

[MR. SPEAKER *in the Chair*]

**MOTION OF THANKS ON THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS - CONTD.**

[*Translation*]

**THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH):** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to express my gratitude to all those hon. Members who participated in the discussion. If some hon. Members have been critical of Government, I don't mind it, since their criticism must have been well intentioned. Mr. Gadgil had said certain things. He is not present here at the moment.

**SHRI BHAJAN LAL (Faridabad):** I shall convey your views to him.

**SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH:** Sir, there are middlemen in hearing also.... (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

**SHRI K.S. RAO (Machilipatnam):** It is most unfortunate..... it is unparliamentary.

**SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH:** 'Bicholia' is not an unparliamentary word..... (*Interruptions*) ...

**SHRI K.S. RAO:** Please withdraw that statement.

[*Translation*]

**SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH:** I am fully confident that .....

[*English*]

**SHRI K.S. RAO:** Please withdraw that statement. We are not middlemen. We are Members of Parliament... (*Interruptions*)....

**SHRI A. CHARLES (Trivandrum):** We are Members of Parliament. We are not middlemen..... (*Interruptions*)

(*Interruptions*)

**SHRI K.S. RAO:** The hon. Prime Minister should withdraw his words calling us as middlemen. (*Interruptions*)

**THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN):** No; he has not called you so. (*Interruptions*)

**MR. SPEAKER:** Mr. Prime Minister.

[*Translation*]

**SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH:** Sir, I was just saying that had Mr. Gadgil been here. I would have told him something. The hon. Member has been kind enough to agree to convey my views to Mr. Gadgil. He said that he would convey, which means that he will act between Mr. Gadgil and me as a ..... (*Interruptions*)....

[*English*]

**SHRI P.R. KUMARAMANGALAM (Salem):** The Prime Minister should have the grace, not to speak in this manner. It does not increase the dignity of the House. It is not proper on his part... (*Interruptions*)

**AN HON. MEMBER:** We are not middlemen. (*Interruptions*)

**MR. SPEAKER:** I do not know what he said.

(*Interruptions*)

**SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM (Sivaganga):** He used the word *bicholia*. (*Interruptions*)

**AN HON. MEMBER:** Is 'middlemen' unparliamentary?

(*Interruptions*)

[*Translation*]

**SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH:** Sir, is the word 'middlemen' an unparliamentary expression?..... (*Interruptions*)

Sir, you are the final authority. If "middlemen" is an unparliamentary expression, I shall not use it.

(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seats.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No. I think the Prime Minister has said it in a light vein. There is nothing unparliamentary.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please take your seat. Mr. Rao.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No I am on my legs. You must sit down. Take your seats, please. I am on my legs.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I think that although the Prime Minister has spoken something in a light-hearted manner, he has actually said nothing unparliamentary. I am convinced that there is nothing unparliamentary, which he has said.

Now the Prime Minister.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You should have a sense of humour.

(Interruptions)

[Translation]

MR. SPEAKER : Now, Rajiv ji, has come.

(Interruptions)

[English]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): They have lost the elections, and also lost the sense of humour.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: You tell me what unparliamentary word he has used?

[Translation]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: Mr. Speaker, Sir, When Hon. Prime Minister rose to speak after speaking a few words, he has said in your presence that the Leader of the Opposition is not present in the House and had he been present, he would have told him something. I said to him that we were expecting him any moment but if he did not come, we will not down the points and convey them to our leader .....(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Rao, why do you stand up when I have allowed Mr. Bhajan Lal to speak?

(Interruptions)

SHRI NIRMAL KANTI CHATTERJI (Dumdum): In their party, there are no middlemen. They have a top and a bottom. ... (Interruptions)...

[Translation]

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: It is insult of the whole House and all of its members. We give full respect to Hon. Prime Minister. We only want to say that he has insulted House, so he may kindly withdraw his words..... (Interruptions).....

MR. SPEAKER: I have heard Shri Bhajan Lal. I shall ask the Hon. Prime Minister, to continue his speech.

SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA: (South Delhi): I have to say that commission received by them should be refunded.

MR. SPEAKER: Question is not related to any commission.

...(Interruptions)...

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. K.S. Rao.

SHRI K.S. RAO: The Hon. Prime Minister has said that the Leader of the Opposition is not there to hear. (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: No.

