

President's Address

September, 1968, under sub-section (2) of section 6 of the Police Forces (Restriction of Rights) Act, 1968. [Placed in the Library. See No. LT-234/67.]

REPORT OF SALAR JUNG MUSEUM BOARD etc.

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Education (Prof. Sher Singh): I beg to lay on the Table—

- (1) A copy of the Annual Report of the Salar Jung Museum Board, Hyderabad for the year 1965-66, along with the Audited Accounts. [Placed in the Library. See No. LT-235/67.]
- (2) A copy of the Salar Jung Museum (Amendment) Rules, 1967, published in Notification No. G.S.R. 341 in Gazette of India dated the 11th March, 1967, under sub-section (3) of section 27 of the Salar Jung Museum Act, 1961. [Placed in the Library. See No. LT-236/67.]
- (3) A copy of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment) Rules, 1966, published in Notification No. S. O. 3520 in Gazette of India dated the 20th November, 1966, under sub-section (4) of section 38 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. [Placed in the Library. See No. LT-237/67.]
- (4) (i) A copy each of the Annual Reports of the Executive Committee of the Trustees of the Victoria Memorial, Calcutta, for the years 1963-64 and 1964-65. [Placed in the Library. See No. LT-125/67].
(ii) A statement showing reasons for delay in laying the above Reports.
- (5) A copy of the Annual Report of the Executive Committee of

the Trustees of the Victoria Memorial Calcutta, for the year 1965-66. [Placed in the Library. See No. LT-238/67].

16.24 hrs.

MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS—Contd.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now take up further consideration of the following motion moved by Shri K. Hanumanthaiya and seconded by Shri Vishwa Nath Pandey on the 21st March 1967, namely:—

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

"That the Members of Lok Sabha assembled in this Session are deeply grateful to the President for the Address which he has been pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on the 18th March, 1967."

The Prime Minister and Minister of Atomic Energy (Shrimati Indira Gandhi): Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Parliament has met after three crucial months during which the political scene in India is transformed. This is a phenomenon which proves the vitality of our country, the vitality of our democratic system and the faith of our people in our system.

Life is always changing. It is not only the Congress but even the hon. Members opposite who must adjust to those changes. As I said on a previous occasion here, now all of us, the Congress and the other parties, are in Government and outside Government. We see here many new faces and I had hoped that new ideas would also emerge. But listening to the debate—I would like to assure hon. Members that even though I was not present here all the time I did listen to almost all the speeches from my room—I was disappointed. I thought new ideas would emerge, ideas which would help to strengthen our democracy and our country. But I did not see much evidence of this. I do not grudge my hon.

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friends opposite their sense of elation or pleasure at the success they have gained in some States. I welcome the fact that they now share not only power but also the responsibility that goes with power. I am not much concerned with which party sits on which side in what State. What is important is that whichever side is in power uses the opportunity to solve the problems which confront our country. Along with this positive aspect, change brings with it fresh challenges, also certain dangers against which we have to guard. Here and there there are evidences of small groups belonging to different sides, this side as well as the other side, who have tried to place themselves in a position to bargain. There are some who are attracted to politics today when politics means an opportunity for power, and they are using this opportunity to criticise those who joined politics at a time when it meant unmitigated hardship. I am referring to the many members of the Congress, some of whom are now in the House and a very large number outside, who have sacrificed a great deal from their youth throughout and life to old age for the Congress, not merely because Congress is a party but because the Congress stood for certain vital values in the country.... p

Shri M. E. Masani (Rajkot): Only in the Congress?

Shrimati Indra Gandhi: All of you were also in the Congress. I am not denying that. But that does not mean that you should now consider that everything that is in the Congress is bad and that you should not recognise the very genuine sacrifices which so many genuine and sincere and dedicated workers have made to the cause of freedom and the cause of building the country after freedom.

The most important question which we face today is the question of food and of drought in certain parts of the country. The other day, yesterday I think, certain members referred to my visit to Bihar and U.P.

