

MR. SPEAKER : The question is :

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill further to amend the Income-tax Act, 1961."

The motion was adopted.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA : I introduce** the Bill.

11.06 hrs

STATEMENT RE: INCOME-TAX (AMENDMENT)
SECOND ORDINANCE

[English]

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : I beg to lay on the Table an explanatory statement (Hindi and English versions) showing reasons for immediate legislation by the Income-Tax (Amendment) Second Ordinance, 1997.

[Placed in Library. See No. LT 46/98]

11.06½ hrs.

MOTION OF CONFIDENCE IN THE COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS

[Translation]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move :

"That this House expresses its Confidence in the Council of Ministers."

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I move this motion with mixed feelings, for I am reminded of the day, the 28th of May, 1996 when I had moved the Confidence Motion in this very House from this very place on behalf of the then B.J.P. Government. Since then much water has flown under the bridge. It is imperative for a democracy to function smoothly. However at times, it seems as if smooth current of democracy is being hindered through creating a crisis in the form of expressing no-confidence in the Government. At that time, I had tendered resignation because mine was a minority Government and before the umpires of democracy could direct me to leave the field, I preferred to quit. But the country has to think seriously about the cycle of events which took place after that. The scenario of democracy caught in the Whirlpool of Confidence Motion since 1989 is a cause of concern.

** Introduced with the recommendation of the President of India.

The Confidence Motion was moved once again on December 21, 1989. The Government lasted only for 11 months. Confidence Motion was moved again on November 7, 1990. The new Prime Minister moved the Confidence Motion in 1990 but instead of completing its full term of five years, the Government ran only for five months. Lok Sabha was dissolved. Nobody managed to muster majority in 1991 elections. The minority Congress party Government was formed. Initially we lended our support to the Government. I do not want to go into details as to how the position of minority was converted into majority position as the matter is *sub-judice*. That Government was not threatened by instability, however this Government was mauled by the alligators of corruption. That is why the Congress lost the elections. Congress has to face unprecedented defeat. The Congress had to lose power earlier due to the crime of imposing emergency in 1977, even then, the Congress emerged as a single largest party. But at that time, the Congress had lost its position of being the largest party. Bhartiya Janata Party succeeded in wresting the coveted status of being the largest party on the basis of increasing support of the masses. However a period of instability was witnessed after the Congress lost the elections. Being short in number, we decided to withdraw from the field. However, while addressing the House on 28th May, I had said that we will come back with a mandate and as promised, I am here in the House once again.....(Interruptions) There is a sea change in the circumstances prevalent on that day and the present circumstances. In the meanwhile, the politics of untouchability failed and attempts at separatism have also failed. We have emerged as a single largest party and as largest coalition with the support of our allies(Interruptions) We are somewhat short of the required majority. We never tried to hide this fact. We did not go to the president to stake our claim. The President himself invited us for consultation and we informed him that our number is a little less than the required number. He said that he will be consulting other parties also and he did so. The President asked for the documents regarding the support of the parties claimed by us. Separate consultations were held. He talked to the leaders of the Telugu Desam Party and thereafter he took this decision. The Congress party did not stake claim to form the Government. The Chairperson of Congress and the Head of Congress Parliamentary party, Shrimati Sonia Gandhi also met the President and informed him that they were not going to stake the claim to form the Government. There was no question of United Front staking the claim for they have suffered most in these elections.

[Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee]

The number of Congress members might have gone up but the number of United Front members has been reduced to one-half. The Front also did not express its interest in forming the Government. Then the President directed me to form the Government and set a time-limit upto 29th. I stand before the Houe to seek the vote of Confidence.

I would like to submit as to how long should we continue with this process of seeking Confidence year after year. It is not as if I am raising this question only because I am required to seek the Confidence of the House. But it is not so. Today, a question is agitating the mind of ever citizen and champions of democracy that why this country is capsized in the whirlpool of political uncertainty. As I have mentioned earlier also that it should not be allowed to continue. We hoped for a clear-cut decision in recent elections. The popular mandate is today in favour of the BJP and its allies. Congress party and United Front cannot claim that*(Interruptions)* Our opponents have also contested against each other. I therefore, asked the hon. President to explore the possibilities by inviting other parties also. Before taking up the responsibility, we want that you should give an opportunity to other parties also. However, nobody was prepared to form the government. Today, I once again repeat my point. If all parties can unite against us and become successful in giving a stable government, they should come forward. They had been united last time also and, the Congress Party was giving support from outside. However, it gave support for some months and later on withdrew it, as a result of which Shri Deve Gowda had to face lot of problem.....*(Interruptions)* Charges were levelled against him that he wanted to divide the Congress party. I do not know that how far it is true. After that, my friend Shri Indra Kumar Gujral became the Prime Minister and after few months, Congress Party again withdrew its support. Now who will trust Congress? However, if people have expressed a new trust and if there is expectation for a new initiative, I will say that the country requires a stable and honest government, and we will fulfil this requirement*(Interruptions)*