(Interruptions)

SHRI K.S. RAO: He said, there are middlemen calling us so. (Interruptions) Assuming that he has said it in a lighter tone - I agree - now I request that the hon. Prime Minister should withdraw that statement because it is insulting us.

That means, he did say and he wanted to support himself that it is not unparliamentary and that 'middlemen' is a parliamentary word. It is like this. In Telugu, when we ask, 'how is your father' how it looks like if we say: 'how is your mother's husband' — *Amma Mogudu*

If he has got any respect for the Members of Parliament, let him say that he did not say this word or let him say that he withdraws this word instead of enquiring whether this word is parliamentary or unparliamentary. It insults all the Members of Parliament. We do not want to proceed with this unless he says so. It is insulting every Member of Parliament. Either he must say that he regrets or he must say that he, withdraws this word, one of the two. He cannot say, whether it is parliamentary or unparliamentary. What is this Sir?.....(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Chidambaram.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : Sir, my submission is this. This is a serious debate .....(Interruptions)

SHRI MANDHATA SINGH (Lucknow): Sir, the entire House appeals to the Leader of the Opposition through you to control his Members. We want the proceedings of the House to continue...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I am not allowing you. Mr. Chidambaram.

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM: My submission is this. This is a serious debate. The Prime Minister was replying to a very serious debate and we definitely expected that he would start and go through his reply in a vein of seriousness. Now Sir, I heard it in translation, he used the Hindi word '*Bicholia*', which, I believe, means middlemen. Sir, you have said - the Prime Minister has not said it - that the Prime Minister has used it in a lighter vein. We feel offended. If the Hon. Members of Parliament are offended, what stops the Prime Minister saying that "if you are offended, I withdraw the word"...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: I think the word '*Bicholia*' is not unparliamentary. But I request the Prime Minister - if by using this word friends on this side have been hurt - to use some other word.

[Translation]

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I fully comply with your orders, perhaps there is some mistake in interpretation. Firstly, I ..... (Interruptions)....

MR. SPEAKER: You may use words which don't hurt the feelings of others.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: Sir, I shall be the last person to hurt the feelings of others, Sir, I did not say it about the Leader of the Opposition but Shri Gadgil. He is not present in the House. He raised this issue in detail during the debate. I had said about Shri Gadgil that he was not present in the House. Shri Bhajan Lal or other Mem-

bers said that whatever was said that would be conveyed to him. I mean to say that I wanted to convey to him something but he is not present in the House. You offered to convey my message. I am thankful to you that you are between Mr. Gadgil and me ....  
(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please take your seat. I have not allowed you to speak. ....(Interruptions)

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH:  
Sir, we express our views through you in this august House.

SHRI HARISH RAWAT (Almora): We will definitely convey our views to Hon. Prime Minister through hon. Speaker but we will not use the word 'Bicholia' for the hon. Speaker. You have used the word 'Bicholia' which does not behove you ..... (Interruptions) .....

SHRI BHAJAN LAL: Either he should say that he has not said so or he should withdraw his words .....(Interruptions)....

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH:  
Now, hon. speaker has allowed.

We should proceed further. What is there. Please, at least listen to Mr. Speaker

Shri Gadgil called me a weak person. Sir, I admit that I am an ordinary and weak person but all of you struggled with this ordinary and weak person for three and a half years. The result of this three years struggle is that our people are on the treasury benches and you are in the opposition. I think you should learn a lesson from my weakness. You have been strong all along, so remain in the opposition with the same firmness and never show the weakness to listen to others. Do not try to come to this side. If you have not followed, you can try to understand after reaching home and if there is lack of understanding then even God cannot help you. It has been said that we, particularly I, are indecisive and earlier I was called a confused person.

[English]

But my confusion has confounded you. So beware of my confusion. Do not under-rate my confusion that way.

[Translation]

It is said that I cannot take decision promptly and the result of this state of indecision is that the Lok Pal Bill about which you could not take decision for three years, has been brought before the Parliament by us at the very first available opportunity and the Postal Bill which had been hanging in balance for years, has also been reintroduced. We had declared that Doordarshan and All India Radio will be made autonomous bodies and now accordingly we have started implementing our words. This is also the result of our indecision that 59th Constitution Amendment Bill has been adopted with your help.

