

20 प्वाइन्ट प्रोग्राम का जिक्र किया गया है—लेकिन वहां तो 20 प्वाइन्ट प्रोग्राम बिल्कुल कागज पर है। देश के अन्दर 40 लाख बीड़ी मजदूरों की तादाद है लेकिन इन बीड़ी मजदूरों की स्थिति हमारे देश में क्या है? उन को मिनिमम वेज भी नहीं मिलता। जहां सरकार ने कोई कानून बना रखा है वहां वह कानून लागू नहीं होता। सरकार ने जो मिनिमम वेज तय किया है उस के हिसाब से बीड़ी मजदूरों का करोड़ों रूपया बकाया है। चूँकि वहां कानून लागू नहीं है इस लिये राज्य सरकार कुछ नहीं कर रही है। सेन्ट्रल गवर्नमेन्ट की ओर से भी इस सिलसिले में कोई कार्यवाही नहीं की जा रही है। देश के अन्दर करप्शन बढ़ रही है देश के अन्दर चारों ओर जो ला एण्ड आर्डर की स्थिति है उस से हम लोग वाकिफ हैं। बिहार खास तौर पर इस का एक ज्वलन्त उदाहरण है और वहां पर जनजीवन खतरे में है। वहां पर ऐसी स्थिति है और सरकार चुपचाप बैठी हुई है बल्कि कई स्थानों पर तो सरकारी लोगों की सांठ गांठ एन्टी सोशल एलिमेंट्स के साथ है जोकि अखबारों में बराबर निकलता रहता है।

मैं ज्यादा समय नहीं लेना चाहता हूं और सिर्फ यही कहना चाहता हूं कि कम से कम बिहार की जो स्थिति है उड़ीसा की जो स्थिति है, उसको ध्यान में रखा जाना चाहिये और केन्द्रीय सरकार की इस में स्पेशल डिम्मेवारी है क्योंकि वहां पर सुखाड़ की स्थिति के कारण हजारों हजार लोग, बिहार के लोग भाग कर पंजाब और हरियाणा में रोजी रोजगार के लिये आ रहे हैं। वहां की स्थिति बहुत भयावह है और लोग भूखे मर रहे हैं और हम उम्मीद करते हैं कि

सरकार इस ओर ध्यान देगी और उचित ध्यान देगी।

इतना कह कर मैं समाप्त करता हूं।

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI): Mr. Speaker, Sir, a large number of hon'ble members have spoken on the President's Address. Some have made good points, others have repeated their pet theories and others again have aired their prejudices. I am not taking the names of one group or other or even of one individual or another, not because I do not appreciate what some have said or object to the criticism of others, but only because it is not possible to take all names and to take just a few might be discriminatory. Anyhow, I thank all for their participation in the debate.

In his Address, the President informs Parliament and the country about the state of the nation. This the Address has done with a high sense of responsibility and in a cogent, compact manner.

Some hon. members have accused it of being unduly rosy and optimistic. Nobody claims that conditions are ideal or that we are satisfied with what has been achieved. But, on the whole, the Address is objective and presents a balanced view of strengths as well as of shortcomings. But it does certainly highlight, as I think it should, the nation's grit and achievement, in the face of tremendous difficulties.

Several hon. members have talked of a decline in production in the agricultural and industrial sectors and the low rate in the growth of the economy during 1982-83, compared with the previous year. Agricultural production has been lower but industrial production has not fallen. There has been some decline in the overall growth rate but two important factors have to be borne in mind, firstly, the rapid deterioration in the international economic situation and secondly the un-

[Shrimati Indira Gandhi]

precedented drought of 1982 in vast areas of our own country.

The Indian economy cannot be completely insulated from the international economic environment within which it has to operate. When world trade stagnates, our exports are also adversely affected. Aid is becoming increasingly costlier and more difficult to get. The whole world is passing through a period of economic turmoil marked by high rates of inflation and unemployment. Even in the industrially advanced countries the average rate of growth was only 1 per cent last year. The non-oil-exporting-developing countries were the worst hit, suffering from the inherent weaknesses of their own economies and also from the repercussions of recession in developed economies. During 1982, the inflation rate in non-oil-exporting-developing countries was as high as 35 per cent, and the average rate of growth only 1.8 per cent. In this year of all-round stagnation, India is one of the very few countries which has managed to keep the annual rate of inflation at the low level of 2.8 per cent while sustaining a reasonably satisfactory rate of growth.