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when the Hon. President invited us he had two things in his mind at that time. He considered on both these ponts. One is, Bhartiya Janata Party emerged as the biggest party and secondly the alliance between Bhartiya Janta Party and other friendly parties was the most powerful alliance. There was another characterstic that this alliance was forged before the elections and not after elections. We

went before the electorate with this alliance. The alliances which are forged before elections have uniform ideology. Therefore, the Hon'ble President preferred the fact of forming alliance before elections and invited us to form the Government. We went to the public with two main objectives--firstly, to give political stability to the country and secondly, to give the country a clean government. This alliance was formed before election, therefore, it is wrong to say that this alliance was formed with a view to come in power. Participation in government is a natural phenomenon in democracy, it is essential also but one should understand the qualitative difference between the alliance which was formed before election and which was formed after elections. The Hon'ble President realised this fact and invited us to form government.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to briefly mention about the election results. The election observers were surprised as AIADMK returned to power in Tamil Nadu under the leadership of Ms. Jaya Lalitha. In Karnataka, our alliance with Lok Shakti under the leadership of Shri Hegde has proved to be useful. In Orissa, Shri Naveen patnaik, son of Shri Biju Patnaik, has changed the political scenario by forming Biju Janata Dal. In West Bengal, the Trinamul Congress under the leadership of Mamataji has routed the Congress and Marxist Parties *(Interruptions)*

SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN (Chandigarh) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, please ask the hon'ble Members not to interfere otherwise we will also not allow their leaders to speak. After this Shri Sharad Pawar has to speak*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : This is not good.

.....*(Interruptions)*

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE : In Gujarat, the alliance devoid of sound principles was defeated and the people have again reposed their faith in us. We did not get the desired success in some states. We are deeply considering the reasons of failure. Our alliance with some parties is not due to this election, we were working with them earlier also. The alliance between Akali Dal and BJP is not for sharing power between them, but to strengthen the centuries old Hindu and Sikh brotherhood in Punjab. Now, the mustard fields in Punjab will not be stained with blood. One can hear the sounds of Giddha in evenings. The festival of Baisakhi is approaching. Entire Punjab will enjoy....*(Interruptions)* The Congress takes the credit for defeating terrorism in Punjab but the public does not accept this claim. If they

would have accepted, why the congress has to face defeat in Punjab. In Himachal Pradesh, we are working with Himachal Vikas Congress. ... (*Interruptions*) Bhartiya Janta Party and Haryana Vikas Party's alliance is in power in Haryana. Now, there is an atmosphere of mutual co-operation between Haryana and Punjab and contentious issues are not complicated further. Wherever Bhartiya Janta Party is in Power, prohibition has been imposed. As this is a democratic government, it is being reconsidered to lift the prohibition on public demand. In other states also prohibition has been experimented in many ways. We learn from our experiments and try to improve our policies. However, if the government bring about changes in the policy after taking into consideration, the difficulties being experienced, then the credit should be given to the government. I am sure that Bhajan Lal ji must be appreciating this policy.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have already clarified that because of lack of majority we did not stake our claim to form the Government. However, today, we are in majority in the House and we shall prove it. However, I would like to repeat that though the majority and minority are essential components of democracy, whether the democratic process will remain caught in the game of majority and minority? Whether the never ending phase of instability will continue? My colleague Hon'ble Finance Minister Shri Yashwant Sinha has given a realistic picture as to how the country has suffered, particularly on the economic front, due to this uncertainty and instability in the last 18 months. Our economy has been badly affected by the uncertainty and short sighted policies adopted during the last 18 months. Foodgrain production has decreased, exports have decreased and government revenue has gone down. There has been increase in financial deficit. We will have to take steps to check this trend and for that a stable, capable and an honest government is needed at the centre. All of us have to face the challenges of the next century. It is not the question of one party or an alliance of parties. When you were in power, we saw your difficulties and never hesitated to extend help whenever it was sought to overcome those difficulties. After all, the parties are for the country and the nation is the supreme. India is the largest democracy of the world. However, political instability is not only damaging our economy, but it is also tarnishing our image as the largest democracy in the world.

I have tried to highlight the priorities and policies of my government through the President's Address. If there are any differences in this regard, we are ready to have a discussion on them. Or programme is for the

overall development of the nation. It covers each and every one. It is for the development of all parts of the country and for all sections of the society. That is why, we have not termed it as Minimum Programme. We have called it National Agenda. We would like to have serious discussion on it. Through this agenda, we want to bridge the increasing gap between the people's aspirations and the performance of the government. India is a multi-party democracy. We are proud of it and are committed to uphold the dignity of our democracy. After independence, due to some historical reasons, one particular party remained in power for long at the centre as well in the states. As a result, several distortions appeared. No doubt, there were certain advantages also, but the situation deteriorated to such an extent that even the Chief Ministers were nominated by the Centre. Practically, there was a decline in the autonomy of the states. There was no appropriate medium to express the Regional aspirations and requirements. Today, it is a matter of great happiness that the regional parties have formed the Government in different states and they are contributing in development of the nation by adopting an all India attitude. They all deserve our praise and congratulations.

There is no conflict between a powerful centre and a powerful state. We would like to give more autonomy to the states so that the Chief Ministers do not have to rush to New Delhi forgetting small amounts of grants or for completion of small projects. The resources should be divided in such a way that the states become self-sufficient and fulfil their responsibilities with regard to development. For this, it is required to eliminate the negative approach and the feeling of discrimination which has crept into the politics. Last time, an alliance was formed only to keep Bhartiya Janata Party away from power, but it has broken down.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the country again faced the elections. Whether the same scenario will be repeated? Old political parties are there where they were but the public has made progress. The number of people supporting us is also increasing day by day. Today, we are representing the entire country. We want to progress, alongwith all the sections. Alongwith the multi-parties system, we have several languages and many religions in our country. People of different tribes live in this country. They are less in number, so they are worried about their existence. People living in the north-eastern states of the country feel themselves neglected being geographically located far away from the Centre. This situation has to be changed and we are committed to it. This task can be easily accomplished by general consensus instead of looking towards the Government.

[Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee]

Diversity is not a sign of our weakness but is the symbol of our rich culture. Study of the literature of different languages sounds like harmonious notes of our culture. Though, we belong to same species, people who are in minority either due to language or religion have apprehensions in their minds with regard to their existence in society. We are aware of such feelings and we will try to remove such fear.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, on this occasion I would not like to speak in detail. Discussion would be held on various issues and I will get an opportunity to reply to all these issues. Some of these issues always have the consensus and I would like to mention particularly the foreign policy here. When our neighbour decided to raise the issue of Kashmir during the Human Right Conference held in Geneva, the then Prime Minister Shri Narasimha Rao asked me to represent the country. It amazed the leaders of our neighbouring country. Someone had remarked that the Indian democracy was of a strange kind in respect that the leader of the Opposition was being nominated to represent the Government in the International Conference whereas in his country his Counterpart created obstacles in the smooth functioning of the Government which led to international problems.

People argued that Narasimha Rao was not a simple but a cunning man. His purpose of nominating Vajpayeeji may not be only to show the integrity of the country but also Vajpayee can be made scape goat should the Geneva talks, fail. I never believed this as we relied upon each other in the past.

My friend Shri Gujral is present here. He was Ambassador of our country in Moscow when I became the Foreign Minister for a short period. We know each other from that time. Drastic changes were witnessed in the country in the post emergency period in 1977. Many stalwarts lost election at that time. The party which was ruling the nation for many years had lost faith of the public. When we got power for a short period, even at that time also the Foreign Policy was formulated on the basis of general consensus.

At that time a foreign diplomat had asked me as a Foreign Minister as to what change was going to take place in the South block where I sat. Thereupon I replied that nothing was going to change, only the Minister had changed. Perhaps, my friends in the Congress party will not believe this. There was a Portrait of Nehru ji in the South Block which I used to gaze while passing from there. I also recall the days

when we used to have skirmishes in the House. That was the time when I was a new Member and a back-bencher. I had to stage walk out to get an opportunity to speak but gradually I made a place for myself. With the passage of time I became the Foreign Minister but I found the portrait of Nehruji missing from the corridors. I enquired about it but did not get the reply. Then the Portrait was replaced there. Has the country any respect for this feeling? Should not we work towards strengthening such a feeling in the country?

But it doesn't mean that I had no difference of opinion with Nehruji. Difference of opinion emerged clearly during the discussion in the House. Once I told Pandit ji that he was a man of mixed personality that he was Churchill, as well as Chamberlain also. He did mind it. On the same day we met at a banquet. He told that my speech was very powerful, then he smiled and went away. Today, such a criticism would invite animosity and the people would stop talking. Can't we, the leaders of the country co-operate with each other and face the challenges before the nation unitedly.

One century is coming to an end. The other is knocking at our doors. I have no objection if you want to conduct a new experiment without us. However, I would request you to pave the way for making our experiment a success.

With these words, I conclude my speech as a mover of the Motion. I shall reply to the issues that will be raised during the debate at the end of the discussion.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Motion moved :

"That this House expresses its confidence in the Council of Ministers."

[Translation]

SHRI SHARAD PAWAR (Baramati) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to express my views the Motion brought before the House under the leadership of the Prime Minister. I have listened to the speech of the Hon'ble Prime Minister with apt attention. I have to agree with one thing that his language is quite rich but I cannot say the same thing about the issues that he has raised. The Prime Minister stated in the House that initially they did not have the majority. Now it is being assured that they have got the majority. At the moment, I do not wish to go into the question as to how did they muster the majority. But we have to see as to what is the mandate of the people of country. How many percentage of people have given right to Atalji to form this