AN HON. MEMBER: There was no other alternative.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : We are thankful to you because the amendment could not be carried without your cooperation. For your cooperation, we will express our gratitude. This is also the result of our indecision that the previous Government was only talking about giving interim relief to the Bhopal Gas tragedy victims but we have taken a decision in that respect. In the Bofors deal, we have filed a FIR and got the accounts sealed within 3 days which the congress (I) Government could not do in 3 years. Look at the extent of indecision on our part that we could set up Inter-state Council only in 90 days for which we had made a declaration in our manifesto. Rural youth were greatly disappointed on becoming over-age for the competitive examinations, we enhanced the age limit from 26 years to 28 years. I am thankful to Shri Harish Rawat who has expressed thanks for it. You admit it because they are directly related to you. I know that he is directly connected with these youths...  
(Interruptions).....



**SHRI HARISH RAWAT :** I had not only expressed thanks but had added something else also.... (*Interruptions*)

**SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH:** Again the result of our indecision is that we have taken a decision to extend the facilities available to scheduled castes, to neo-Buddhists also, which was the dream of Baba Bhim Rao Ambedkar. Not only this, National Integration Council has also been formed and Bachawat Report on Insurance enquiry has also been prepared in this state of indecision. Now if you want to put us on test in future, you may bet. Let us behave like a soldier and see whether we fulfil our promises or not. Let there be a bet... (*Interruptions*) We have made a statement about 'one-rank-one pension'. Can you dare say that we will not take a decision about it. They are silent, Sir.... (*Interruptions*).... We have promised that loans of the farmers will be waived. If you want to test us, say that we will not do that in this Budget Session. Can you say that we will not take a decision about bringing laws relating to land under schedule 9 for which we have made a commitment. Have a bet. We have also made statement about participation of workers in the management through secret Ballot. Can you bet that we will not do it? It was because of indecision that agitations were going on the issue of reservation and we have achieved it through your co-operation. I am thankful to you for this as it is a constitution amendment. Secondly, if you want to test our state of indecision, you can test us on the question of waiving of loans. We will do it in this Budget session. Can you dare to bet on this issue. Further if you want to challenge our indecisiveness, take Panchayat Raj and decentralisation. Have a bet whether we will do it or not with total resolve. Another test about indecision is that we will provide 30 per cent seats to women in panchayats. You can bet on this point also.

If you want to test our indecisiveness further you can take the example of right to work proposed to be made a fundamental right under the constitution by us and if necessary, we would seek your co-opera-

tion in this regard also. There is yet another score on which we can be put to test on the charges of indecisiveness levelled against us. We have decided to channelising 50% of the resources to the rural areas under the Eighth Five Year Plan. Why don't you tell the truth? You stop talking about a weak or strong Government or State of decisiveness or indecisiveness on the part of the Government. We had declared in our manifesto that we would do it by January 1st and certainly we are in the process of doing it and we are grateful to the parties supporting the Government. (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

**SHRI M. BAGA REDDY (Medak) :** Mr. Speaker, Sir..... (*Interruptions*)

**MR. SPEAKER :** If he yields, then you can speak.

[*Translation*]

**SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH:** You may permit him.

**SHRI M. BAGA REDDY :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Prime Minister referred to the implementation of the many decisions taken by the Government. A much publicised and very important decision of this Government is about the waiver of loans upto Rs. 10,000/- which was mentioned even in their manifesto. (*Interruptions*) It is really surprising that no mention has been made in the Address about this important matter oft-repeated by them and their Chief Ministers. (*Interruptions*)

**SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH :** Mr. Speaker, Sir, let there be a bet on this issue also and see whether we bring a proposal in this respect in this very budget session or not.

In this regard, I would like to express my gratitude to the parties supporting the Government.

**SHRI MADAN LAL KHURANA (South**

Delhi) : Please also announce that a bill granting statehood to Delhi would be introduced in this very session.

AN HON. MEMBER : Please make a statement on the Mandal Commission report also.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : I will come to the Mandal Commission report.. Please do not worry. Nothing would be left.

I would like to express my gratitude to the parties supporting us as a new tradition is being created. It is not because we want to keep this Government in power. I recognise the historic contribution of the friendly parties in establishing the foundation of a new political tradition based on issues and programmes, because issue-based politics is replacing personality-based politics and I believe that a thoughtful clash of thinking is healthier for a democracy than a thoughtless unanimity.