Therefore, I would like to say a few words on this matter. I have been to Palamau, Gaya and Mirzapur over the last week end. Never have I seen the Gangetic plains so dry. The recent rains gave a little relief in the sense that they have helped some grass to grow, reducing the shortage of fodder and also delaying the crisis about the availability of drinking water. But this is a crisis that has only been postponed and we will have to face it within a short time.

I found that a great deal of work was being done. But I also found the need to accelerate this work and to extend it and expand it in every way. The Centre will do all it can to supply needed equipment and store. We are also making an effort to enlist the support of all possible people who can help in this. A suggestion was made, which I welcome, that ex-ser-distinguish. In the face of such acute vicemen living in those areas might help in some of these problems.

Unfortunately, there was a set back to relief work due to the elections. Now we have to regain the momentum again. The State Governments are doing the job and non-official agencies are also active, specially in Bihar. I would like to pay a tribute here to the Bihar Relief Committee, of which Shri Jayajirakash Narayan is the Chairman. He has gathered together a band of workers who are doing excellent work. The special complication in Bihar is that of the outbreak of smallpox.

In Palamau District I heard that 2 lakhs are at work out of a total of 2 lakhs of the working population, but more help is needed from non-official agencies because the coming three summer months will be exceedingly critical.

In Mirzapur I found a large number of aged and destitute and, as hon. Members may have read in the newspapers, I was given some reports of starvation deaths. I, naturally, took up this matter with the authorities. I was given two representations, one giving specific names, a list of 13, of which the authorities have already in-

investigated 11 names and they have various causes for death. The other representation mentioned the figure 50 but gave no details of the names or where these people came from. Naturally, unless we have more detailed information, it is difficult to look into this.

This question of starvation deaths was also taken up by the hon. Members here. What I would like to say is whether deaths are due to starvation or ailments or diseases which come about because of prolonged malnutrition and exposure, it is really hard to discuss this would be a verbal dispute. The need of the hour is to provide all the relief that is necessary and all that is possible whether Government provides it or non-official agencies or the people themselves.

The foodgrains supply is in shortage all over the country and we cannot meet the full demand of all the States. The Food Minister and I have had talks with the Chief Ministers of Kerala and Bihar. We will discuss this matter in greater detail at the proposed Chief Ministers' Conference this week-end.

I feel, as I have said earlier also, there is need for a national sharing of the distress, the need to mobilise all our energies and all our resources, to cut our lavishness and waste. This is something which we can only do with the full co-operation of the States. It is something which we must sit down and discuss and formulate a plan which can be carried out and implemented in all parts of the country.

Some have said that we would rather starve than import food. I am afraid, I cannot agree with this and I feel that it is an irresponsible statement to make in the present conditions.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): We are importing and starving, both.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: It is because we cannot import as much as is needed; but it is a problem which faces the entire country and it is, as

some hon. Members said, a national problem.

When I talked of co-operation with hon. Members outside, it is not on small matters of procedure and thing like that—they are important and if we can work together, it is a good thing—but far more important is to get co-operation in these matters which are matters of national importance and of life and death for our people. Certainly, food comes in that category.

Food and drought relief are the foremost problems for us. Last year we faced the same kind of problem and it was only through a Herculean effort that we were able to avert a great human tragedy. This year is even more difficult because reserves are depleted and there is considerable uncertainty about supplies which we can get and which we need.

The Food Minister has already outlined the programme of short-term crops and we must all see that this programme is made a success. There is also the need to accelerate intensive cultivation programmes all over the country. Many steps are being taken to deal with this immediate problem in Bihar and in eastern U.P. Some people here mentioned Rajasthan. I would like to say that we have not at all forgotten that Rajasthan also faces this problem and so do areas of other States.

16.35 hrs.

[Mr. SPEAKER in the Chair]

There was the joint Emergency Committee for Bihar set up under the Food Minister with the Bihar Chief Minister and his colleagues. In the short time, it has already met three times.

