

(Shri N. Sunjiva Reddy)

12.30 hrs.

**TRIBUTES TO THE SPEAKER
(SHRI N. SANJIVA REDDY) ON
HIS RELINQUISHING THE OFFICE
OF SPEAKER**

MR. SPEAKER: Before I formally proceed to lay down my office as Speaker, I thought I should personally express my gratefulness to all Members of this august House for the confidence reposed in me by electing me to this high office unani- mously in March. I am deeply beholden to each one of you for the love and affection that you have showered on me and for the courtesies and cooperation extended so graciously. This had made the task so much pleasanter and easier.

I recall that at the time of my election to this office, the Leaders of all Parties and Groups had voiced their feeling that the Lok Sabha should be vigilant in regard to the maintenance of rights and freedom of the people, that national rather than sectoral interests should guide our actions, that freedom of expression should be accompanied by self-restraint and dignified behaviour, and that the spirit rather than the letter of the Rules should prevail.

The sentiments expressed by the Hon'ble Members at that time have always remained uppermost in my mind. I have endeavoured to afford opportunities to all sections of this House to express their views freely and frankly on all issues of importance. Members from the front, middle and back benches were given a chance to make their valued contribution and enrich the proceedings.

I acknowledge with deep gratefulness the ready help and understanding which have been extended to me in the discharge of the onerous responsibility by the Hon'ble Leader of the House, the Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition, the Hon'ble Leaders of the Parliamentary Groups, viz., CPI(M), AIDMK, CPI, other Groups, unattached Members etc. etc. These

Leaders and their Deputies have invariably shown a willingness to see the others' points of view and reach decision in a spirit of give and take in the best interest of smooth functioning of the Lok Sabha. I am specially beholden to them for their graciousness of manner and the spirit of understanding.

I am also grateful to the Hon'ble Deputy Speaker for the invaluable help he has always extended in conducting the proceedings of the House.

I would like also to thank the distinguished Members of the Panel of Chairmen who have shared with me the work of presiding over the House.

I need hardly remind that the essential purpose of all democratic institutions in developing countries like ours is to ensure that there is an open forum for discussion and debate and interaction between the policies put forward by the Government and the representatives of the people so that what emerges out of these discussions are measures which would go to ameliorate the conditions of the under-privileged and the weaker sections of the society and to sustain all developmental efforts which would reduce poverty and give meaning and dignity to human beings.

A thought which has always remained uppermost in my mind is the imperative necessity of preserving the unity and integrity of this great country, which we have achieved with the blood and sweat and sacrifices of millions of our countrymen. This unity needs to be preserved and strengthened.

In the World today there is a growing desire to come closer and build bridges of understanding between people. We in India are very fortunate that behind the apparent diversity of a vast land stretching from the mighty Himalayas to the thundering water of the Indian Ocean, from the sun and sands of Saurashtra to the snows of Kanchanchunga in Sikkim

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lies an essential unity—a unity of soul, a unity of mind, a unity of shared experience, a unity of rich heritage and culture, a unity of purpose and determination to eradicate poverty and wipe tears from the eyes of those who are deprived and underprivileged. We have to build India of Gandhiji's dream where human beings do not suffer from pangs of hunger and want and where in the words of a great poet "the mind is without fear and the head is held high."

I have dwelt on this at some length, for, I feel that, while we should have freedom of debate and discussions in this House, we should always keep in mind the national interest so that our thoughts, words and actions reflect the essential unity of the country and enthuse in us a feeling of belonging to one great and united nation.

I would like to pay my tribute to the Press whose representatives are assembled in the Galleries above me. These distinguished and learned members of the Fourth Estate are instrumental in conveying the discussions from the four walls of this House to the people outside and giving them, as it were, a sense of participation in the great task of nation building and governance of the country. With their characteristic independence, objectivity and candour, the Press has been covering all issues of importance and providing the members with valuable information. We acknowledge their role and contribution in sustaining the functioning of democratic institutions.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution made by the officers and staff of the Lok Sabha Secretariat and other departments who render ancillary services in the successful functioning of the House.

I relinquish my office, and in relinquishing my office, I have a feeling of sadness, but I am fortified by the hope that you will continue to extend to me your support and affection.

Thank you.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI): May I say, Sir, not only on my behalf and on behalf of my Party but on behalf of the whole House how we will miss you. You have won the respect and cooperation of the whole House without any exception, which is no small achievement. I would have said, we are sorry to lose your services, but I cannot say that because we are not losing your services but we are getting them for a better cause. Therefore, even though one has mixed feelings as you have, of both happiness and unhappiness, if one may say so, the feeling of happiness preponderates in view of the larger interests of the country.

I thank you for the kind words that you have used about me and also all sections of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and all other leaders and Members, and I hope that we will have opportunities in future to express our feeling of thanks and gratefulness to you in another greater capacity.

SHRI YESHWANTRAO CHAVAN (Satara): Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I associate myself and my Party with the sentiments expressed by the Prime Minister on behalf of this House? It is an occasion for mixed feelings, as the Prime Minister has rightly put it. We are losing you, Sir, but at the same time we are losing you because you are seeking election to a very important and highly honoured office of this country. So, though we may be missing you in one House of the Parliament, in that high office you yourself will become a part of Parliament because you will have your own legislative authority.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, while speaking on this occasion, one remembers the many

high offices that you have held in your life. Even this particular office, I think, you are holding for the second time. Possibly, this is the shortest period for which you have held any office; during these last three months you have conducted yourself with all the tact and skill and this House; I cannot forget your previous regime as Speaker, from 1967 to 1969, during those turbulent times when I was sitting on the other side of the House, how useful and effective you were. I was then curious to know what goes into making a good speaker, and I have found that, along with the knowledge of Rules etc., which certainly is an elementary requirement, knowing the mood of the House is very important. Your very shrewd common-sense helped you to know the mood of the House. If I may make a comparison, the moods of all Houses of Parliament all over the world can be compared to the mood of a lady (with due apologies to the ladies here): One moment they are very tense, noisy and confronting and the very next moment they are very relaxed, quiet and full of laughter! with your common-sense you have picked up knowledge of this particular point and you have helped yourself and have helped the House to carry on. We have always found a very fine mix of flexibility and firmness in the way you handled the House and the Members. I think this is the key to the success of this office and I hope your work will be a guide to those who step into your shoes in this House henceforward. This office has a great tradition and I must say that you have added to its magnanimity and dignity.

I wish you well and my wishing you well in the present circumstances is not only personally wishing you well but wishing the whole nation well.

SHRI JYOTIRMOY BOSU (Diamond Harbour): Sir, you are a little over 60 years but, out of your life-span I know that you have spent 40 years in politics. You are now enriched

with rich experience and maturity as a politician. In 1937, I gather, you started as a Congressman at the village level. Since then, for ten years you were there as Secretary and in various other capacities. You were an MLA in Madras and then you occupied various positions.

Let me recount some of the outstanding things that happened in your political life in between 1959 and 1969. While you were Congress President, you made a statement, if I remember correctly, in Baroda, in which you fearlessly said that many people in the ruling party of that time, i.e., the Congress, had enriched themselves overnight. This is something we don't hear nowadays. You also set another example by voluntarily resigning in February 1964 following the Supreme Court judgment in the Road Transport Nationalisation case to establish a high standard of public life. This is also a thing we do not see nowadays.

Sir, I have seen you in the 1967 House and I have seen how turbulent the House was and the tact, common-sense and the presence of mind that you used. I remember that when Dr. Lohia was enraged by certain remarks from one side of the House and the House was in severe turmoil for 45 minutes, you adjourned the House and brought peace to the House after 50 minutes.

In 1969 things happened which become a chapter to remember in the Indian Parliamentary history. You took it gracefully and retired temporarily.

You are now here for the last three months or so and you have undone many black deeds that had engulfed Parliamentary life in this country. Restrictions and action to scuttle

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Parliamentary democracy were in the process of being undone. Some employees were thrown out of employment and I am thankful to you that you have reinstated them.

I wish you good health and good luck to your family and yourself and success in your new office, which is the highest office in the country.

PROF. P. G. MAVALANKAR (Gandhinagar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, may I join my esteemed colleagues in offering not only my respectful felicitations but also affectionate good wishes on the occasion of your assuming the high office of the President of India next month. The loss of the House is a gain of the nation, and although we shall miss you here, I am glad to say, as the hon. Leader of the Opposition mentioned, that you will continue to be a part of the Parliament, because the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and the President all together constitute the entire Parliament.

The qualities of robust commonsense, good humour, good sense and goodwill towards each one of us here are qualities which will be required by you in a much greater measure in the Rashtrapati Bhavan. In the months and years ahead, when our country is going through difficult and delicate situations, when body-politic is getting into two different opposite parties emerging as a necessary requirement for a parliamentary democracy—there are, of course, many others functioning outside the parties—

a person like the President of the Republic can bring them together. It was very heartening to find that you expressed this idea of deep national unity which really keeps us all together in spite of the variety and differences that we have. Before sitting down, may I wish you the very best in the Rashtrapati Bhavan, and may I wish our country a great future in the world under your able stewardship in the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

SHRI M. N. GOVINDAN NAIR (Trivandrum): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am extremely happy to share the feelings and sentiments already expressed here by other hon. Members. With your glorious record as a freedom fighter, you have occupied many important offices in the past. You were the Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh, you were Minister here, then you were the Speaker in this House, you became the Congress President, then again the Speaker, and finally you are about to occupy the highest office in this country.

