personal vehicles or for various other petty temptations. So these are the versions heads on which money is squandered and that is the way how the votes of backward classes and weaker sections of society are captured. It shows that the Corruption is at its peak during the election days. Apart from this, leaders of the ruling party manage to collect a lot of funds during elections. During the last elections the then ruling party i.e. Congress(I) extorted an enormous amount of money from sugar mill-owners as a result of which the price of sugar which was selling at Rs. 6.50 per kg, at once shot up to Rs. 1300 per kg. So that was the way the ruling party mobilised funds for elections resorting to corrupt practices to achieve that end. Similarly voters are classified on the lines of caste and here it is

the breeding ground of communalism. There is a saying that what is obvious is not always the ultimate truth whatever is preached here in the House is not practiced at the time of elections. Places are marked on the times of concentration of Pandits' 'Yadavas' Thakurs' on 'Muslims and these things are kept in mind while giving tickets to the party candidates at the time of elections. However many a slogans of idealism we may raise, the fact is that during elections, people are divided on caste and tend to favour the candidates of their own community. Such a situation may clearly witnessed in all the areas. All this encourages casteism and communalism.

There is one more point of booth capturing that is vehemently raised quite often. Every candidate who contests the elections wants to capture the booths in his constituency. We adopt resolutions to condemn such practices but in real life we do not follow them. Booth-capturing will continue unless the Election Commission cancels the candidature of the candidates found guilty in such cases. Booth-capturing took place in Amethi during the last elections. Due to this re-polling was ordered at 95 polling booths there. If there was no booth capturing, what was the necessity of going in for repolling in that constituency?

At that time the former Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi was contesting from that constituency. So it was during his time that this incident took place, a fact that was proved correct as re-polling was held at the 95 booths. Hence such a provision should be made wherein the candidature of such a person who has indulged in the act of booth capturing of should be declared as cancelled. So as to debar him from contesting the elections.

I would also like to give a few suggestions in this regarding political leaders should later care to give their party tickets to the people with a clear record and not to the criminals. Today criminals are making their basic entry into politics by winning elections on the strength of their ratoriey in their

[Dr. S.P. Yadav]

respective constituencies. So I would like to urge upon the party leaders to give tickets to persons with a good track record. Secondly, voters should be issued identity cards and polling officials should be appointed from the neighbouring districts and not from the same district. The present way of canvassing should also be changed. At the time of filing nominations a candidate should declare the publicity material that he is going to use and if he violates the norms set by the Election Commission, his candidature should stand cancelled. As in Switzerland and Denmark an amendment should be made in the People's Representation Act and there should be in provision of right to recall in the act. Parliament is the highest institution in a country. So it is essential that a nation has a strong character. Without that nothing can be achieved.

SHRI NAND KUMAR SAI (Raigarh): We have been discussing the Bill introduced by hon. Shri Advani for quite a long time. Elections are the very basic of democracy and if there are unfair practices in the electoral process, the right people cannot be got elected. This is bound to have an adverse effect on the lives of all the citizens of the country. Much has been said about irregularities in the electoral process, the cases of booth capturing and the extra ordinarily large number of candidates contesting the elections. I don't think that in an election, any political party is more important than the nation itself.

I shall briefly put forward two suggestions regarding poll reforms. In fact the nation is above every thing and a political party comes only thereafter. There should be a code of conduct for all political parties. Some political parties have made efforts to evolve a specific procedure to take a decision in respect of their prospective party candidates. There should be a provision at the national level to ban political parties which give tickets to criminals. The Congress Party's flag resembles with the national flag. I feel that no party should be allowed do have a flag

resembling with the national flag. Instead they should difference between the two because the place of national flag is above all the flags of the political parties.

Hon. Mr. Chairman Sir, my second point relates to the restriction on a person carrying a party symbol with him while entering a polling booth to cast his vote. But you cannot exercise such a restriction in case of a particular party symbol. That is the hand, because everybody carries a hand with him. So such a symbols should not be allotted to any political party because it is misused. So I would suggest that from now on this symbol be declared as cancelled. It so happens that at the time of elections, party workers wave their hands to indicate that voters should cast their votes in favour of the hand. All these aspects must be kept in mind if we are to strengthen this democratic country of ours. Hon'ble Chairman Sir, considering the present—day circumstances in the country a big question mark hangs over the issue of poll reforms. Already a lot of time has been spent discussing this matter so it needs only an immediate implementation of such reforms. Hon. Members who have participated in this discussion have given many valuable suggestions but all these suggestions will amount to nothing if they are not implemented. So I would request the Government to consider the suggestions given by the hon. Members and implement them so that at the time of next elections we may be able to tell the people that. House has discussed all these things and now the Government is taking concrete steps to bring in poll reforms. I think this would be a definitely a step towards strengthening democracy a step that will give a new direction to the political culture not only in this country but in the entire world. With these words I conclude.

[English]

SHRI Y.S. MAHAJAN (Jalgaon); Mr. Chairman, Sir, the hon. Member Shri Advani has started discussion of a very important problem relating to our democracy. Electoral reform is a very old subject. It has been discussed for a long time in our country. This

problem is also are being discussed all over the world. There are certain peculiar conditions prevailing in our country. As regards common problems which are discussed all over the world, I will mention them very briefly. Some people believe that the System of proportional representation with a single transferable vote is a just form of election, because it gives to each group the representation it deserves in the legislative Assembly. But, this is not suitable to our country because the electorate consists mostly of uneducated people. So, it will not be possible to work out this system efficiently in our country.

Then there is the listing system where you vote for the party and not for the candidate. Then the party selects its candidates according to the number of votes polled by it. But this gives the party bosses an enormous power of manipulation. And I think, Advaniji will excuse me he is a leader of the party, that considering the quality of leaders of all parties, it will not be fair to burden them with this responsibility or thrust it upon them.

The system that we follow is first pass the post. The man who gets the highest number of votes is elected. It is possible that he may get less than 35 per cent or less than 50 per cent of votes. Even then he is elected though the others together might get more than sixty or seventy per cent of the votes. This sort of system is very defective. But it is good because it gives a stable Government. That is the British experience. I hope, it will be so in our country. At the moment, it is not so. Not a single party in India has a majority in the Parliament. But that is a system which is likely to give a stable Government more than any other form of representation.

I will come to peculiar problems of our country which, I think, no political theorist have been able to envisage or discuss so far. The parties themselves while selecting their candidates do not consider their character, their ability, their education and their loyalty. All these things are brushed aside and only those persons get tickets who are likely to be loyal to the leader, whatever be their charac-

ter. This has lowered the prestige of representative bodies in our country. This has lowered the level of discussion in Parliament and this has spoilt the administration of our country, which depends on the character and integrity of the leaders.

We all talk of secularism. All parties swear by secularism. But while selecting candidates for election, they take into account the caste of the person concerned. This is a disease from which we must free ourselves therewith, our secularism cannot succeed. All that we have been doing for the last 40 years has been that we have been preaching one thing and doing exactly the opposite. All the parties have been doing this. Therefore, the longer we practice this sort of thing, this sort of democracy, the farther we will be from secularism or real democracy.

In our country, people who call themselves progressive or radicals have been saying that the Government should finance elections in our country. This is an illusion. This sort of thing will not improve things for the simple reasons that if a man gets money from the Government, it will not prevent him from spending money from his own pocket. If he is not allowed to spend money from his pocket he can spend it through his friends. So, the money which is given by the Government will be an additional resource. And, thus, we will be spending more money than we have been doing so far. Therefore, this system which is supposed to be prevalent in West Germany and in sponsored many progressive people in our country cannot eradicate the problem of excessive expenditure in the existing conditions in our country.

I need not mention the horrible things that have been taking place in our country. Our democracy, excuse me, Sir, is a fake democracy. It is a caricature of a democracy. We capture booths, the people and still call it a democracy. One feels hopeless.

In a country like ours, we can improve things if the heads of all the parties come together and agree on a common programme

[Sh. Y.S. Mahajan]

and are determined to follow the principles or precepts which they themselves lay down. Unless all the parties are united, it will not be possible to make electoral reforms or improve the functioning of democracy in our country. With these words, I conclude my speech.