There are some figures which I would like to give to the hon. Members. I am told that nearly 6.5 lakhs people are employed on relief works or on Plan schemes in Bihar and the number may increase to 15 lakhs in the months of maximum distress which are May and June. Over 3.5 lakhs people have been given gratuitous relief from the State plus

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2.6 lakhs who are fed in free kitchens run by non-official agencies, that is, the Ramakrishna Mission, the Warwari Relief Society and other agencies. The international agencies like the CARE and the UNICEF are giving milk to 14.6 lakh people. We also received a gift of 4,000 tons from Italy which is valued at about Rs. 60 lakhs to Rs. 70 lakhs and this has also been used for giving relief through voluntary agencies.

Drinking water is an acute problem and schemes worth over Rs. 5 crores have been sanctioned by the Central Government.

118 rigs are being mobilised from all available resources, our own as well as abroad, by the Government, the Army and the private agencies and so on. About 66 rigs are working and another 33 rigs have reached the sites. Institutions like the Geological Survey of India, the Oil and Natural Gas Commission, the UNICEF and so on are helping in this and also the Governments of U.K. and Canada have offered to airlift the rigs. We are also airlifting other essential things. In cattle camps, half a million heads of cattle have been provided and there are short-term fodder crop plans for 130,000 acres. The food supply to Bihar is being progressively increased from 72,000 tons in last October to 1,85,000 tons in April this year. Over Rs. 50 lakhs have been given from the Drought Relief Fund to U.P. and Bihar. Health measures are also being taken but I must confess that these need to be stepped up considerably.

Sir, the elections have thrown up certain political challenges. But the real challenge is, and it remains, the economic challenge of prices and production. Many hon. Members opposite have talked about the economic situation. This is natural because it is a serious one. But, as usual, the diagnosis as well as the treatment has differed from person to person. This is what I mean to say, when I say that we should get together on certain things. Let us have some kind of

a minimum programme at least on which we can agree, just on one or two national issues.

The hon. Member, Mr. Masani, painted a gloomy picture. Mr. Hiren Mukerjee said that devaluation was at the root of all ills. Others questioned the food policy and so on. The main cause really is fall in production, mainly the fall in agricultural production. Shri Morarjibhai has given the blunt facts. We are not making any attempt to cover up anything or to hide anything. We have put all the difficulties and the seriousness of the situation very clearly before the House. We must now do everything possible to increase production and to cut existing expenditure to the bone.

Higher production and budgetary discipline can give some respite from high prices. I think that streamlining the administration and procedures is the first need and the second is to use the full capacity of already installed plants, and to have a full survey of their capacities. It is necessary that we try to achieve our target of swadeshi in the next 10 years.

We are very anxious that conditions should be created in which science and technology can be applied to practical problems of the nation, the economic development as well as the security of the nation. Therefore, it is necessary to have a greater interflow between institutions of research and development and those connected with implementation of programmes and also to have a larger measure of technical, scientific and technocratic association at appropriate levels of policy-making and implementation, so that a climate can be created for the most effective fulfilment of tasks according to modern methods of technology and science.

In administration also, the changed situation needs changed methods and change in outlook also. We are trying to give greater autonomy to public sector plants and to simplify financial procedure so as to reduce delays which are costly and which have

prevented so many of our schemes from getting going.

We have policy planning cells which can at all stages look forward and see how the present programme fit into the programmes for the future.

Many speakers have talked about the public sector. Those whose creeds disapprove of the public sector as a whole, naturally saw nothing but failure about them. I am not prepared to admit that failure. There have certainly been shortcomings, but there has been good work also. I do agree that the public sector must be run well and must produce results, must create new resources, and that we should try our utmost to give new re-orientation to the public sector which would increase its efficiency and all round, profitability, modernise management consolidate their investments and make efficiency their watchword.

Much interest was evinced in the future of the Planning Commission. The Administrative Reforms Commission has received its interim report from the Study Team and I suppose, we will get their recommendations in a short time. Therefore, I do not want to anticipate what they are going to say. But I am sorry that the Planning Commission should have come in for so much criticism. It has played a valuable, even a historic, role. It has translated the economic vision of our nation-builders into concrete policies and it has provided a useful forum for discussions between States and the Centre. It would have been very difficult for the Government to achieve this without the Planning Commission. The objective expert composition of the Planning Commission has naturally helped. I have felt that the Commission should concentrate much more on the task of economic development, i.e., analysing factors and trends, assessing strategy and, if possible, it should present various alternatives. That is, it should be a kind of an expert body which would give certain alternatives, which would

Of course, the task of actual implementation falls on the State Governments.

