

12.47½ hrs.

THE CONSTITUTION (SCHEDULED TRIBES) ORDER (AMENDMENT) BILL

As passed by Rajya Sabha

[English]

SECRETARY GENERAL: Sir, I lay on the Table the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 1991, as passed by Rajya Sabha.

12.48 hrs.

THE GENERAL BUDGET, 1991-92
—GENERAL DISCUSSION—*Contd.*

[English]

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI MANMOHAN SINGH): Mr. Speaker Sir, I rise to reply to the General Discussion on the Budget for 1991-92, which I had the honour of presenting to the august House on 24 July 1991. I am extremely grateful to all hon. members on both sides of this House who have taken part in the debate which has been characterised by a mixture of commendation, caution and criticism of the proposals contained in my Budget.

I was particularly impressed by the extent of knowledge, skill, wisdom, dignity, moderation and the great concern for the politically innocent Finance Minister, which marked the speech of my esteemed friend Shri Jaswant Singh. He performed the role of the opening batsman for the Opposition with great distinction. Then there were the speeches of veterans and stalwarts like Shri Indrajit Gupta, Shri Chandra Jeet Yadav, Prof. Nirmal Kanti Chatterjee, Shri Atal Bihari

Vajpayee, Shri Sukh Ram and many others whose deep love for our country, whose scholarship, skills and experience as parliamentarians and whose sense of fairness and decency I have always admired and respected. I am of this view that there is no match for these stalwarts of the parliamentary scene in our country. On an occasion like this I feel like a pigeon thrown among the cats. I must confess to you that I feel a little diffident in taking on such great stalwarts. But since the Prime Minister has placed me in this predicament I have to do my duty howsoever inadequate I may be for this task.

Shri Jaswant Singh was greatly worried about my political inexperience and innocence in political affairs. I am deeply grateful to him for his affection and concern for me but let me assure him that I am not in any way over-powered by any feeling of lack of political experience on my part. I have had the privilege of working closely with all the Prime Ministers of India, starting with Shrimati Indira Gandhi. I have been a keen observer of the Indian political scene and political processes in our country. I have been a witness during the past 20 years to some of the most historic moments of both triumph and tragedy: of joy and sorrow, of laughter and tears: of the high noons of creativity and idealism as well as the evenings of despair, darkness, and despondency which have characterised the arduous journey of this republic in our nation's quest for modernity, dignity and self-respect for our people.

I am also a student of History, in particular, after Mughul period. I also know that the Delhi Establishment has not been able to shake off completely the heritage of the culture of the great Mughal court. The atmosphere of intrigue and the low-cunning politics of self-aggrandisement which ultimately led to the decline and fall of that great empire, that great enterprise and great adventure. And, if you read Gibbon and Shakespeare you know