16.00 hrs.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RAM KRISHNA YADAV (Azamgarh): Hon. Speaker, Sir, after attaining independence in 1947, we should have contested elections on democratic lines according to the aspirations of our people. However, we are constrained to observe that over the years money, media and mafia are playing a vigorous and vital role in politics which is eroding the power of the people. What we find today is that the new parties emerge and try to win elections with the help of money power. They receive money from big capitalists to come up with the help of media and mafia. I am quite sure that if these parties are not supported by money, media and mafia, then many of our hon'ble Members who are sitting here might not have won the elections. However, on the basis of their money power and with the help of media and mafia, they have been winning elections. It is posing an imminent threat to the democratic structure of this country. In this country, elections should be free and fair and held on a democratic and a socialistic pattern. With the increasing power of money, media and mafia, it is having an adverse effects on the democratic set up of this country, which is prejudicial to the interests of the people. These parties and the people are wielding their power on the people of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and backward classes on the basis of their power of money, mafia and musclemen. Whenever the ordinary persons want to cast their vote with a sense of self-respect and prestige they are intimidated and compelled to cast their vote in their favour. The people who want to take part in politics with their independent views

and self-respect and have faith in a particular party to contest against the candidate of some other party, they are discouraged and labelled as communals and terrorists. Government policy also seems to be negative in this regard. If the Government so desires, it can hold free and fair elections in India, but the Government itself does not want it. Everybody knows what had happened in Amethi, but the members of the Congress Party are not prepared to say even a single word against Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. Similarly the people of Janata Dal do not want to say anything against their leader in respect of Meham incident.

SHRI RAM BAHADUR SINGH (Maharajanji): Janata Dal is the first such party which has demanded repoll in Meham.

SHRI RAM KRISHAN YADAV: Everybody knows as to what is happening in Bihar. I want to say that in a country like India democracy should flourish with a strengthened economic structure and favourable climate for socialism. But on the contrary, Mafia groups and anti-social elements are wielding power to cause a set back to the democratic set up. Now it is our duty that the whole society is reinvigorated to achieve the optimum utilization of our man power, otherwise, only the rich people will continue to win elections and it will never be the turn of the poor. All these tactics are aimed at deterring the son of a poor person from contesting elections. In my State Bihar, candidates spend lavishly on the petty items like posters, but for a poor man it is a cry for the moon because he cannot afford to manage even the basic necessities of life i.e. food, clothing and shelter. It is not good for a poor country like India to spend such a colossal amount on elections. It is an ever increasing trend and it is something not good. Also the role of money, media and mafia in the democratic set up of this country is constantly increasing. It needs to be checked. With these words, I conclude.

SHRI JANARADAN YADAV (Godda): Mr. Chairman, Sir, while participating in the discussion on the resolution of Hon. Advaniji

regarding the electoral reforms, I would also like to convey my sentiments through you. In the State of Bihar to which I belong, wielding of money and muscle power is at its peak. Both of them have their unchecked play. During the last assembly elections hundred of people had been killed at the polling booths. Therefore, I would like to urge upon the Government to put a complete check on these forces to ensure free and fair elections on the basis of our voters' list. Electronic machines may be used for this purpose. Identity cards should be issued to the voters. There should be separate polling booths for the tribals, harizans, oppressed and the backward classes. Besides that, at the time of Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, S.D.O., district collectors of the area should not be deployed as returning officers because these people can exercise their influence and authority on the local residents. Therefore, they should be transferred to other districts for that purpose. Also the expenditure on elections should be borne by the Government and not by the individuals so that the poor, the suppressed and the backward people may have their representation in democracy and physical and money power may be dispensed with. These are the few suggestions I want to place before the Government through you.

[English]

\*SHRI GOPINATH GAJAPATHI (Berhampur): Mr. Chairman Sir, with your kind permission I would like to make my speech on poll reform in my mother tongue, Oriya.

HON'BLE CHAIRMAN : But, be brief.

[Translation]

SHRI GOPI NATH GAJAPATHI: Sir, I rise to speak briefly in support of the Resolution of Honourable Member Shri Lal Krishan Advaniji. I would like to deal with three to four salient points in my speech. At the outset I would like to express my views on money

power. Shri Advaniji has observed that the evil influence of money power has been ever increasing. So there is a need to curb the influence of money power. I entirely agree with him that the influence of money power should be limited. Sir, myself I have had very bad experience in the matter. I appeal to all political parties to ensure that this influence be strongly curbed. We should have free and fair elections.

Secondly, I would like to deal with muscle power. I am glad to inform the August House that the muscle power has not made considerable much headway in my State of Orissa. However, I am sorry to hear from some Members that it is very much existing in their States. We have to be very careful light away before this mal practice spreads to other States. We cannot give justice to our democratic system if we use the muscle power in elections. I support the proposal to issue identity cards to the voters. To overcome rampant impersonation and also vehemently denounce both capturing as debase acts.

Sir, I am extremely sorry to point out one thing i.e. selection of candidates by political parties on the basis of caste of community consideration. If one party selects a candidate from one particular caste or community, other parties also try to nominate their candidates from the same caste or community. The intention is very clear, of securing mala-fide division of votes of his community. But this certainly is not good. Selection of candidates should not be made on the basis of caste or community. Similarly, Sir, I must say that baseless campaign should not be allowed in elections, particularly on the language issue. I wish to point at as to how it was made an issue in my elections. Groups from my rival parties have preclaimed said in their elections campaign in my constituency that I am in capable of speaking my own mother tongue Oriya. I shall not remain in my State of Orissa even after winning the Lok Sabha election. I will migrate to some other State and that I shall not be able to deliver the

---

\*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Oriya.



[Sh. Janaradan Yadav]

good to my people. While replying befittingly to such baseless and malicious campaign I would like to quote verse in *Sanskrit*, which means as under:

"Mother and Mother-land are mightier than the Heaven." Indeed I consider that Mother and mother-land till the scales in their favour. Honourable Chairman, Sir, I have no intention to go anywhere else leaving my have land, of Parlakhemundi in Ganjam District, Orissa. This fact I want to put on record. My sole aim and ambition for entering to politics is to serve my people of Orissa and the nation in my own humble way. I would like to State honourable House that my grand father, Late Shri Krishna Chandra Gajapathi Narayan Deo had played an epic role in the formation of a separate Orissa State in 1936. For this sterling role played by him in the merger of Oriya speaking areas, he was made the first Premier of Orissa State. It is not my intention to elaboration this immortal contribution to the State of Orissa and its people. Rather being his grand son, it is my foremost duty to serve the people of Orissa, and in particular to devote my life for the upliftment of Oriya language as well as the backward district of Ganjam.

[*English*]

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is why you are talking in Oriya.

[*Translation*]

\*SHRI GOPI NATH GAJAPATHI: Indeed Sir, hastily, I would like to state that a lot of good suggestions have been made in the resolution. Many Honourable Members have given their valuable suggestions while expressing their views. We should make it a point to adopt those good suggestions. If we do that it will go a long way in strengthening our democracy. There will be free and fair elections in every constituency. Ultimately it will help the people of this largest democratic country of the world.

I thank you very much for giving me time and opportunity to speak on this vital topic of 'Poll Reforms'.

[*English*]

SHRI BHABANI SHANKAR HOTA (Sambalpur): Hon. Chairman, Sir, as already committed, I will not take more than a few minutes. I will only put forward a few points rather than giving a long lecture.

The State must finance the whole election process. It should finance the political parties and the candidates through the political parties.

Secondly, there must be some provision in the Constitution so that it is mandatory for a registered and recognised political party to conduct its party affairs in a democratic manner, so that a trend of despotic leadership does not grow in the party and the party is kept away from all the ills in the election process. I am of the opinion that one of the greatest dangers to democracy is that most the parties nowadays are not conducting themselves democratically.

As I have said earlier, some of the expenses could be reimbursed to the political parties and also the financing should be done both in cash and in kind.

Lastly, the delimitation of the constituencies is overdue. The size of the constituencies is so large that it is practically impossible for an elected Member to do justice to his constituency. The next point is about the role of officers who are engaged by the Election Commission on a piecemeal basis. They should be drawn out and a separate machinery to conduct the elections should be constituted with full-time officers so that they can do justice to the work assigned to them. These are the few suggestions which I want to make. With these words, I conclude.