We have differences on some issues, we do not hide them, we are not afraid of expressing them, but we would like to set a tradition of achieving consensus on national issues wherever it can be achieved.

It is nice that we got their co-operation too in this regard. I would like to express my gratitude to them as well. There are issues of national importance on which they extended their support. The repeal of the 59th Constitution Amendment Act would not have been possible without their co-operation. They extended their co-operation on extending reservation facilities for S.C. and S.T. also. They extended their co-operation on the Kashmir issue as well. Hence, this tradition of give and take would continue in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cordiality.

There is an attempt to arrive at consensus on national issues. I feel that a healthy tradition is being created to safeguard the country's basic interests. A charge often levelled against us was that ours was an opportunistic alliance, but today none of the

parties supporting us are sharing power with us, neither the leftist parties nor the B.J.P. Both of them are supporting us not for the sake of power, no one is sharing power and no one can be branded opportunistic.

[English]

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha) : They are wielding more power.

[Translation]

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH : Please listen to me carefully and try to see the truth. So, this is not an opportunistic alliance. On the contrary, on the basis of programmes, we are advancing towards the politics of issues rather than following the politics of personality-cult.

I am grateful to Shri Somnath Chatterjee for expressing his views about the present Government. Shri Gadgil raised a point about planning and he also said something about the growth rate. I would like to assure the august House, that we are fully committed to accelerate the growth rate. There would be no laxity on our part, as far as the pace of development is concerned and we would like to keep it up. The difference is that, we are not content with the statistical development alone, rather, we would like to see as to who should be the real beneficiaries of the growth. We would like to make unemployment as the main concern in the Eighth five Year Plan. It is the gravest problem being faced by our youth. Decentralisation is necessary to strengthen our people oriented policies, the Federal Structure, the people's participation and our plans do not confine only to statistics. A figure is not a pointer of development; we would like to bring about changes in the character of development and rectify its shortcomings. I believe that there has been two major shortcomings in our development strategy. The growth as reflected by statistics, during your tenure, has been impressive. We agree that statistically, the figures are correct, but the pace of development in agricultural sector was not at all satisfactory. The investment in

[Sh. Vishwanath Pratap Singh]

agriculture was marked by stagnation and decline. There has been many shortcomings in the poverty alleviation programmes and the process of development did not affect the unemployment problem. I would not like to take much of your time. In this respect, if you see this graph, you will find that after 1980, the gross capital formation in the Agriculture Sector, has either remained constant or remained below the mark. It is our strategy to curb this tendency. India lives in villages and to remove this disparity, we intend to allocate 50% of our resources to the rural sector. The allocation in the Central Budget may be a little less because of the high expenditure on defence. But as far as the Plan allocations are concerned, in our Central and State Budgets, we want to have at least 50% of our national resources allocated for rural development. In case of industry we want to shift our stress from capital-intensive programmes to labour-intensive programmes. Small-scale industries and agro-based industries will be the main thrust of our industrial policy. This will strengthen our rural as well as industrial sectors, one helping in the growth of the other. A point to be noted in this regard is that the Industrial Policy Resolution moved in this House has played an effective role in framing and shaping the country's industrial development. But I do not know the reason as to why an Agriculture Policy Resolution has not been framed in this country till now? Most of us here have a rural background and the Government may have made a policy statement on agriculture. But such a policy statement of the Government does not have that significance as the policy resolution adopted by the House has because a National Policy Resolution binds the successive Governments. We should have such an Agriculture Policy on which we may have a discussion and adopt it as our national policy. It should not be linked with the Government of a particular party or with some particular individual. Instead it should be taken and accepted as our national perspective, consensus and voice of the people living in our villages and working in our agricultural sector. This policy should be followed by

whichever Government comes to power. So I would strongly favour an Agriculture Policy Resolution.