As has already been expressed by the hon. Prime Minister, it is a moment of sorrow as well as joy for all of us. As a Speaker, you were handling this House very ably and tactfully, as has already been said by other hon. Members, though I may not share the views of the Leader of the Opposition, Shri Chavan, regarding his comparison, but in all other aspects, I think, there would not be two opinions in this House that you have been one of the ablest Speakers this House had.

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It has already been mentioned that without you, as the President of India, the Parliament would not be complete. All of us will always look upon you for your guidance, advice and help and I am sure, the relationship that has already been built up by your association with all of us will continue to be so even after you, as there is no doubt about it, become the President of our nation.

Sir, we will remember the point mentioned by you in your speech about the national unity. Even though the place you are going to occupy is not the place of power, I consider this an office of authority in the sense that you will be able to exert your influence on all the political forces in this country. I wish you well and I hope not only the Member of this House, but also the whole country will be happy that you are going to be elected to the highest office in this country.

SHRI V. ARUNACHALAM (Tirunelveli): It is my proud privilege on behalf of the All India Anna DMK to felicitate you on this occasion of your leaving the office of Speaker for assuming the highest office of this land.

It is not without regret that we can adjust ourselves to your departure from our midst. You have adorned this office with grace and distinction and a sense of fairness.

The prestige of the Speaker's office has been enhanced by your service and sincerity. You have added a new and glorious chapter to the history of the Speaker's office.

Your career as a Speaker on both the occasions, though brief but brilliant, was more a turning point in the parliamentary history.

It is a matter of pride that a South Indian has been again called upon by the nation to assume the highest office.

You are carrying with you our best wishes and blessings.

SHRI TRIDIB CHAUDHURI (Behrampur): Please allow me to associate myself with the felicitations that have been voiced from all sides of House.

One of my advantages has been that I have sat in this House from the very beginning and I have no manner of hesitation to say that your record as Speaker would be inscribed in the parliamentary history as one of the most brilliant of the present times.

You are leaving this House to assume the highest office in the land and it is also a good augury both for the Government and the Opposition that you are being elevated to that office as a matter of national consensus. Your assuming the office of the President is in that way an expression of national unity.

SHRI G. M. BANATWALLA (Ponnani): Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of the muslim League, I rise to ex-

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press our deep sense of gratitude for the concern that you have always shown to every section of this House.

We all know very well that at times the office of the Speaker is the most unenviable one. But your humour has saved many a situation. You have been firm, you have been tactful and, at the same time, you have conducted the proceedings of this House with dignity and decorum that is commendable. Indeed you have maintained the dignity and the honour of the office, may, I should say that you have added to that.

We extend our heartiest congratulations to you that very soon you will be elevated to the highest position that can be held in our country and we are quite sure that the dignity and honour with which you have held the office of the Speaker and even added to it, will also be carried now to the highest post that you will, we are sure be called upon to shoulder very soon.

On behalf of the Muslim League I extend our heartiest felicitations and wish you all the best.

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): May I join the other members of this House to express my sentiments on this occasion?

You, Sir, as the Speaker, have made a valuable contribution in determining the destiny of our nation and also in formulating the policies for the attainment of the same.

You, as the Speaker, also guided and helped us in our efforts to participate in the decision-making

processes of the nation while you have been adorning that Chair here in this House. You have been now called upon to the highest office of our nation with great responsibility. On you, let me remind you, rests the responsibility for preserving and protecting the Constitution of our country. On you rests the responsibility of maintaining the value and norms of democracy of this great nation of ours. On this occasion when you are being called upon to undertake that immeasurable burden of our nation, may I hope we and our nation must allow the path to be chartered by you as an occupant of the highest office of our country. I, on behalf of the Forward Block, extend our sense of gratitude to you on this occasion of the assumption of the high office.

SHRI A. E. T. BARROW (Nominated-Anglo-Indians): Your biography will have no difficulty in identifying you as a distinguished psychologist. You have always gauged the mood of not only the House but also of the individual member. You have acted as a referee or an umpire in helping us to play the game according to the rules of the game. You have added lustre and radiance to all the offices that you have held and I have no doubt when you assume the highest office in this land you will add lustre and radiance to it. May God give you strength in assuming your new responsibilities!

MR. SPEAKER: I may take leave of you all.