SHRI NANDU THAPA (Sikkim): Sir, I will also speak only on a few points because whatever points I have to say on electoral

\*Translation of speech originally delivered in Oriya.

reforms have already been made by me in the All-party meeting held on electoral reforms. Firstly, multipurpose electoral identity cards with photos must be introduced. This card system was test case in Sikkim in 1979 when Shri S.L. Shakdhar was the Chief Election Commissioner of India. In 1984 elections also, this identity card system was used partly in Sikkim and although it was a test case, it was found successful cen per cent. But I do not know why that has been done away with. The advantages of this identity card system are, bogus voting will be reduced, foreigners entry will be curtailed in the border States, identification of persons for all purposes and it also serves as an advantage to the administration.

My next point is about delimitation. Population pattern changes in every segment. Monitoring has to be done and according to that, delimitation has to be done. Population pattern keeps on changing for every ten or fifteen years, the process goes on. Many Members have said that it has become difficult to do justice to their constituents which is a fact. The other difficulty is clubbing of districts while doing demarcation of constituencies. If you club two or more districts in one constituency, it becomes difficult for the candidates and the party workers to approach all the districts and work there. In Sikkim, demarcation was done in 1974 when at that time it was not a part of India. Everybody knows this. Under the meaning and scope of Article 371F of the Constitution, there are provisions for delimitation of Constituencies in Sikkim. Delimitation need not be warded off till 2000 AD. Why was this not done this far is that question which we have asked the Central Government to look into. We hope and demand from the Government that delimitation should be done before 2000 AD.

The next factories about rotation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes seats or reserved seats. This will reduce the class communalism to a great extent.

With these suggestions, I conclude.

**SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN (Cannanore):** Sir, I am highly thankful for giving me an opportunity to participate in this debate of electoral reforms. I know that the time at my disposal is very limited. So, I do not want to touch upon the points which have already been raised by my friends. Free and fair elections are part and parcel of democracy. The manner in which elections are conducted ever since independence and the sagacity shown by the voters have evoked all-round appreciation. However, there have been certain inherent defects in this electoral system which have to be rectified. No doubt that certain measures have been taken from time to time to do away with the maladies of this system. Money and muscle power, as many have put it here, are the important reasons for the decay of the electoral system and in this connection, I may rightly say that State funding is a welcome step in the right direction. A suitable legislation must be introduced so that free and fair elections can be held in all State. It is a pity that handlums and persons with criminal records are in fact ruling the roost during the time of elections. This was evident in the recent elections also. There should be a bold initiative on the part of the Government to eliminate these undesirable elements during the time of election and there must be a clear provision in the electoral law to debar or disqualify candidates found indulging in anti-social and criminal activities by colluding with such elements.

Prevention of booth capturing and rigging must be on the top of the agenda of the electoral reforms. The secessionist elements as well as communal forces indulging in anti-national activities need to be dealt with a heavy hand. Such secessionist and communal forces must be debarred from elections. In fact, it should be a precondition that such people would not be allowed to contest elections.

Then, introduction of multi-purpose identity cards with photograph will no doubt prevent the voters from casting more than one vote. For this purpose, the law must clearly provide that any person possessing

[Sh. Mullapally Ramachandran]

more than one identity card on any pretext would be subjected to deterrent punishment.

The multiplicity of non-serious candidates at the time of election is a major defect in the electoral system in and we should see that non-serious candidates do not contest the elections. Such candidates are put up by certain serious candidates in order to cut into the votes of other candidates. There must be a clear provision in the election law that on-serious candidates would not be allowed to contest the elections at all.

I have another suggestion to make. Persons found guilty of offences against women, the vulnerable section of our society, must be disqualified and debarred from contesting elections.

The Election Commission must be given wide powers to conduct elections at all levels from Panchayat to Parliament. For this purpose, the Election Commission should be converted into a multi-member statutory body. The Election Commission must be empowered to punish the erring officers who are entrusted with the election duties at the time of elections.

As we know, there are a number of election petitions pending in the High Courts and the Supreme Court. These election petitions are not disposed of within a reasonable period. There must be a stipulated period for disposing them off, say three months, within which all election petitions must be disposed off. For this purpose, there must be some special courts or tribunals, so that the election petitions are disposed of within a reasonable time.

Before I conclude, I would like to make a couple of more suggestions. The countermanding of elections in case of death of a candidate is another defect in the electoral system. If a candidate of a political party dies during the time of election, the party concerned should be allowed to suggest another name, as otherwise the entire election

process will be upset and a lot of difficulties and cost will be involved.

In a democracy every citizen has got a right to vote, but unfortunately, we find that a sizeable number of people, especially belonging to the educated class, do not go to cast the votes at all. There should be a clear provision in the election laws that the right to vote must be a compulsory duty and all citizens must go to the polling booths and cast their votes.

Lastly, ours is the largest democracy in the world. I suggest that a Parliamentary Committee should be set up to go into all the vital aspects of electoral reforms. The Committee should tour throughout the country and we should have wide ranging discussions which are highly essential before going in for a comprehensive legislation in this respect.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SATYANARAYAN JATIYA (Ujjain): Mr. Chairman, Hon. Advani ji has taken this golden opportunity to initiate discussion on a very important issue. There is no doubt that we live in a democratic country and we realize it very well, but actually it is the element of fairness which should be felt and discussed in all its depth and seriousness. It has been stated in the constitution of India that "We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens justice, social, economical and political." Therefore, the words 'the Government of the People, for the People and by the people' are important. However, the concept of 'Government by the people' should come to be a reality through a free and fair electoral process.

Our electoral process is a very complicated one. It starts with initiating the election process. I know it from my past experience that taking into account the results of previous election, names of thousands of voters are transferred from voters' list of an area to

that of some other area. In fact, names of upto 25,000 voters are transferred from one constituency to the other area. However when the people lodged their protest against this practice, it has now stopped. Entire electoral process needs to be streamlined. Identity cards should be issued to each and every voter to put an end to this practice of adding names to the voters' list and to ensure that only genuine voters cast their votes. Elections to Lok Sabha, assemblies and other local bodies are quite frequently held. But a lot of time and money is wasted on holding the elections at a different point of time. This situation keeps a large number of people engaged in this process. Therefore, it is my submission that all these elections i.e. for Lok Sabha, Assemblies and the local bodies should be held simultaneously. It will save a lot of time and money of the people. I would also like to submit one thing that whatever be the order of steps to be taken by the Government, it should be done properly. I mean to say that polling booths are decided while preparing the voters' list. I believe that voters lists occupy a very important place in a polling booth. However, it is my own experience that some voters' lists are forcibly added to those already meant for a particular area booths. In this way, there is only one polling booth for a block of 4-5 villages. What I mean to say is that there should be a separate polling booth for every village. It will save the unnecessary transportation of voters to the polling booth for castings their votes to and voters will also be protected against any external influence on the day of polling.

When polling booths will be set up in each and every village, there will be no need to provide transport to voters to reach the booths and thus they could be protected from being influenced by the candidate who provides transport for them. It is quite but natural that the voters will be influenced by the candidate which provides them transport facilities to reach the polling booths. I strongly plead for setting up polling booths in each and every village.

The electoral process should also be

made free from the influence of money and muscle power. If the above proposal is implemented, it will tone up the electoral process. It is necessary to rectify the system.

**SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV** (Jhanjharpur): Mr. Chairman, Sir, since only two minutes time is at my disposal, I would like to make two points only. There are four pillars of democracy viz. the judiciary, the Press, the people and the elections. Today, the electoral system is in jeopardy. The biggest pillar of democracy has collapsed. It is, therefore, necessary to rectify the electoral system.

What is the position of electoral system today? It was the responsibility of the party which remained in power for the last 40 to 42 years to protect the electoral process, the tallest pillar of democracy, but it is unfortunate that it is during the Congress rule that the electoral process suffered a big set back. This is the reason why the demos i.e. people were vanished from democracy and only crazy i.e. machinery was left out. It is during their regime that the people became secondary. Booth capturing is taking place on a large scale. it shows the sorry state of affairs if our elections process in elections. Display of money and muscle power reigns supreme in elections. The upper class people and the elite class in the society dominate the scene in elections. In fact, they have been dominating like this for the last thousands of years. The Lok Sabha is the supreme Panchayat, if the country. If this Situation is allowed to continue in the elections of the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies and the present electoral system is not rectified, it is definite that these Legislative bodies will become the dens of unsocial elements and the murders will not longer require bail. A time may come when a legislation may be brought forward providing therein that criminals even after committing 5 murders cannot be arrested. In order to save the country from such a danger, it is necessary to rectify the electoral process. The electoral process could be rectified through many ways. To name some of the such proposals as have come up from various quarters—issue of identify cards and

[Sh Devendra Prasad Yadav]

arrangement of mobile polling booths etc. In this connection, I would also like to make a suggestion. It should be seriously considered. My suggestion is that the electoral expenses should be funded by the State. There should be ceiling on electoral expenses and these expenses should be borne by the Government. The policy of adhocism being followed by various political parties, creates problems. The national parties should take a decision in this regard and they should be cadre based. There are parties which maintain an upper hand at the time of elections.