Another criticism made here of the Planning Commission was that it was encroaching on the States. But the major decisions on the Plan, the size, strategy, priorities and allocations, are always taken by the National Development Council which consists of both Central and State representatives and even in the old days, despite the fact that there was the same party in power in the States, there were pulls and counter-pulls; there were occasions when States' interests were not always satisfied according to the desire of the State representatives and there was some clash with the Centre. This will no doubt, continue. I sincerely hope that this will not be taken to mean that the Centre is not co-operating with the States, but only that the State problem has to be viewed in the context of the national problem. All of us have to adjust our programmes in that light and in that perspective.

Federalism means that Government functioning is shared by and divided among different foci of authority.

With the changes which have come about in the recent elections, the NDC naturally assumes greater importance. All the schemes which we take up are national schemes, whether they are in the State sector or the Central sector, because the welfare and progress of the country are indivisible.

Many hon. Members have talked of Centre-State relationship. Certain Chief Ministers have also come out with statements on this matter. I read the other day the Address of the Governor of Madras. I think there need be no apprehension of friction. The Constitution is strong enough and also resilient enough. The problem of Centre-State relations is an old problem in our national movement. I think the Constitution was drawn up with foresight and its spirit is both accommodating and reconciliatory. It

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spells out division of functions to the extent possible and leaves the rest to discussion.

Now, even in these three weeks of the new Government, I am heartened at the kind of response which we have had from the State Governments. I would like to declare once more that our own attitude will always be to work together with them in the national interest.

Even if a subject is in the State list, such as Agriculture or Education, inter State and Centre State interdependence are unavoidable.

Shri A. K. Gopalan spoke of provincial autonomy. I would like him to appreciate more fully the spirit of our Constitution, and I would like him to look once again at the statement made by the Chief Minister of Kerala who said that time must be given for these relations to develop.

Shri A. K. Gopalan wanted a higher share of income-tax and export earnings. Under the Constitution, as you all know, a Finance Commission goes into this matter every five years. As for grants, the Study Team of the Administrative Reforms Commission is going into the question of Centre-State finance.

Many hon. Members referred to the problem of corruption. We are as anxious as anybody to maintain the highest standards of personal integrity because we think that this is essential in public life. The Administrative Reforms Commission has recommended the institution of a Lokpal and a Lok Ayukt. We have nearly completed formulating our views, and we have approached the States. We would like to have their views also before finalising our own.

A matter which creates great emotion is that of language. Many Members have spoken on this matter, Shri V. Krishnamoorthi talked of the betrayal of non-Hindi-speaking people. Shri H. N. Mukerjee talked of the need for imaginative handling. I think that a very good reply to this

was given by Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha who very clearly said that we had no desire to impose Hindi on the South. Friends of the DK have spoken with deep passion on this matter. Our view is well known. We believe that all our languages are national languages and of equal status. And any of them can be made the official language, if a State so wants. But it is important also for all of us to be able to understand each other and this was the real reason why we felt that one language should be a national link language. We have given a solemn assurance that English will be retained at the Centre as an associate link language as long as this is deemed necessary. We shall move a Bill in the next session to give formal effect to this assurance.

I should like to make a reference also to Urdu. I am very concerned with this problem. When certain deputations came to see me earlier, we assured them that this matter would be taken up most urgently. Here again, in some States there are new governments. We will take up this matter when the Chief Ministers come here, and I hope that it will be satisfactorily solved.

Reference was made to the delay in announcing Government's decision regarding the Education Commission's Report. The Education Minister himself was a member of this Commission. I am sure he will set a definite date by which to announce his decision. He is also setting up a Youth Division in the Education Ministry.

A new Member spoke about the President's powers. Our Constitution is clear on this issue. Our conventions are well-established. I do not think there is any justification for imaginary fears of friction.

