

FELICITATIONS TO SPEAKER

[Translation]

11.42½ hrs.

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I feel extremely happy while felicitating you as the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. You have been elected unanimously. It is indicative of your popularity. But at the same time, it also signifies the fact that in spite of political differences, Indian democracy and this highest representative institution of the Indian democracy can unite on important matters and can take decisions unanimously.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, you have the privilege of being born in independent India. You belong to that part of India which is known as North East. This region is an important part of India but somehow feels itself neglected. Sometimes, people living there feel that they are not only far from Delhi but are far from hearts also. There is no reason for nurturing such a feeling. I am sure that your election will help in lessening this feeling.

You have shouldered many responsibilities. We have seen you working in many capacities. Perhaps, there has been no such issue related to the Central Government which has not been solved with your skill. You have been popular as the Labour Minister and even your opponents have appreciated you. You have also been the Chief Minister of Meghalaya. Your election has enhanced the dignity of this august House. You are a devoted follower of the great religion, Christianity. Your sense of tolerance, feeling of fraternity and quality of taking all together are the assets which will now be available at national level. I am confident that under your leadership, the rights of this House as well as that of the Member will be protected. People of India have elected their representatives. Now, it is the turn of these representatives to prove their mettle. As I said, Lok Sabha is the highest representative body. We have to maintain the dignity of this House and keep the democracy intact. I have noticed that some of our old friends have been re-elected. Now, their charm to move towards the middle of the House, instead of sitting in their seats will certainly be less. There is a need to run the House with dignity. Wherever we deviate, you can guide us to the right path. You have to take all together. We wholeheartedly wish you success. We assure you of our best cooperation. I once again congratulate and felicitate you.

[English]

SHRI P.V. NARASIMHA RAO (Berhampur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I feel extremely happy that you have been unanimously elected as the Speaker of the

House. Unanimity is the essence of this election and I would very much welcome the spirit of unanimity which gives you a lot of manoeuvrability, a lot of power and a lot of scope to come to conclusions which otherwise would have been very difficult.

I have seen you in many capacities and perhaps more than anyone else I have had the opportunity of appreciating your work in whatever capacity you have been working. As the Chief Minister of Meghalaya, I remember the very difficult situation which you faced. As the Labour Minister of India, I very well know through what holes you were dragged some times. But you came out unscathed and you proved to be one of the most successful Labour Ministers of India because the time when you became the Labour Minister was so crucial, everything was touch and go - that the whole policy would have collapsed if we not had a Labour Minister of your calibre. So, I feel very happy that you are at the place where your talents will be required in great measure and I am sure they will be available in adequate measure.

I welcome you and I beseech the Members of the House to help you in maintaining the dignity of the House as, I am sure, you would like to maintain the dignity and conduct the business of the House in the best possible manner and in the best traditions of Parliamentary democracy.

I welcome you once again.

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL (Latur) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is indeed very heartening to know that the leaders of all parties and, in fact, all Members of the House have shown sagacity in choosing the Speaker unanimously and choosing you, Shri P.A. Sangma, as the Presiding Officer of the august House of the People of this country, which has the greatest democracy in the world. They all deserve appreciation of all the people who believe in the practice of parliamentary democracy.

You, Mr. Speaker, appear to be young, but you are a very experienced leader who had innings in responsible positions at the State-level and the national level and are very humane, intelligent, co-operative, balanced and pragmatic politician and you are bound to protect and enhance the dignity of this august House and to strengthen the democratic and parliamentary system in India. In this responsible and onerous task, you may need the co-operation of this House which, I am sure, would be given to you in ample measure.

The Speaker has to deal with legal, political, economic, social and psychological matters and has to respond to matters which arise suddenly and abruptly. An approach which is sympathetic, unbiased and correct can help in all these matters. The tradition of this House so far has been to adopt an approach of that kind and, I am sure, it would be adopted by it in future also.