Parties, particularly those which are in power become successful in booth capturing. They manage to have a say at the social as well as administrative levels. The constituency I represent used to be the constituency of the former Chief Minister Shri Jagannath Mishra. He won election through looting of booths. In Bihar, particularly from Shri Lalit Narayan Mishra's time, money and muscle power have invariably been used. I have made this suggestion in order to prevent this type of booth capturing.

Finally, I would like to point out that the autonomy that has been granted to the Election Commission should not be there for name sake only but it should be fully autonomous. The Election Commission should be granted complete freedom. Then only the electoral process can be rectified. With these words, I conclude.

[English]

MR CHAIRMAN: The House has taken a decision to conclude the discussion by 4.30 P.M. and taken call the Minister for his intervention. I have got two or three more names. What is the sense of the House?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES AND MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRIDINESH GOSWAMI): Let us extend it by half an hour. Mr. Advani's reply will take

sometime. You have to take into consideration that also. I have no objection of extending the time.

MR CHAIRMAN: Then I can call two or three more Members. The problem is, if one person is called—of course there are requests from both the sides—then there may be more demands. I leave it to you.

MANY HON. MEMBERS: Okay, let us extend it by another half an hour.

MR CHAIRMAN: Then, let us extend the time. I will give two or three minutes to each hon. Member. Many hon. Members are raising their hands.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: The point which the hon. Members have not taken note of is that, forty-five Members have already spoken. Therefore, if I am to do justice to the reply, then I will require about 30-35 minutes' time. Therefore, I have no objection in extending the time. But, I hope, you will not cut my time. You will also give me sufficient time for the reply. I don't mind Members' speaking. Let them speak. I have no objection.

[Translation]

SHRIMATI VIDYA CHENNUPATI (Vijayawada): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I would like to make some suggestions with regard to the Resolution that has been moved by Shri Advani in connection with electoral reforms.

First of all, I would like to suggest that a multi-purpose identity card must be issued to each voter. The identity card should contain the date of birth and blood group of the holder. It will be highly beneficial. It will be a sort of certificate on the basis of which the voters could cast their votes. It will help checking booth capturing and bogus voting. There can be no rigging also. As such issuing of identity cards is a must.

Similarly, I would like to make a suggestion about setting up of polling booths. Polling booths should be set up in slums also.

People belonging to weaker sections find it difficult to reach the polling booths and cast their votes. Hence, polling booths must be set up at a place nearest to their place of residence. These people are not allowed to cast their votes. It is, therefore, necessary to make improvements in this regard.

Thirdly, I would like to make a submission about the electoral expenses. Today, huge sums of money are being spent on light decoration, tents and other outward shows. Cut-outs are being installed just as it is being done in cinema houses. There should be a check on these expenses. All this should be done in a simple way. This will reduce the expenses and help us to reach the people easily.

Similarly, there should be no propaganda of caste and religion. If this practice is avoided, there could be free elections. People demand votes by distributing 'Sindur'. There should be a check on such practice and the practice of seeking votes on the basis of caste and religion. Ours is a secular state and as such there is no place for such things in the elections in our country.

Similarly, bungling in counting of votes should also be checked. There have been instances in which ballot papers without signatures have been detected. I have seen such an instance in my area that there was no signature in a full bundle of ballot papers. There were signatures of neither the Presiding Officer nor anybody else. From the above instance, it seems that counting is not done properly and bogus voting is being resorted to. Proper attention must be paid to check such malpractices.

[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

Some norms should be fixed for campaigning and propaganda. I have no idea of the North, but in South, I had some practical experience. Two to three tents are pitched in a street. Various parties make long speeches from their respective camps. This results in clashes between various groups of people. It is necessary to pay attention to this also.

I would like to lay stress on my point regarding use of liquor. Now a days consumption of liquor has become the order of the day. It must be stopped. Maximum clashes take place due to this reason. People consume liquor and start quarrelling on the streets. Efforts are made to influence the voters. It will be a good step if consumption of liquor is totally prohibited throughout the country. I will thank the Government for this. Sale of liquor should be banned at least 15 days before the elections. At present, sale of liquor is banned only 24 hours before the polling which is not that useful. It should be banned 15 days before the polling. It has been noticed at several places that the candidates distribute liquor. It has been my practical experience. Such things must be checked. (*Interruptions*)

I am a Gandhian. I never distributed liquor.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Vidyaji, sale of liquor should be banned, but make your next point. Time is very short.

SHRIMATI VIDYA CHENNUPATI: Sale of liquor should be banned right from the date of announcement of elections. These are few of my suggestions. If the hon. Minister implements these suggestions, it will be highly beneficial. I would like to thank you for providing me time to speak.

SHRI SARJU PRASAD SAROJ (Mohanlalgarj): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have had a long discussion on the private Member Resolution on electoral reforms moved by hon. Advaniji. If we make a deep study, we will find that there is a logic behind this demand. The person once voted to power develops a psyche to remain in power. Therefore, he remains blind to the brazen display of money and muscle powers in elections. I would like to offer some suggestions in this regard. The elections should be mass-based, not money based and the Government should function as a care-taker

[Sh. Sarju Prasad Saroj]

Government at the time of elections. The delimitation of the constituencies should be held after every ten years, particularly in the case of reserved constituencies in which the pace of development is very slow and people miss the benefits of development in such constituencies. Therefore, the delimitation of the constituencies at frequent interval is absolutely required. Secondly, voters should be issued identity cards and casting of votes should be made compulsory. But all these are possible only when we have no attachment for power or furtherance of interests of our own kith and kin. Unless we become selfless, there can be no poll-reform. The voting-age was lowered to 18 years during last general elections. It was seen during the last elections that renewal of electoral rolls was not made and the roll prepared in 1984 were used, as a result of which at least 10-15 per cent eligible voters could not exercise their franchise. Therefore, the electoral rolls are required to be made up-to-date and the voters whose names are missing from the rolls should be allowed to exercise their franchise. In my Parliamentary constituency, there are two such segments where ordinary person still dare not to contest elections, be it a block-level election. If a person belonging to a weaker section dare to contest an election, he is harassed and forced to withdraw his nomination. We have adopted parliamentary system of administrative in India down from village panchayat level to block, district, assemblies or Parliament levels. Our constitution speaks for socialism, but our economic and social set up is capitalist. As a result, persons having money and muscle powers do not allow others to come in. I know cases where honest and popular persons have been implicated in false criminal cases and awarded punishment of flimsy grounds by the Nyay Panchayats. At the time of filing nomination for village Panchayat elections, they oppose the nominations of such persons on the ground of their having been convicted by the 'Nyay Panchayat'. Thus they are debarred from contesting elections. All these malpractices vitiate our electoral system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the suggestions put forward by me need to be considered. I thank you for giving me opportunity to speak.

[English]

SHRIBHOGENDRAJHA (Madhubani): First I would like to suggest some structural changes. I appeal to the Members from all sides of the House to ponder over them.

Our democracy is a talking democracy. The Members of the Legislatures or Parliament can talk. And some of us talk non-sense to get more publicity or compelled to talk non-sense. So I want that our democracy should be tuned a bit towards functional democracy so that we should have some accountability, some responsibility for executing something for which we fight or enact here. We gain the experience at the bottom and then again we come.

Our bureaucracy on the other hand is entirely aloof from democracy. So I want our bureaucracy, those people who actually do the work, either here or in the States, should become a part of the democratic process to implement also. There should be structural change for this. At present, we politicians, rightly or wrongly, very often wrongly also, do influence bureaucrats from the backdoor to get something done. To remove these things, my suggestion is that we should have our electoral-cum-developmental-cum-administrative units. For example, for the State Assemblies, if we have got the Assembly constituency, that very Assembly constituency should either be the block or the sub-division or taluka and the administrative unit should also be the same. Similarly, with regard to Lok Sabha constituency also, the electoral constituency should be synonymous with the district or the sub-division.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: How many Members do you have in Parliament?