I should like to say one more word here about our deep concern about some sections in our country who have been under-privileged and who,

in spite of various programmes have not really had their due share. I am speaking now of our Harijan brothers and sisters, of our tribal brothers and sisters, of our hill people and of the very large mass of people who are known as the landless labour. These people have really had the worst of the difficult situation and we must bend all our energies to help them now in every way.

I should like to say a few words about foreign affairs and our relations with foreign countries, whether they be our neighbours or whether they are situated far off. Many members have touched upon this. The hon. member, Shri Masani, said that we are friendless. I think it is very difficult to judge who is whose friend. I do not think that we are friendless. In times of need, countries with different systems, different persuasions, have come to our help; I think the list of our friends, if we are to go into detail, is a fairly comprehensive one and it covers practically all continents.

Our foreign relations are governed only by considerations of national interest and the nation's security and are rooted in the firm belief that mankind is one family and that to exist we have also to co-exist. That is why we have tried always to further our national interests from the economic, political and strategic points of view and secondly to promote international co-operation and peace. This was our aim in the past and this is what will guide us in the future.

I want to assure members about one thing. Some of them have a feeling that we pursue a particular policy merely because it has been a declared policy. All policies are constantly under review, because if they do not serve the purpose of today, there is naturally no point in continuing with the same policies. If we continue a particular policy today, it is because on reviewing and re-testing, we feel that it meets the needs of today, that it meets the needs of national interests.

We also have a fundamental dedication to championing the cause of all people who are fighting against racialism and colonialism. Some people feel that may be this is unnecessary or it is not our business, but we know from our own experience how much it meant to us when we were fighting for our freedom when there were people in other countries who appreciated our fight, and if they could not help us in any other way at least they could give moral support. Freedom is indivisible. Therefore, we are deeply concerned with the rights of the people of South Africa, of Angola, Mozambique, Portuguese Guinea, Southern Rhodesia, Aden and other countries which have yet to attain freedom.

Shri M. R. Masani: What about Tibet?

Shri M. I. Sondhi (New Delhi): Pathans. What about Pakhtunistan?

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: There are few things which are more dangerous than the consequences of racial war, and that is why we have opposed the policy followed in South Africa.

Some members have talked of the need for a more positive policy towards Pakistan. Government entirely agree. We have always stated our point that it is necessary, in fact it is vital, for India and Pakistan to work in co-operation on as many issues and as many spheres as possible, because we are neighbours, because we share the same problems and difficulties. And we shall certainly continue to make every effort possible to have greater understanding and goodwill with Pakistan. It distresses us deeply that our relationship should not have been one of amity, and that there should be considerable distrust between these two neighbours.

With regard to China, our policy is well known, and here again, we have no quarrel with the Chinese.

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people, and we would certainly like not to have a rigid attitude in this, but we feel that some indication should come or some situation created in which we can get out of our present rut. This has been completely lacking, but we do not believe that we should close the door or that matter.

Prof. Mukerjee said that we have been silent on Vietnam. There are other members who are constantly telling us that we talk too much about Vietnam. Sir, actually, I do not think we are silent, nor have we overstated the case. We have expressed our view whenever it was necessary to do so. The House knows the Government's views on this. We fervently hope that peace will return to Vietnam soon. We have welcomed the various peace moves which have been made, including the one by the Secretary-General, U Thant, whom we shall have the pleasure of welcoming amidst us some time next week. And it is our hope that the problem can be taken away from the battle field and brought to the conference table.

I also want to talk about something which is rather delicate. For some time now, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, systematic attempts have been made in this House by certain quarters to raise questions in one form or another about gifts received by me especially from foreign dignitaries, or about my personal possessions. I have denied these allegations on the floor of the House, and I want to do so again. Since I became a Member of Parliament or entered Government, or earlier when I was a private citizen, I should say that, to the best of my knowledge, I did not infringe any of our conventions and rules relating to the acceptance of such gifts. The allegations and insinuations which have been sought to be raised are false and malicious. I have denied the specific allegations from time to time.