One of the problems facing us relates to the public sector's contribution. We want that instead of seeking labour's participation in management, they should be made partners in the ownership of the industries. However, the details have to be worked out for the same. That is a matter of discussion and needs our attention. If we do not take labour into confidence and do not make them partners in the management as well as in the ownership of public sector undertakings, public sector will not be able to achieve the optimum results. For this purpose we will bring in a Resolution on public sector through secret ballot in the current year itself. It is necessary that the earnings of the public sector are commensurate with the capital invested in them. We will also bring out a white paper on the public sector. So far as the current economic situation is concerned we are facing a two-dimensional problem. One problem is the internal debt and the other one is the external debt. In fact, what was done till now, was just to cover the facts about these problems by raising foreign debts. Any way we were able to conceal the factual position from the public as we managed to cover it up by drawing upon our currency reserves. But now we cannot hide it. It would be better to bring it before the House and the people of this country so that they may realise the gravity of the situation. If we see only the amount of expenditure incurred towards our debt servicing, it was to the tune of Rs. 2523 crore in 1984-85 and Rs. 7036 crore in 1988-89. If debt servicing on N.R.I. deposits is not taken into account we see that debt-servicing charges on medium and long-term loans stand at 24%, otherwise it comes to about 30%. In the beginning of the year the foreign exchange reserves amounted to Rs. 7040 crore but when this Government came to power these reserves had shrunk to Rs. 5,500 crore. It dipped to that level within a period of only one year before the assumption of office by this Government. And the low level of foreign exchange reserves was a result of domi-

nance of imports during the last two months. The reason why I am telling you all these things here is that I want the House to realise fully well the problems facing this Government. I shall not criticise the previous Government. Leave it there.

We would not like this country to depend on others and for that we need economic independence in future. We do not want to keep our economic liberty mortgaged with a foreign power by raising loans from them on their conditions. So we will have to take hard decisions in this regard because I have known the pressures that debt-ridden countries are subjected to. A Minister of a debt-ridden country made a statement at an international conference. It was surprising how he could gather the courage to make a statement which was vehemently resisted by certain country with the adjournment of the sitting but when the session resumed after a 15 minute gap the same Minister retracted the statement he had made earlier. We do not want to face a similar situation and we will do whatever we may have to do for it, even if it is the curtailment of expenditure on our basic requirements. The Government alone cannot do it; it needs public co-operation and we will have to tell them openly that the Government has been forced by the tight economic position to take certain hard measures in order to preserve our economic independence. In case you continue to beg, ultimately it will compel you to take those stern measures to get out of the vicious circle of indebtedness. It is for that matter that I have taken you into full confidence and I hope I will get your full support and co-operation in this matter. The present Government does not believe in self-praise because we are not the representatives of the Government but representatives of the people in the Government. So we are not interested in eulogizing the Government. At least I am not interested in doing so. I feel that my duty is just to exercise a check on the its working of Government on behalf of the masses. The day we start eulogizing the Government we shall reduce ourselves to the position of a Government official and we will not be the people's representatives in the real sense of the term.

Therefore, we will accept our shortcomings. It is not that we have given a faultless performance over the last 100 days. There may have been some mistakes on our part.

As to the question of appointment of Governors', it seems that some of the persons appointed as Governors have not come up to our expectations. There is no point in expecting too much from a Government or a Prime Minister. Do not give them unnecessary importance by linking the interests of the country with the very existence of a few individuals because the very fall of such individuals causes the collapse of the entire system. That is why we have no hesitation in accepting our shortcomings in this House. Only then can we hope to improve. But we will continue the struggle on the basis which we have come here. That is the yardstick with which we operate.

Hon. Shri Bhajan Lal had expressed his concern about Panchayati Raj and had said that Government was not holding a discussion on it. Here I can assure the hon. Member that we are committed to the decentralisation of power and we will come forward with a Panchayati Raj Bill in the current year itself. We are sure that since you are concerned about this matter, you will extend your support in the passage of that Bill. Hon. Shri Inderjit said that all the Members of this House should declare their assets.

SHRI BHAJAN LAL : I had expressed concern over the happenings in Meham.

SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH: We cannot support the incidents of violence be it in Meham, Rai Bareilly or Amethi. And for the first time any party has.... (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM : What about Meham ? Your man is sitting there till now.

SHRI Y.S. RAJASEKHAR REDDY (Cuddapah) : Do you know what is happening in Haryana ?... (*Interruptions*)



[*Translation*]

**SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH:** Let me finish what I am saying. I shall tell you the reason. Let us not bring Amethi into the picture. Now please be seated. That matter is over. Sir, for the first time a political party has on its own asked for repoll from the Election Commission. If a similar demand had been made in respect of Amethi, the shape of things would have been different. It might have improved. (*Interruptions*)

**MR CHAIRMAN :** Order, Order.

**SHRI BHAJAN LAL :** They said so but the election has been countermanded.

**MR CHAIRMAN :** Shri Rakesh, please sit down.

**SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH :** Shri Bhajan Lal, why are you talking unnecessarily. We were there together in Garhwal. So let us now work together towards finding out a solution to this problem. (*Interruptions*) Hon. Shri Inderjit said that all the hon. Members should declare their assets.

[*Translation*]

I think he has given a very good suggestion and it would set a healthy tradition. I hope the Government would consider it in a positive manner.

**SHRI R.N. RAKESH (Chail) :** You should, first of all, tell how much property do you own.

**SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH:** We are well known to each other and there is nothing to hide from you....(*Interruptions*)... Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra has mentioned one thing in particular here that we must follow certain guidelines in our day to day affairs and decisions should not be taken in a discretionary manner. Vijay Kumarji, I will certainly discuss this matter with you, I am also of the opinion that certain guidelines or conventions should be followed. You are

welcome to discuss this matter and we are ready to cooperate in this regard.

Shri Rajdev Singh and Shri Harish Rawat referred to 'one rank one pension'. The Government intends to bring a proposal in this respect in the current session and I am confident that the opposition will lend their support to it. I do not consider the ex-servicemen as pensioners nor do I favour this principle. They sacrificed whatever they could for the country and they stood boldly to protect the country. Today, we should look towards them as a symbol of unity of the nation—whether he is from Kerala, Kashmir, Bengal, Rajasthan or Tamilnadu, whether he is a Christian, Hindu or Sikh. When he is in his uniform he is none but an Indian. Through this august House, I would like to appeal to the ex-servicemen that they should boldly face the challenge before the country and work for the unity and integrity of the country not merely as a pensioner but give a new leadership and direction to the people. This new force would play a significant role in protecting and strengthening the country.

Now, I would like to make a brief reference to Defence because many critical remarks have been made in regard thereto. It has been stated again and again that the present Government is weak. Here, I would like to mention as to what was happening when we were facing threats from across the border. In the year 1988-89, the revised estimate of expenditure for Defence was Rs. 13,200 crore while the actual expenditure was Rs. 13,340 crore. Similarly, during 1989-90, i.e. current financial year, only Rs. 13,000 crore were allocated as against previous year's actual expenditure of Rs. 13,340 crore. Consequently, when the present Government came to power in the month of January, it did not have sufficient funds in the Government Treasury even to pay salaries and therefore, we had to come with a supplementary Budget of Rs. 500 crore during the first session of Parliament. This was not the way to strengthen the country. I do not want to mention all these matters here. We want that not only in India but throughout the world, maximum funds should be utilised for

developmental purposes as compared to military hardware and defence. But in view of the prevailing circumstances, I do not think that we should neglect our Defence. If we look at the escalation in foreign exchange and prices, then in actual terms there has been a reduction in the total expenditure on Defence whereas threat to our borders has been continuously increasing. In my opinion, we will have to modernise our defence equipment. It would certainly entail some burden, but we will have to bear this burden for the sake of the security of the nation.

15.00 hrs.

Shri Handoo referred to the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. The matter was discussed in detail. Shri Fernandes has already gone to Srinagar and he would review the situation there. After that, he would go to Jammu and stay there for 3-4 days. An All Party Meeting is also scheduled to be held. The situation is alarming, and in view of this, I do not want to make any contradictory comments which may further worsen the situation. All of us should try to avoid it. In this connection, I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition too, who has extended constructive cooperation in this regard.

Shri Rajdev raised the issue of Punjab. Cases of killings and kidnappings have increased in Punjab recently. The residents of Abohar came to me and I have been told that violence is at the same level as it was during the year 1988, and this, of course, is a matter of great concern. The Government will control the situation firmly. We will not let any innocent person to be killed. The Government would use all the might at its command. The Government have already taken measures to check the feeling of injustice prevailing there. Shri Rajdev also referred to the riots of 1984 and the 59th Constitution Amendment. Special courts were set up within a period of 90-100 days. Deserters have been released and rehabilitated. They have been given employment. A proposal has been mooted to provide some more relief to the widows. That would be considered. But unless a congenial atmos-

phere is created, the situation cannot improve. Recently an All Party meeting on Punjab was held. It was a good step in that direction. The Government have approved the constitution of an All Party Committee to assist the Governor of Punjab. The need of the hour is to restore peace there and I am glad that all the major political parties except Akali Dal (Mann) participated in the meeting. They included BJP, Communist Party, Congress, Janata Dal, Akali Dal (Barnala), Akali Dal (Badal) etc. All of them agreed that the important task at present was to create a congenial atmosphere in Punjab.