SHRIBHOGENDRAJHA: We have got the constituencies throughout the country, be they districts or whatever name you may

[Sh. Bhogendra Jha]

give it. Then the elected representatives should head that committee and the administrative head of the bureaucracy should be the Secretary of that Committee. All departmental heads of that area should be there. Then with our signatures, we will have to decide for execution whether the work has been accomplished or not; otherwise, from the backdoor many of us do influence bureaucrats. With our own pen, in our own constituency, it will be very difficult for us, even for those who very easily go out of the way, to order for the payment of a bill for a job which has never been done. So I suggest that we should make the electoral constituency synonymous with the administrative areas and the developmental areas.

Here at the State level or at the Central level we should have standing committees of Members of Parliament for various sectors unlike the present Consultative Committees. The Standing Committees should be something nearer to what the US Congress has got. So here also Members of Parliament from both Houses, those who are concerned, can go into the depth of the matter and ensure for policy formulation and execution. With that aspect some structural change is needed. For a vast country like India with out ancient tradition and, according to us, bright future also, we all have to do some exercise on what I have suggested.

The CPI in 1976 in its resolution in the National Council had suggested these things. I am sorry that we could not pursue it further. I do submit is the whole House to consider this point seriously. I think with regard to elections, whenever the candidates are put up, screening is done and finally the candidates' list is prepared. Every candidate is after the printed material. But the printing cost should be borne by the Government. Even if the Government provides them with one or two cars or jeeps or for that matter nothing at all, even than also, all of us will be in the same race. So, that does not matter. Except the vehicles which are permitted for the candidates, not a single vehicle should

be allowed to ply independently. Otherwise, it will create problems.

Our friends were talking about the issue of identity cards. It is not necessary.

When the booth itself or the officer himself is captured, why there is a need for identity cards? Upto South, it has not yet gone but it will travel from the North. So, in that situation, if these things are made available on an equal basis, then you can have a semblance of better form of democracy. I do not want to go into the details. I do not want to go into the allegations. We have got very bitter experiences. But, I do not want to narrate them here. So, only with these two suggestions, I am concluding my speech.

**DR. VENKATESH KABDE (Nanded):**

In my constituency in one booth there were 47 candidates and the real problem was how to house them. But, practical problems may arise. The independent candidates should somehow be restricted. I suggest that the deposit money be increased to Rs. 5,000. But, the suggestion has already been made. In addition to that we can keep another amount which could be called as 'caution money'. This amount may be to the tune of Rs. 10,000. If a candidate is polled less than say 1,000 or 2000 votes, then that money should be forfeited. This kind of provision may serve as a deterrent for the non-serious candidates. The question of enrolling members and bogus voters is also a very serious. We had about 160 college students enrolled and all these students belonged to one engineering college which belongs to a Congress leader. So this kind of practice could be prevented by having random checks on electoral roll. Now the electoral rolls are being checked on some complaints. I suggest that there should be random checking of the electoral rolls sufficiently beforehand. Suppose if voters enroll their names in other areas also that could be eliminated.

About the money spent on the election, I strongly suggest that there should be state funding. I would say that this may be a self-serving command. Because, I think, there



[Dr. Venkatesh Kabde]

was a negative voting and people voted against certain issues and the same situation may not continue for a long time. I believe that there may be people with character who may not have money, but they may have an aspiration to contest in the elections. These people may not get an opportunity to contest because all the parties do persistently ask the question to the candidate. "Can you spend this much amount of money for the elections". If he says no there is almost no chance of his candidature being considered for election. So, I think the State funding should be very seriously considered and I suggest that this should be in the form of materials. As one hon. Member has suggested, the materials should be identified, may be in the form of pamphlets, vehicles etc. Anything other than what has been approved in the format should be banned. There should be a practical mechanism to check the backdoor entry of the money into the elections. It may be difficult, but certainly an attempt needs to be made in this direction.

I would lastly mention about the people who do not vote. We always have a voting percentage of something like 50 or 60 per cent. But, a large number of people are still not participating in the election process. The votes of these persons are also equally important. Their participation may change the whole balance in favour of a right person. Somehow, the election does not mean anything for these people. So, we have to educate the people about the value of voting and this is a work which could be given to voluntary organisations and to the society. But an attempt must be made to educate the voters to see that the percentage of voting really increases to 80 or 90 per cent. It may appear very difficult but unless this is done, I think the electoral reforms in our country will not be complete.

About booth capturing and other things, we all know about the sensitive areas in a particular place but the action is taken only very late. Many a time adequate forces does

not reach there. Therefore, I would suggest that in all the constituencies there should be clear instructions and in areas or booths or wherever such disturbances have occurred in the past or wherever the candidates have suggested, adequate precautions should be taken sufficiently before hand. It should not be done on demand of a particular candidate but it should be done sufficiently before hand to avoid booth capturing and other bad practices that may come up.

The last point that I would like to mention is that just as the candidates are asked as to how much money they are able to spend, similarly, caste is also asked while choosing a candidate. So, I think all the political parties should subscribe to a normal code of ethics. They should sit down and say that while choosing the candidates, they will never ask the caste of the candidate or the religion of the candidate, or how much money he is going to spend. If we follow this very simple thing in choosing the candidates, lot of good would be done to our electoral system.

[*Translation*]

PROF. RASA SINGH RAWAT (Ajmer):  
Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Resolution moved by hon. Advani ji. Our country is fortunate that it has stood the test of democracy during the last so many years and the other countries of the world have also praised democratic system which we have adopted. It is a matter of pride and glory for all of us. But for the last some time elections scenes in our country have been dominated by money and muscle power. It may prove extremely dangerous for our democracy in the time to come. In this context, I would suggest state-funding of elections and put a ceiling on election expenditure, then no candidate would spend Rs. 5 to 10 lakhs on his election.

Secondly, at present a statement of expenditure incurred by the candidate in elections requires to be submitted. The Government know that it is just a formality and false statement is submitted because

with the amount shown in the return, no one can contest election. Therefore, the Government should fix a realistic ceiling. And if any one found violating the limit so fixed his or her election should be declared void. Likewise the persons who show disrespect to the constitution, indulge in terrorist and separatist activities and denigrate National symbols or indulge in activities prejudicial to the National Integration should be debarred from contesting elections for ever. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, thirdly, I would like to submit that persons deputed for elections duties and the personnel of Armed Forces are issued postal ballots to enable them to exercise their franchise. However, it is not possible for the candidates or their polling agents to canvass among them on the day of elections to win their support. Therefore, it is requested that a list of persons who have been issued postal ballots should be given to the candidates so that they could approach such voters to cast their votes in their favour. This will also help in reducing bogus stamping on postal votes.

17.00 hrs.

Sir, Doordarshan and Akashvani are often misused by the ruling party for election purposes. Therefore, in order to check the misuse, the Government should function as a caretaker at that time and some guidelines should also be fixed for this purpose. The identity card for voters is also required to be issued. To check the growing number of independent candidates, deposit money should be increased. Voter-lists should also be made up-to-date and perfect. Neither political workers nor voters ever go to check the voter-lists displayed at the notice-boards after notification of elections. It is just on the day of elections, they check in their names in the rolls. As a result, names of the voters of an entire locality are found missing from the voter list. Therefore, there should be a massive publicity through various Government media including loudspeakers to advise the eligible voters to get their names enrolled before elections. I thank you for providing me time to speak.

**MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER:** The time allotted for this discussion was upto 5 'O' clock. I think Shri Kalp Nath Raiji should be given two minutes time, he is pressing for it. After that Mr. Minister will speak. Thereafter reply will be given. Time will be given for it till the reply is over. If we have time, we may take up another item. I think it has the approval of all of us.