Mention was recently made about a diamond necklace given to me over ten years ago by the King of Saudi Arabia, and I have written to the Speaker at some length about this. I am not really worried about these allegations even though they are made day in and day out. But there is a deliberate and sustained attempt at character assassination and it is for this House to judge and decide how long this personal vilification and maligning can be allowed to continue.

17 hrs.

I would like to take this opportunity to make a few other observations on this matter. In 1955, the then Prime Minister, my father, expressed the view that it would be desirable to apply the toshakana rules to Ministers also and that they should not retain expensive presents. He went on to observe that as the toshakanas was not equipped properly to preserve the many things which were given they should be sent to museums and other suitable places where they might remain as state property, rather than as the personal property of the recipient. That is how he and I treated the presents which we received. Except for a stole of sable skin which was presented to me by Mr. Khrushchev on the Russian trip, I have not retained any other expensive gifts. I kept this gift because in the manner in which it was given, it was felt that it would perhaps be misunderstood if it were handed over. It is not the custom to make public the details about the presents received from Heads of States and Governments or other high dignitaries from friendly foreign countries. They vary considerably in nature and any publication of a list of presents, such as might possibly give rise to embarrassing comparisons between country and country, would obviously not be in keeping with the propriety and the dig-

nity of our relations with those countries. It would also not be in the public interest to reveal how individual presents were disposed of because such disclosures might conceivably be misunderstood as an act of discourtesy to the dignitaries from whom they were received. But a full list of all these things is however kept.

Under the code of conduct which was adopted sometime ago and which was laid before Parliament, all Union Ministers send returns of their personal assets and liabilities to the Prime Minister. Although the code does not specifically lay down any procedure for the Prime Minister, for my part I have been following the practice of placing my own statement along with the records of my colleagues.

There is no intention on my part nor on the part of my colleagues to evade answering allegations even of a personal character which any Member might choose to level. We have rules and conventions about the manner in which such allegations can be raised by one Member against another, whether in Government or not. These rules and conventions naturally take into account the fact that what any of us chooses to say on the floor of this House is fully protected against legal consequences and highly privileged. I think it is within the right of this House and indeed appropriate, that it should be possible to raise allegations against Members of Government or even against another Member which relate to the period of Membership of the House or of Government. It would be particularly open to a Member to raise such allegations against a minister of a nature which involves abuse of public office.

I say all this with a sense of hesitation because from time to time various things have been said which concern me personally and I consider it my duty to bring them up here today. I sincerely feel that what this House must consider are some of the

general issues that arise, including, if I may say so, in all humility, the question of how long one single Member or two should be allowed to persist with wild, irresponsible and baseless allegations against the Prime Minister of the country.

When I began to speak, I spoke about certain national problems. Some hon. Members opposite tend to give the impression that it is only they who are concerned with the poverty in the country or with the difficulties in the country. Indeed, it is not so. In speaking of these, they do not speak only of the present period of difficulties or the last year or two.

But they try to sweep up all the 20 years since Independence years in which considerable progress was made years in which the very face of this nation has been transformed.

An hon. Member: Question.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: Well, I think this is there for all to see. Except in the tribal parts and the drought-affected areas, there is great differences from before in the lives of our peasantry, in the lives of our workers and so on. But it is true that since the last few years and notably since 1962, since the Chinese invasion followed by other repeated invasions, along with which we had this unprecedented drought, Hon. Members may know that at least in Uttar Pradesh, it is really three years since we have had hardly any rain, and even in the year before, that is, the fourth year, rainfall was deficient. So, a very difficult situation has arisen because of this, and at the same time, we have had a rise in population and rising demands from our people.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Rising prices also.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: Well, that is true. There are many causes for it. As I repeatedly said, we are not trying to hide anything; we do not

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want to run away from the shortcomings of the Government. They are there; there have been shortcomings in implementation; we all know there have been, but it does not help to keep on underlining the shortcomings and ignoring the achievements. All that I say is, let us see the picture in its reality; it is not that the situation is not grim today. The statements made by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Food Minister have very clearly outlined how critical and grim the situation is, and what a tremendous national effort will be needed in order to face it and to overcome it. Therefore, we must all get together to create the national will to face this kind of problem. (Interruption). As I said, we are not running away from the fact that we might have made mistakes, but the situation is also caused by many, many happenings and events which were beyond our control, such as the invasion on our borders, the increase in defence expenditure, which naturally had to follow, and other problems which I have already mentioned.