The growth rate of 2 per cent is less than that of the previous year, but here I come to the second point I made earlier, which is that this growth rate has been achieved in a year of severe drought which affected 43 million hectares of land and 26 crore people. Our last drought was in 1979-80 when 38 million hectares of land and 22 crore people were affected. But if we compare the state of the economy now with that of the previous drought year, the House can judge between good and bad management. In a country like ours, heavily dependent on the monsoons, all that the Government can do in a year of monsoon failure is to try to mitigate its adverse impact through good management of the economy. This is exactly what we did in 1982. That is how the country was

saved from the debilitating impact of a great natural calamity.

In 1979-80, in spite of a comfortable situation in food stocks and foreign exchange reserves, prices were allowed to increase by nearly 22 per cent. By contrast, in the drought year of 1982 the price rise has been only 2.8 per cent. There was nothing fortuitous about it. In fact, prices had begun to rise sharply in the middle of 1982. But the Government moved quickly to control this trend through appropriate monetary measures, timely imports, increased supply of essential commodities and vigorous efforts for grains procurement. In fact, the procurement of rice and wheat in 1982 was higher than in the previous year and this helped the steady flow of foodgrains through the public distribution system. Again, in the previous drought year of 1979-80 the national income actually fell by 4.8 per cent and industrial production by 1.4 per cent. By contrast, in the drought year 1982 there has been an increase in industrial production of 4.5 per cent and an increase in the national income of 2 per cent. What is more, improvements in infrastructure facilities—power coal, railway—were maintained, the tempo of investment has been increased and plan outlays augmented substantially. This is the difference between good and bad management.

I have never expected bouquets from the Opposition, but only political prejudice, and perhaps sheer habit will throw brickbats at such a record. On the economic front, the picture is neither illusory nor exaggerated, as an Hon'ble Member has alleged.

An Hon. Member regretted the inadequacy of grain stocks. On the 1st February, 1983 these stocks were 12.5 million tonnes. This is higher than the stocks in February 1981 or 1982. There are 2.76 lakh recognised fair-price shops, of which 78 per cent are in the rural areas, covering about 52 crore people. I do concede that the system is not perfect. It needs greater improvement. Whenever difficulties are brought to our notice, we

rush stocks and try to remedy the situation.

Many hon. Members have spoken of the problems of their own States. Sir, this is hardly the forum where we can go into the specific problems of each different State. I know that States are facing difficulties. Recently we have sent some grain to Tamil Nadu as well as to some other States who asked for it.

Another Member thought 'that our success in checking prices was due not to our own efforts but because prices were falling all over the world. Frankly, Sir, I do not know which world our friend was referring to! It is no secret that inflation is raging in Europe and in several countries of Asia, Africa and America—both North and South. Runaway prices are the major problem in many countries. In some countries where prices of certain essential commodities are low, the goods are just not available, resulting in long unsatisfied queues, which I have seen with my own eyes. Another hon. Member remarked that the rise in consumer prices was much higher than in wholesale prices. This does happen. But the rate of increase even in consumer prices has been brought under check. This year it was 8 per cent in December 1982, compared to 12.7 in December, 1981. Public memory is said to be short. But we expect parliamentary memory to be somewhat longer. Have our opponents of the Right and the Left, who were components or supporters of the Janata Party, so soon forgotten?

It was amusing but not perhaps unexpected from a party known for its inconsistency to criticise our family planning efforts as being inadequate. Need I remind the House that it was the Janata Party which completely scuttled the family planning programme through vicious and false propaganda and when in power even obliterated its name. It may interest the House to know that in the last months the rate of growth of our population has, for the very first time, come down to

below 2 per cent i.e. 1.9 per cent. I sincerely hope that no interested group will once more mislead the people to reverse this downward trend.