The Government wants to have a national consensus on Ram Janam Bhoomi-Babri Masjid issue to solve the dispute. We want the cooperation of all the political parties in this regard. A committee has also been constituted, which will hold its meeting very soon. There was a little delay in the matter first due to the elections and then due to the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. But the committee will start its work very soon. We hope that some solution will be found, if we proceed wisely.

You will be pleased to know that the pension of the widows of the 1984 victims has been increased from Rs. 400 to Rs. 1000 per month.

As regard the foreign policy, Shri Gadgil stated that the present Government is very weak and small countries like Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh have also started speaking against India.

Such attitude is surprising as well as shocking. At least foreign policy should be an area which should not be affected by narrow party considerations. It is the policy of the nation and not of a particular political party. It is not the monopoly of a single party. It belongs to the whole country. It was formulated during the freedom struggle and it has stood the test of time. Not only we—the Government but also the people of the country have accepted it. I would like to quote Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, who played a significant role in framing the foreign policy. I quote :

[Sh. Vishwanath Pratap Singh]

[English]

We believe that each country should solve its own problems, develop its own genius. We do not believe in any country dominating in the colonial or economic or the cultural sense of other countries.

[Translation]

What was the basis of our foreign policy. It was equality, mutual trust and the basic concept was of 'Panchsheel'. In view of those principles, would it be justified on our part to question the friendship of Nepal and Sri Lanka who are speaking against us. Would it not be a fatal attack on that policy. We have been capable of challenging the big countries because we never followed the policy of suppressing the smaller nations. If we look towards them with such contempt, we would bow before the bigger nations. Our mentality would force us to do so. We would continue to follow the same foreign policy. The arrival of the President of Maldives in this context is quite significant. The first Head of the State to visit India after we came to power, has been from the smallest country. Luckily, the Opposition has not scoffed at that. The first foreign visit of our External Affairs Minister was also to Maldives, though some consider only visit to big countries as significant. Now he is to visit Namibia. Population should not be the criterion to judge whether a nation is great. No country is small or big. Values make them so. Our foreign policy is value based. It should not be distorted. Today, allegations are being made that Pakistan is increasingly interfering in our affairs because it thinks that our Government is weak. The Previous Government had also been harping on Pakistan's interference earlier. Was it weak? When the issue of Sino-Chinese was raised, were you weak? I don't say that the previous Government was weak. The facts should not be distorted. Nepal adopted hostile attitude during the tenure of the previous Government, whereas now at least they appreciate

some aspects of our approach like the security of our country etc. Strength does not lie in pride, strength lies in unity. I think that the threat to our foreign policy posed by Jammu and Kashmir problem, has subsided and we have been successful. We should be proud rather than being apologetic for it.

Previously, Pakistan tried to rake up the issue of Simla Agreement. Is Simla Agreement not relevant today? We have told Pakistan that if the Agreement has become irrelevant for them it will not be a one sided affair. Pakistan should understand as to what would happen if Simla Agreement is not there. Efforts are being made to scrap the Agreement which provided base for peace between the two countries. We have succeeded in mobilising support from various countries of the world on this issue. I do not say that it is all because of our Government policy rather credit should go to long standing traditions of our foreign policy which we have been following since independence. Pakistan could not succeed in its attempt to internationalise the Kashmir issue.

I do not want to say more but in the end I would say that in the present political scenario of our country a great political experiment is being made. The Congress party has been a big political party in our country since independence. A developing and newly independent country needs stability. Decade after decade passed but there was no political alternative available to the people. In a democracy, if political alternative is not there, it cannot flourish. In order to provide an alternative, a beginning has been made (*Interruptions*) I am calling it a beginning because contradictions are still there among us and with these contradictions we have to move ahead with courage. Presently the position is optimistic but we cannot say that we have overcome all hurdles. We have yet to go far ahead to reach our goal for which responsibility lies on all of us. We are accountable to the people also.

Keeping this hope in mind we will try to work and will seek your cooperation in it too.