**SHRI KALP NATH RAI (Ghosi):** Mr. Chairman, Sir, I don't want to comment upon the views expressed by my friends on electoral reforms. I would like to raise two points before Shri Advani and the hon. Law Minister. The first point is regarding the Reserved constituencies. Earlier, the Reserved constituencies were double member constituencies, that is, that constituency was represented by one harijan and non-harijan. People canvassed for two candidates in the same constituency. In this way, there was an integration. Now the situation has come to such a pass that many constituencies have remained Reserved constituencies for the last 20-30 years. No voter of that constituency, belonging to any other community can contest election to any local body or Parliament. My suggestion in this regard is that the Government should once again introduce the system of double membership for Assembly and Lok Sabha Constituencies, in order to remove the existing segregation, and create an atmosphere of cordiality and to enable the people to elect a candidate of their choice. My second submission to Shri Advani is that constituencies should be reserved on a rotation basis, in accordance with the proportion of population. Thirdly, population in Lok Sabha Constituencies varies between 3 lakhs and 15 lakhs. I would suggest that constituencies should be reorganised on the basis of population. That is, they should be reorganised throughout the country on a uniform pattern. A Lok Sabha Member should be elected from among five or ten lakh constituents. Lastly, what I would like to submit is that, as Shri Advani has also pointed out after the last elections, we all take the oath—I swear in the name of God that I will be true to the Constitution of India as by law established and I will do whatever

[Sh. Kalp Nath Rai]

I am asked to do. This is unrealistic. Whatever we say should be realistic. Electoral reforms have become very necessary and the Government should take firm and time bound steps in this direction and increase the number of constituencies by delimiting them. In the United Kingdom also, they have increased the seats in Parliament. Here too we should think about increasing the number of MP's from the present 546 to 600-650, or even 700. The Government should think on these lines.

With these words, we support the resolution moved by Shri Advani on electoral reforms.

**SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL** (Rajgarh): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to mention here a small point that has been left out. In order to curb expenditure, there should be a common platform, of all the parties, for holding public meetings. Similarly, all the candidates should use the same vehicle like Jeep etc. for canvassing. This would not only curb expenditure but also lessen bitterness.

**PROF. RAMGANESH KAPSE** (Thane): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have to say something with regard to the suggestions made by Shri Kalp Nath Rai particularly about the system of Double Member Constituency. The constituency from where Baba Saheb Ambedkar contested elections, ... \*... \*... said that everyone should not vote for a Dalit Candidate and the result was that Baba Saheb Ambedkar lost the election.

**MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The name of ... \*... should not go on record. .... (*Interruptions*).....

**SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR** (Bareilly): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would

like to say only one thing. Recommendations were made in 1982 to bring about reforms in the organisation of Election Commission. Today when we are talking about poll reforms, the hon. Minister should definitely pay attention to it. I would also urge that the Private Member's Resolution brought forward by Shri Advani should be accepted as a Government Resolution.

[*English*]

**THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES AND MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI):** Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am extremely grateful to Advaniji for introducing this Resolution and also for moving it, and to all the Members who have spoken on this Resolution. I think more than 50 Members have participated in this debate which shows the interest that the Members have taken on this subject. It is quite natural because the subject is on Indian democracy. It is also quite natural because all Members are directly involved on the question of electoral reforms.

The number of Members participating was large also because of the fact that all of them except the Minister who is replying have come here with direct experience of election in the last election.

**SHRI CHITTABASU:** Only three months ago.

**SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI:** Yes, only three months ago.

**MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER:** But the Minister is also not without experience.

**SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI:** I say, they have the direct experience of the last election. We can be legitimately proud that in spite of the fact that democracy has faltered or fell on the way-side of a number of neighbouring countries or of many developed countries, the strength of democracy in India has grown. We are called the largest democ-

racy in the world, but many a time we use this phrase without trying to comprehend the enormity of elections in this country. Holding of elections requires deployment of manpower and investment in sky high and snow-clad mountains in the North, scattered tiny islands in the South, thick forests in the East and vast tracks of marshy and desert lands in the West, and it poses daunting problems which have been, time and again, successfully tackled by the Election Commission. The electoral machinery has to plan and manage an election for an electorate of nearly 500 millions spread over 25 States and 7 Union Territories. It requires about 5.5 lakhs of polling stations and an Army of about three million persons. This is the enormity of the task that is before the Election Commission and those who manage the election, and I must pay my compliments to the Election Commission that up till now they have managed this enormous task with tremendous credit.

They have been able to carry confidence in the minds of the people about the independence of the organisation itself. I would like to pay my tributes to the Indian electorate, because if Indian democracy has succeeded and has grown in strength, it is because of the commitment of the Indian electorate to the democratic process. They have voted fearlessly in spite of the fact that there had been attempts to overawe them through money and muscle power. Barring a few aberrations, I will not hesitate in saying that the Indian voters have expressed their mandate fearlessly. Otherwise, there would not have been many changes in the Government; changes not only in the Congress Party, but even when the Opposition has been in the Government, there has been a particular type of mandate in a Parliamentary Election followed by another mandate in an Assembly Election. It shows that the Indian voters have voted keeping the issues and the interests of the country in the forefront. If there had been aberrations of money and muscle power—which I do not deny, that there had been some aberrations—it is not because that the people have been lured by it, but mainly because we, in the Govern-

ment, have not been able to protect them so as to give them sufficient guarantee and security against aberrations or maybe that we, who are in politics and the political parties have not been able to rise to the occasions. I said in public and I have no hesitation in saying today that the Indian people have not failed the democracy. If there is any failure, the failure has been on the part of all of us in the political parties and the politicians. Today, the time has come to think about electoral reforms. It has been emphasised by all sections of the House as a self-introspection of the political parties and those who are in politics. This is an urgent necessity of the day. The Government will bring legislations and will try to impose legislations. But reform in election is not possible only through legislations. Reform in election is possible through the cooperative efforts of the political parties.

Sir, Mr. Advani referred to certain things which developed in England when constituencies used to be bought. But in England, if there had been a reform in the electoral process, it is because all the political parties of Great Britain came to the conclusion on a cooperative approach to deal with the menaces and maladies of the electoral process. As far as this Government is concerned, we are committed for electoral reform, because electoral reform must be a continuing process. Every election will present before us new situations and human ingenuity being what it is, even if we try to plug all the loopholes after an election, there will be people who will try to manage to remove this or get rid of these loopholes. That is why, even in our election manifesto, we made a commitment that if we come to power, we will go in for comprehensive electoral reforms. Normally what had happened uptill now is, everybody used to promise about electoral reform but forget about it and think about it only just before the next election was due. We made it a point that the process of electoral reform must begin immediately after the election. That is why, the Prime Minister had a meeting with the representatives of the political parties on 9th January, 1990. I addressed letters to all the Members of

[Sh. Dinesh Goswami]

Parliament asking their suggestions on various aspects of electoral reform and I must say that the response that I got was tremendous. A large number of Members have given very valuable suggestions and we have taken note of them. We will take note of all the new suggestions that have been given today. In the meeting held on the 9th of January, 1990, it was decided to appoint a small committee composed of political personalities and also those who have been associated on the subject of electoral reform in the past. The committee was set up and the committee met for the first time on the 3rd of February, 1990. I am glad to inform you that today on the 4th May, 1990, this committee has virtually finalised its deliberations and the last sitting of the committee was to take place at 5.00 p.m. today. But probably, we shall have to postpone it for sometime. We hope to conclude our deliberations, if myself and Mr. Advani can go back to the committee room after finishing this discussion. Now we have almost all the suggestions that have come before the House and have been considered by this committee barring a few. We have to come to certain conclusions. We hope to finalise it today. Therefore, I will not like to present before the House any view of the Government today because after the report is presented by the committee, the Government will seriously consider all the proposals contained in the report. But I can take this House into confidence and say, on the basis of recommendations of this committee, on the basis of the views expressed by the hon. Members of this House and also of the other House, we intend to bring a comprehensive electoral reforms Bill in this Session of Parliament.

Some of the Members, notably Mr. Kalpanath Rai who was the last speaker, raised the question of delimitation.

The views have been expressed that there is freezing of number of constituencies now till the end of the century, delimitation should be there till the end of the century. There are constituencies where the general

people feel that they are being deprived of their representation. There are neighbouring constituencies where the number of reserved people has grown but they do not get representation. They feel that there should be rotation of constituencies. There should be delimitation of constituencies because there are 15 lakh voters in one constituency and some 7 lakhs in another constituency. Subject to what ultimately the conclusion of the Committee is, we may come for a delimitation of constituencies or also for a Constitutional amendment and in that case, I do hope that we have the support of the Party of Mr. Kalpanath. It is because, a Constitutional amendment to that effect will not be possible without the support of Congress-I.

But I would like to emphasise and I am glad to inform you that barring a very few occasions, all the Members who have spoken on this subject have risen above the Party-lines. They have not spoken keeping the Party in view. Therefore, while we will be approaching on the subject of electoral reforms and when we will be introducing this Bill—may be a Bill for the amendment of the Representation People's Act and also some amendments to the Constitution—I am sure that I will get the full support of this House.

Many suggestions have been placed. One has been strengthening of the Election Commission. This committee is fully conscious of this matter because there have been suggestions that the Secretariat of Election Commission should be given something like that of the Lok Sabha Secretariat so that it can be independent of the Government. There has also been a suggestion that the procedure for selection of the Election Commission should be such that the Executive may have the minimum control.

Now, there has been a demand for stringent laws for booth capturing. I will submit that we will go for laws. But my own feeling is that we cannot eliminate both control only by passing laws unless the politics forces today take a determined stand that they will stop it and will not go for it. What had hap-

pened was probably, there were times when someone or the other got the help of criminals for the purpose of winning elections. Ultimately, the criminals have felt that instead of helping somebody to win. "Why not I myself come to Parliament, to the Assembly". And there has been increased criminalisation of politics, a matter which has been causing a great concern to all of us. Therefore, a cooperative effort will be necessary. We will take whatever step that is possible within the framework of the law. But I do not want to bring forward a Bill and pass a law in this House which I cannot enforce or which I cannot implement. It is because we have got the tendency of passing laws and we do not care to see whether the laws are really implemented or enforced. We should try to bring only such laws which are capable of enforcing by the machinery. It is because, I think, it does greater harm to the society when you pass a law, when you make an enactment and ultimately you cannot enforce it.

There has been a question of public funding. On this point, even in this House, while Members participating in the discussion, there has been dissenting voice. Now some of the hon. Members have said that the entire election expenses should be borne out by the State. The resource position in the country being what it is, it is not possible to bear the entire expenses by the State. Also we have heard the view that public funding will not do away with the private funding. There will be private funding. But the question is today, unfortunately the election expenses are so much that a candidate becomes ultimately too much dependent on money. We are trying to examine it from that point of view whether we can reduce dependence of the candidates on money so that a candidate can fight the election without going to somebody or some business office and say "Kindly give me some money to carry on my election process" and, whether to reduce the dependence on money, some assistance in kind can be provided. This is a matter which the Committee is seriously considering.

One hon. Member has mentioned the question of election expenses I believe that we should frankly confess that barring a few, probably we come to this Parliament by playing a fraud on the Constitution and telling a lie. How many of us really can restrict ourselves election expenses laid down? I asked the Election Commission once: Will you kindly show me that it is theoretically possible to fight an election with the expenses that have been laid down? Therefore, it is necessary to look into this question of expenses. What is the use of having some election expense put in the name of a candidate, if the Party and friends can spend any amount as they like? What happens is if the candidate cannot spend it through his right hand, he can spend it on behalf of his Party and friends. This is one other aspect which has to be very seriously gone into and I can assure the House that the Committee that is set up of which Shri Advani is a respected Member and on which we have Shri Somnath Chatterjee and Shri H.K.L. Bhagat and many others, can go into this question very seriously.

A number of Members, particularly hon. lady Member, spoke about multi-purpose identity cards. I believe that multi-purpose identity cards to some extent will help, if not fully, in the matter of booth capturing and impersonation. We are also examining this issue.

We have also decided to put a statutory time-limit for holding by-elections. There have been by-elections having not taken place for months and months and for years. Now we have a model code but the model code has no statutory effect. It is only a self-straining code of the political parties and if it is violated, neither the Election Commission can do anything nor the election law comes to aid. Therefore, we are considering as to whether some of the provisions of the model code also should be given statutory basis and the violation may be made punishable as electoral offence.

The non-serious candidates question has become the most serious one because

[Sh. Dinesh Goswami]

there are ballot papers with hundreds of names. But not only ballot papers, the problem is this. Every candidate has a right to put up a polling agent or a counting agent. What may happen is that the polling agent or the counting agent may do an electoral offence. But he may belong to a non-serious candidate and if you want him to challenge the election of that person, you cannot challenge it because you cannot link up the polling agent and the counting agent who is a non-serious candidate with the candidate who has won the election. It is very difficult. The difficulty that we are facing is how to tackle this problem. It is also not possible to say that any candidate who does not belong to a political party is a non-serious candidate because there have been in the past in this House very eminent personalities whose contribution to the House one cannot forget and who have not come through the route of a political party. But we are trying whether through increase in the election deposit, we can tackle this problem. Also on this question of electoral rolls, the Committee is seriously seized with. In this respect also, certain points have also been made about the structural change of the entire election process. In fact, when the Prime Minister met the leaders of the political parties, suggestions came particularly from the BJP and from the Left, that we should go for proportional representation with a list system. I can take the House into confidence that in the Committee itself there are sharp differences of opinion on this and, therefore, this is a matter on which may be a national debate may take place but the Government probably at this stage will not be able to take any stand because there are sharp differences of opinion on it and we believe that any reform in the election process must have the support of a large number of people, if not, total consensus. I have covered almost all the areas which the hon. Members have referred to in this debate. As I said, I do not intend to express the Government's view because the Government will also like to be benefited by the Report of the Committee and the views expressed in this regard. But I can assure

the House that according to our time-table we intend to introduce a comprehensive Bill in this Session, I hope that I will be able to carry on this promise. We will bring this Bill forward and obviously this will be open for a public debate. I am sure that I will have the support of all the sections of this House because I have no doubt in my mind that though we have political differences yet on this question of strengthening the electoral process we are all united. With this confidence, I am thanking once again all the hon. Members who have participated in this debate, particularly Advani-ji. I thank you for giving me this opportunity.

With this, I conclude my speech.

SHRIMATI VIDYA CHENNUPATI (Vijayawada): When the Government is thinking of electoral reforms, is it going to give reservation for women or not? We are requesting for 30 per cent reservation for women candidates.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He has already stated that he is not going to express his views.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: It is being considered.

[*Translation*]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI (New Delhi): Although at the moment, not many Members are present in the House, yet for me this is a very special occasion.

[*English*]

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Sir, I would like to add one sentence. Since we have accepted that we are going to bring a Comprehensive Bill on the suggestions made, I would request Shri Advani to withdraw this Resolution.

[*Translation*]

SHRI L.K. ADVANI: I would request the Government to accept this resolution, be-

cause it would not put any restrictions on the Government. The Government agree with the intent of this Resolution. I am sure that it will be a historical step if the Government accepts a Private Member's Resolution when it is convinced about it and when the whole House is also convinced about it. There should be no objection to it. I would like to express my gratitude to all those who participated in this debate. About fifty Members participated on this debate which was spread over five Fridays. The first Friday was spent on formally introducing the Resolution and the discussion was held on the next four Fridays. The hon. Minister made his observations on the suggestions in a general way and touched the major points. It has also been stated that at present, a Committee is considering this issue and I am also a member of that Committee. I have been in public life and politics for last many years and particularly since 1967. I have been campaigning for the electoral reforms in and outside Parliament. There are two aspects of this campaign. Firstly, what reforms should be effected in the existing system and secondly, which of the systems should be adopted here by bringing in a radical change in this regard. I have my own views about it. The hon. Minister has rightly stated that there is no unanimity about the second aspect as yet. Several persons may find it strange. On the second aspect. I and the Marxist Party are in agreement but other parties do not agree. Though some people of other parties have agreed but there is no unanimity on that.

Similarly, I do not agree with the hon. Minister on the point that public funding is not possible or it will put heavy burden on the economy of the country. I would like to submit one point in this regard that a discussion was held on this issue in the Constituent Assembly also, A Private amending Bill was also brought to provide that the Government should bear the entire expenditure of elections. At that time, the Government had not come out with a statement that it was inappropriate. Instead, it was stated that the Government was not in a position to bear the burden of expenditure at that time, i.e. 10

years ago. It was in the year 1980, that the Election Commission had roughly calculated that if the Government provided it with a revolving fund of Rs.100 crore, it would make entire arrangements for elections. Being it so, it would be providing minimum required funds to the parties for contesting elections. I agree with him on this point that value of rupee has come down because of an inflationary trend and today the earlier estimate of Rs.100 crore would not be sufficient for this purpose. I think that if the Government provides Rs.500 crore instead of Rs.100 crore, we can break the nexus existing between the Indian political leaders and the capitalists and industrialists. That will be a great achievement on our part. So we should concentrate on achieving that end. If we fail in our mission, it will vitiate not only our political milieu but also our economy. All the official reports received hitherto in respect of black money have revealed that the root cause of black money generation in India is the election funds. Therefore, I would like to request once again to the Government and the Committee constituted for election reforms to review the situation and take an effective and bold step to introduce the system of public funding of elections.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, when I am talking of the system of public funding in India, I do not have the example of Germany before me because in that country, there exist both these systems i.e. public funding and the private funding. The position in America and several other democratic countries of Europe is in no way different. But here in India whenever we opt for the system of public funding, we shall have to impose a complete ban on the system of private funding and consequent upon it, the Government shall have to impose certain strict restrictions on electioneering and election campaign. I fail to understand why a particular political party in India should be allowed to bring out large size advertisements in all the newspapers of the country. It should not be allowed. There should be some restrictive check on it to see that a party will be allowed to give only one advertisement and that too through the Government. For this purpose,



[Sh. L.K. Advani]

the parties may give material to the Government to get it published by them. A provision also can be made to this effect that all the political parties will be having a common platform to address the public. I would like the Government and the Committee to reconsider these points.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, instead of touching all the points, I would like to dwell only on 2-3 points. Until last year, the voting age was 21 years but now we have brought it down to 18. In the former case, the minimum age to become eligible for contesting elections for an M.P. and M.L.A. was 25 years. But now, when the voting age has been brought down to 18 the minimum age limit even in case of an M.P. and M.L.A. should have been reduced from 25 to 21 years. Hence, there should be no such binding. Instead all these things have their relevance only with the age of a particular individual when he attains that level of maturity. Hitherto it was believed that a person does not attain the required level of maturity to cast his vote before the age of 21 but now that concept is changing. In view of this situation, I would like to suggest that the point of minimum age limit for the Members of the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies should be reconsidered.

Similarly, I would also like to submit that till the year 1967 elections to the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies were used to be held simultaneously but in 1971 consequent upon the dissolution of Lok Sabha, elections for the next Lok Sabha were held separately and the practice of simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and State Assemblies had come to an end. Since 1971, I have seen that a general election or Mini General Election has been held every two years. It is not a healthy sign for politics and administration. Therefore, I would like that we should try to conduct these elections simultaneously. It is just possible that the gap of two months between elections of the Lok Sabha and the Legislative Assemblies can be cov-

ered up easily. The Government should decide about it right now that both these elections will be held in the year 1994 or whenever these are to be held, they will be held simultaneously and then this gap of two months will also be covered up. I would like to say about voters list also. The Committee has discussed this point also and have arrived at a conclusion. I am sure that any hon. Member will not be able to answer my query that if I or he himself wants to become a voter, where should he go to get his name registered. It can be easily understood how an ordinary citizen will come to know about it. He does not know whether his name is there on the list or not. At the time of elections, he has to go here and there to find out his name on the voter list kept at various polling stations, but what he finds is that names of thousands and lakhs of voters are not there in the voters list. A suggestion has been given about it and I think that this is a very good suggestion that permanent voters lists should be displayed at each post office in the country. For that purpose, Post Offices should be made the focal points and lists should be displayed there. The Election Commission shall have to keep coordination with the Post Offices and it can take such steps in this regard. The Post Office is such a place with which every commonman is concerned. If forms are made available there for the people to get themselves registered as the voters, rest of the work will be easier for the Election Commission and the electoral registration officer to complete all other formalities. We should pay attention to it because it can serve as a centre for each area, village, city and a town. I would like to mention the last point which have frequently reiterated here several times. The hon. Prime Minister had also stated in a conference, convened by him, about the system of election existing in several countries of the world. The hon. Minister has also stated himself that

[English]

electoral reform should not be a one time affair. Electoral reform has to be a continuing process.

[*Translation*]

It should be a continuing process. We have a Joint Parliamentary Committee on Offices of Profit. But it deals only with a very small fraction of the entire gamut of electoral reforms. So we should constitute a Standing Committee of Parliament which we may call

[*English*]

This is a Standing Committee for election matters.

[*Translation*]

That Standing Committee of Parliament will deal with all the electoral procedures, reforms and other matters. Such issues may come before it for its consideration and to report on them as a continuous process which will be discussed and decided finally by the Parliament. I hope that such a Committee will be constituted. It does not matter that we do not agree on this point that this particular election system is good or not, reforms can be brought into it or not. But if the very concept of the Standing Committee is accepted, the present election system which is now existing only in Anglo-American countries i.e. India, Pakistan, Newzealand, Australia and Canada which have had their link with Britain on historical grounds, can be changed. Rest of the democratic countries have adopted many variations in the procedure of lists which has resulted in a better election system there. Even in our county, if we bring about a change in our system of elections, we will be able to free our election system from its various snags. With these words I thank all those Members who have supported this Resolution. I am also a supporter of rotation. The delimitation of all the constituencies for Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes should be done again. The Delimitation Commission to be constituted for this purpose, will have the powers, clear directions and guidelines to convert the constituency which has remained reserved for many years into general constituency and vice-versa. As many changes have taken place since then, the delimitation should be

done on the bass of population. Therefore, I would request the Government that if the Government and the House accept this Resolution, the major opposition parties are also ready to accept it. I am grateful to them for this. Since all the Members have accepted it, it would be nice thing if the Government also accepts it.

[*English*]

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES AND MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI): Sir, when I used to sit in the oposition, I sensed always that the Government stands on prestige on the question of accepting the non-official Resolutions. I feel that I should not stand on prestige and I accept this Resolution.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: There are Amendments given by Shri Yuvraj and Shri Hukumdeo Narayan Yadav.

[*Translation*]

SHRI YUVRAJ: I seek leave of the House to withdraw my amendments to the Resolution moved by Shri L.K. Advani.

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Has Shri Yuvraj leave of the House to withdraw his amendment?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

*The amendment No. 1 was, by leave, withdrawn*

[*Translation*]

SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV: When it is being passed smoothly and with consensus, why should I become huddle in it. I seek leave of the House to withdraw my amendment.

[*English*]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Has Shri

Hukumdeo Narayan Yadav leave of the House to withdraw his amendment?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

*Amendment No.2 was, by leave, withdrawn*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is:

"This House is of opinion that against the background of the Ninth General Elections, poll reforms should be urgently undertaken, more particularly to curb the influence of money power and muscle power and to ensure that future elections held in this largest democracy of the world are completely free and fair".

*The motion was adopted*

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, Shrimati Basava Rajeswari to move the Resolution.

She is not present in the House.

So, the next Resolution to be moved by Shri Guman Mal Lodha.

17.44 hrs.

RESOLUTION RE: REGARDING BAN ON COW SLAUGHTER

[English]

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have to fix the time for the discussion on this Resolution. I think, we can fix two hours time for his Resolution. Now, Shri Lodha to move the Resolution and speak.

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA (Pali): I beg to move:

"This House is of the opinion that the Government should bring forward a suitable legislation to ban slaughter of cow and its pregnancy throughout the country".

[Translation]

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, when a Resolution to ban slaughter of Cow and its progeny like Calf, Ox, bull etc was brought in the constituent Assembly, the matter was seriously considered. India has been an agricultural country and in agriculture, the importance of cow and its progeny like calf, ox, etc. cannot be over-emphasised. During the days of freedom struggle, the great leaders like Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and several others resolved and assured the people that as soon as the country attained freedom, cow slaughter would be banned all over the country. Mahatma Gandhi also spoke in favour of banning cow slaughter throughout his life. When our country became independent and the Britishers left the country for ever, it was hoped that cow-slaughter would be banned all over the country. But it was our misfortune that the time when our constitution was being framed, attempts were made to include the Resolution on banning cow slaughter in the Directive Principles of State Policy of our constitution but the amendment on cow and cow's progeny could not be included in the Directive Principles of State Policy. As a result of that, no provision regarding cow slaughter could be made in the Directive Principles. Not only this, ban on cow slaughter could not be placed in the concurrent list and ultimately it was kept in the state list. Even after that several attempts were made, Resolutions and private Members Bill in this regard were brought but none of them could be passed. Though in some states cow-slaughter has been completely banned, yet there are some states like West Bengal, Kerala etc. Where even today cow blood can be seen on the roads.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, a few days back, I was in Calcutta. In the course of a function over there some people came to see me and told that if was a matter of great