National problems require a national outlook, and a national effort. Many honourable Members opposite feel that they have suggested a national government. But if we cannot even get together on these problems and form a basis of working on policy, I do not see how a national government can function in the present circumstances. It is for Honourable Members opposite and all the different parties to show that they are willing to tackle these problems on a national basis.....

Shri Kanwarlal Gupta: (Delhi: Sedar): The initiative should come from you.

Shrimati Indira Gandhi: and to find at least what is the minimum common factor which could straightway be implemented and pursued. Our primary task is that of economic growth and of the rapid transformation of our economy. And it is

a tremendous task to transform this great and ancient country in keeping with the hopes of the new generation. We are deeply concerned with the difficulties of the masses of our people and the question of inequality. This question has come up and rightly, many times in this House and it is a question to which we must give deep thought and try to solve. Because, no matter what we have achieved, it loses its importance if the benefits of it do not go to the masses of our people and if there are many amongst our people who still remain and feel underprivileged. This is our major and first duty today to see how we can minimise this inequality and help those people who are most in need of our help.

I am fully conscious of the rights of the minorities. We must also pay the greatest, and speedy attention to all their right demands

One hon. member said that the essence of democracy is debate. I entirely agree with him. This is so, but it also means getting the job done. Now we spend a great deal of time on debate. Very often this clarifies many issues. I am not at all against debate, but I think we must at least give the same effort and cooperation in getting the job done. If we can work out this problem, then of course the debates would also have more point. As it is, in a debate many points are expressed. But most people go in different directions and the net result of it is not the kind of action that can have meaning for the people.

In the President's Address, it was not possible to outline more clearly certain aspects of policy. That will be clearer in the next session. But certainly the Address gave some idea of what is to be done immediately. These we must take up as national problems and see that we solve them. We must see that the extremely diffi-

cult period through which we are passing, is not with courage and that whatever unity can be brought about so that we are cleared of it. Although the situation is grim, our people do have the courage and the capacity to meet it. It is up to us to help them to do so. My plea to the hon. members is that they should commend the President's Address to the people, that through what it has outlined we should be able to take at least one step forward in the right direction.

श्री मधु सिन्घे (मुंगेर) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, क्या स्पष्टीकरण के तौर पर कुछ सवाल नहीं पूछे जा सकते ?

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय : एक ही सवाल पूछ सकते हैं।

श्री मधु सिन्घे : माननीय सदस्य, श्री गुणानन्द ठाकुर, एक प्रश्न पूछना चाहते हैं।

श्री गुणानन्द ठाकुर (सहरमा) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, आज से छः महीने किन्नर माननीय प्रधान मंत्री जी बिहार गई थी और उन्होंने गया, पालामऊ और मुंगेर के जमूई इलाके का दौरा किया था। यह 1 अप्रैल को भी बिहार गई थी। बिहार के एक प्रमुख अखबार इंडियन मेसन में बिहार के एक मंत्री ने कहा है कि मिर्क गया जिले में 157 व्यक्तियों की मृत्यु भूख से हुई है। मैं प्रधान मंत्री से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि बिहार के अन्य जिलों में भी इसी तरह बड़े पैमाने पर जांच भूखमरी है, उसके लिये वह अचिलम्ब क्या व्यवस्था करने जा रही है।

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: You have only given information.