The Budget proposals are fresh in your minds. The Finance Minister has had an extremely difficult and unenviable task. But the Budget is consistent with our national policy. It has novel proposals. It introduces new measures for reforming our financial administration, all of which will have a long term impact on our economy. This Budget and some other earlier proposals will mobilise a reasonably large amount of resources. There is no escape from this, because we cannot lose the momentum of planned development. The basic tenet of this Budget, and for that matter of our national economic policy, has been to keep up Plan expenditure. The Central Plan expenditure in the last year's Budget was to increase by more than 27 per cent. This year the increase will be more than 26 per cent. Whatever else we have to cut and economise on, we have tried to protect our Plan. Even so, I am aware that we have had to give up many worthwhile and even necessary projects of the States and even of Central Ministries. I might say that some of these projects were very dear to my heart. Whatever may be our difficulties: drought and inflation, international recession and balance of payments, we have ensured that we are not deflected from our path of long-term development towards self-reliance. Within the Plan, our most important priorities are the infrastructure, which I have already mentioned, such as power, railways, coal, steel, transport and above all petroleum. In agriculture, we emphasise irrigation, fertilisers and other services — special programmes for small and marginal farmers to increase their productivity and other measures directly related to help the poorer and the weaker sections.

To maintain this effort, we have to raise resources. This the Finance Minister has tried to do in a non-inflationary manner. Those who have more must pay more must pay more. If market prices are too high, providing large profits for some

[Shrimati Indira Gandhi]

commodities, part of these profits should come back to the exchequer. If business and individuals spend less and save and invest more, they will also be taxed less. Everyone of us has to share this mammoth task of national development, by saving more, by investing in productive assets, by working harder and becoming more productive and efficient. We also want increases in outlays, plan or non-plan, public or private, to create greater demand for domestic products. We cannot stop all imports. But we must protect our domestic industry, many of whose problems are those of development. But I must also say, Sir, that much of our domestic industry, having been protected so long, is becoming more and more reluctant to stand on its own feet and to face competition. So, that is another aspect which has to be looked into. It is a testimony to our policies of industrialisation that large domestic capacities have been built in a wide variety of products which are also fairly competitive internationally. Over the last few years our exports of engineering goods have increased rapidly. The Budget has given some more incentives for exports. We want our industries to rise to the challenge, increase their efficiency and expand their production.

To be little our achievements is to denigrate not my party or my Government but our valiant and hard-working people — our farmers, our workers, scientists, technicians and many others.

As the watchdog of the national economy, Parliament has often criticised our public sector enterprises. Even our colleagues of the Left, who ideologically claim to support the public sector, have sometimes somehow undermined its morale. Now that this sector's performance has improved, let us not deny it the appreciation and credit which are its due. Let us urge the workers and the executives to keep up their good work.

We have been unjustly accused of being anti-worker. This is most unfair. We are sympathetic to their problems and hardships and they have usually been cooperative in spite of many difficulties. This

charge is levelled by those who want workers to be anti-Government, not for the good of the worker but perhaps for their own ends. I am grateful to the workers who have refused to become their tools. This does not mean that we are oblivious of the hardships caused by lock-outs and other such steps. They also have to be looked at and dealt with.

We are constantly on the look-out for new ideas. I am with this view that I have invited five eminent economists as advisers. Their work will not overlap in any way with the functions of the Planning Commission. A rather superficial comment was printed in a newspaper—"we have enough advice; what is needed is more performance". Does one replace the other? On the contrary, one is dependent on the other. Everywhere there is a search for new ideas, new ways out for problems and complex crises. The condition of the global economy is grave. If oil prices go up, there is one kind of problem, if they start coming down, the world is caught in another kind of spin. International trade is in shambles. Developing countries like ours are the hardest hit. I am sure, that the eminent economists will come up with constructive ideas for short-term as well as long-term solutions. I have often expressed myself on certain ideologies. Members of the Opposition, one group or another, are deeply committed to various ideologies. But I am looking for a new break—through, not—a rehash of old ideologies.

Another charge which is particularly off the mark is that we have moved from our objective of self-reliance. Self-reliance and the strengthening of our country's economy and fibre are the basis of our decisions and actions as a Government. Many of the economic views and philosophies which are held by certain people in the Opposition, have been derived from theories propounded abroad, where circumstances and conditions are totally different and even there these theories can hardly claim much success. Our approach is to find our own formulations and solutions.

The Government has also been accused of not being serious about dealing with

corruption. Corruption drains away a good portion of funds. It undermines the moral fibre and weakens us as a nation.

16.00 hrs.

It is unfortunate that an impression is sought to be created that India is a corrupt country. This is a slur against the nation. Several opposition parties conveniently overlook the complaint, which they themselves have made against one another, and propagate that the Congress alone has corruption. We are fighting corruption and we do take action against those whose image, we have reason to believe, is not good. But, often enough, such people are encouraged by the opposition. There are no two opinions that corruption is an evil, but so is the political use sought to be made of it. We are determined to eradicate this evil of corruption. (*Interruptions*) There are many instances I cannot go into the list just now.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: Not a single instance.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: I do not want to argue with you here. There have been many instances which are quite well-known.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: I want a single instance.... (*Interruptions*)

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: I am not going to yield to the hon Member. I am quite sure of my ground on this. I do not make wild statements.

SHRI SATYASADHAN CHAKRABORTY: You have to justify what you say.

SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI: I have justified it on many occasions. There have been some thoughtful observations.... (*Interruptions*) This does not mean that if the opposition shouts, what they are shouting is true. It does not mean that what yellow journalism writes is true. We have our own ways of finding out and

acting accordingly. I should like to know whether any of the parties present here who have been in Government in many States have taken any such action. I do not know of any such instances.

On the domestic political scene, there have been some thoughtful observations, particularly from colleagues of my party. The growth of regionalism is a matter of grave concern. It has been the policy of the Congress to provide adequate scope for the expression of the regional personality and I strongly adhere to this view. But this personality has to function within the national perspective.

Some people have begun to talk loosely about the breaking up of the country. This country is not going to break up. This Parliament and my party and, I am sure, all parties here will never let this happen. But if any party, group or person, concentrates too much on the problems of a particular region in isolation from the problems of the country as a whole, then tensions will be aggravated.

The House has had a detailed debate on Assam. I do not want to go into this question all over again. As I said last week, the need is for all sections to curb their emotions and come together to find solutions. There is no problem which cannot be solved amicably and through earnest discussions. Even if some young people today are consumed by anger, as I said, I continue to regard them as my children and the children of this country. But, more important, can I put aside my responsibility to my country, to its unity and its integrity?

A Congress Member spoke with great feeling and conviction on the need for the revival of the spirit of brotherhood in Punjab. If I have understood Sikhism aright, its basic tenet is love and brotherhood among all people. The most moving of the hymns of Shri Guru Nanak Dev are those where he says that Hindus and Muslims are alike. And in our country Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Jews are all equal.

(Smt. Indira Gandhi)

Unfortunately, some sections are whipping up communalism. A large number of communal incidents are basically the result of economic or other rivalries and fears. Some mischievous elements immediately exploit them for communal and political ends. Some think by stirring trouble they will perhaps have a chance to become leaders.

Some mention was made just now about Memberships, Directorships etc. of certain Boards. We are reviewing this matter and I agree that there are many aspects on which urgent measures must be taken; some are being considered and other suggestions are welcome. My appeal to the House and to the hon. Members is that whether inside the House or outside, this is not the time to speak or to do anything which could spark off new incidents or tensions. You may not consider something to be aggressive or even communal, but in this delicate situation one just does not know how other people will react. I am sorry to say that there is a growth of certain extremist organisations amongst the Hindus as well as amongst the Muslims, and this is not helping the cause of harmony for any section.

The Home Minister was telling me just now that the Mandal Commission's Report is being discussed with the Chief Ministers.

It has been remarked that we should overhaul our Intelligence machinery. We are looking into this question. I myself feel deeply concerned. It is the same as regards the training of police forces to be more sensitive to situations and to public feelings and above all not to be swayed from their duty of protecting the people, so that they earn their trust and confidence. We are taking some steps in this direction.

Some Members have spoken about non-alignment. I heard mention again of "genuinely non-aligned". I had thought that this phrase which had occasioned so much ridicule would now be avoided. When the so-called "genuine non-align-

ment" was in practice, the rest of the non-aligned world were 'genuinely' perplexed as to our 'genuine' intentions. Some have repeated the Western (in which non-Western followers of the West are included) propaganda that India is isolated. Are we to make up our minds and act according to what we consider right and just, or unthinkingly accept the opinions of others? I do not want to remind hon. Members of the number of occasions on which we have borne the brunt of aggressive, even malicious accusations from many sides but ultimately it was our assessment which turned out to be the correct one. And even today, in fact at every non-aligned conference—if I remember, long before the time that I was in Government — there have been tremendous pressures from outside to somehow derail the movement, to somehow create tension and disagreement and to be able to say that the movement has failed.

So, I hope that whatever the personal or party opinions of hon. Members may be, they, and indeed all Indians, will give full cooperation to make the forthcoming Non-Aligned meeting a success. Its effectiveness can do much towards the solution of issues which are vital to the world — Disarmament and peace, and cooperation and development.

Once more, I thank you all and commend the President's Address for the acceptance of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: A number of amendments have been moved by Members to the Motion of Thanks. Shall I put all the amendments together to the vote of the House?

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: Sir, mass massacre is not advisable?

MR. SPEAKER: It is a mass get-together?

All the Amendment were put and negatived.

MR. SPEAKER: I shall now put the main motion to the vote of 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 February, 1983'."

The motion was adopted.

16.10 hrs.

RAILWAY BUDGET, 1983-84—GENERAL DISCUSSION.

MR. SPEAKER: We now take up General Discussion on the Budget (Railways). The ex-Minister.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): I rise to initiate discussion on the Railway Budget for 1983-84.

At the very outset let me go on record that as far as Railways' performance is concerned it has to be judged in the background that we have a very vast network of Railways and, therefore, there are lot of difficulties that are to be faced in managing the operation of Railways. We are probably the second largest railways managed by a single management... (Interruptions). There is too much of disturbance.

MR. SPEAKER: They are in pandemonium. Are they going to get into the train?

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I can understand accidents in the Railways, why accidents in the House?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. If you want to go out, go quietly and do not make it a railway platform.

All right, now start.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: I feel highly honoured that the Chief Minister of Maharashtra State is also present on this occasion.

16.11 hrs.

At this stage Shri Vasantrao Patil left the House.

MR. SPEAKER: Dada, are you staging a walk-out?

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Jadavpur): I am on a point of order. Is it desirable that a Minister of another Government should be here inside the House?

MR. SPEAKER: As long as he is a Member of the House.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: I am not questioning. I am raising a question of principle.

MR. SPEAKER: Before you have taken objection, he has already gone out.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE : Please look into it.

MR. SPEAKER: All right.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE : As far as railway operations are concerned, they are to be judged against the background of the vast expanse of the Railways. We have almost 61,000 route kilometres of the railways which almost covers 7,000 stations in the country and we have the trains which are hauled by about 10,000 locomotives and it is to the credit of the Railway system that every day about a crore of passengers travel by the Indian railways on 61,000 kilometres and 60,000—70,000 tonnes of freight is carried by the Indian Railways. Such being the expanse of the Railways, we being the second largest railways under single management. I wish that the Railways are managed and handled in a manner by which the efficiency of the Railways will be augmented from time to time and it will be inkeeping with other sectors of our economy.

As far as the railway operations are concerned, they do not begin from the time our new Railway Minister has taken over. Fortunately, he has the legacy of good achievements on the part of the Railways and only because persons managing this portfolio happen to belong to another party, I cannot discord the good work that the Indian Railways, the workers and officers have put in.

Over the last few years there have been certain achievements and there have been certain failures. When the new set-up came