श्री मधु सिन्घे : माननीय सदस्य, मैंने जिले में भूख से हुई मौतों के बारे में पूछ रहे हैं। वह वह जानना चाहते हैं कि क्या

प्रधान मंत्री की जानकारी में यह बात आई है।

श्री गुणानन्द ठाकुर : प्रधान मंत्री स्वयं बिहार भूम कर आई हैं, लेकिन मुझे भ्रम है कि अपने भाषण में उन्होंने इस बात का कोई जिक्र नहीं किया है।

श्री बलराज मजोठ (दक्षिण दिल्ली) : इस डिबेट में कई माननीय सदस्यों ने काश्मीर के चुनावों के बारे में कहा था। यह विषय डैलीकेट है, तो भी मैं उम्मीद करता था कि प्रधानमंत्री इस सम्बन्ध में कुछ कहेंगी, परन्तु उन्होंने इस बारे में कुछ भी कहना ठीक नहीं समझा। मैं समझता हूँ कि इस बारे में अगर कुछ और न किया जाये, तो कम से कम एक हार्ड-पावर्ड प्रोब तो वहाँ के चुनावों के बारे में हो।

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There is no question. You have made a suggestion.

श्री बलराज मजोठ : क्या प्रधान मंत्री इस बारे में कुछ कहेंगी ?

श्रीमती इंदिरा गांधी : ये बातें इलैमेशन कमीशन के सामने हैं।

श्री सरजू पाण्डेय (गाजीपुर) : प्रधानमंत्री जी ने अपने भाषण में कहा है कि उत्तर प्रदेश की हालत बहुत खराब है। पूर्वी जिलों की—खास तौर से गाजीपुर, बलिया और धाबनगढ़ की—हालत बहुत खराब है। लेकिन आज भी उन जिलों में तकावी खाद हर तरह की सरकारी बसुलियां जारी हैं। क्या प्रधानमंत्री उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार को आदेश देंगी कि जितनी भी सरकारी बसुलियां बहाएँ पर हो रही हैं उन जिलों में, जो कि अकालग्रस्त इलाके हैं, उनको स्पष्ट किया जाये ?

श्रीमती इंदिरा गांधी : हमने उन को स बारे में पहले ही आदेश दिया है।

[श्रीमती इन्द्रा गांधी]

माननीय सदस्य ने बिहार के बारे में एक सवाल पूछा है। जहां तक मेरी जानकारी है, बिहार के एक मिनिस्टर ने जो बयान दिया है, वहां के मुख्य मंत्री ने उस पर कुछ कार्यवाही की है, यानी किसी को यह देखने के लिये भेजा है।

श्री गुमानच ठाकुर: मजफ्फरपुर जिले में जो दो व्यक्तियों के भूख से मरने की खबर है, मुख्य मंत्री ने उस पर जांच कमीशन बिठाया है। मैं तो गया और सहरसा जिलों की बात कर रहा हूँ। वहां के लिये कोई जांच कमीशन नहीं बिठाया गया है।

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: If hon. Members agree, I shall put all the amendments together to the vote of the House.

Shri P. K. Deo (Kalabandi): They may be put separately.

Some hon. Members: They may be put together.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I shall put them together.

All the amendments were put and negatived.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I shall now put the original motion to the House. The question is:

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

"That the Members of Lok Sabha assembled in this Session are deeply grateful to the President for the Address which he has been pleased to deliver to both Houses of Parliament assembled together on the 18th March, 1967."

The motion was adopted.

17.18 hrs.

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE (AMENDMENT) BILL

The Minister of Law (Shri Govinda Menon): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Representation of the People Act, 1951, be taken into consideration."

I hope, Sir, that much by way of explanation may not be necessary for the passage of this Bill. As the House knows, late in February this year an ordinance was issued under the following circumstances. It was the desire of many sections of the House that after the election was completed of the Members of the Fourth Lok Sabha a 'lame duck' session of the Third Lok Sabha need not be held as was done in the previous years—1952, 1957 and 1962. In order to enable the President to summon the Fourth Lok Sabha it had to be constituted and for that purpose an amendment of the Representation of the People Act was necessary. It was done by this Ordinance and the object of this Bill is to substitute that Ordinance by a regular Act of Parliament. I hope the House will unanimously approve of this Bill.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Motion moved:

"That the Bill further to amend the Representation of the People Act, 1951, be taken into consideration."

Half an hour has been allotted for this Bill.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): I do support this Bill, because some of us thought that this lame duck session was useless when new Members were elected in the general elections. But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact