

entire period of discussion and thereafter a good message went to the country in an effective manner. The Prime Minister had himself stated..(Interruptions) that it is being implemented.

Hon'ble Prime Minister had said that he himself and his Government was seriously considering the issue. Constitution will have to be amended in this regard and our Government will do it. I would like to say that on the whole it was an all party conference and all participated in it. Members from all political parties participated in it. The issue was discussed threadware. Hon'ble Prime Minister has clearly stated on this issue. I would like to quote two lines from his speech, "The interests of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes..(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Shri Pradhan, please sit down.

SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN: I would like to request the hon'ble Prime Minister to inform the House regarding the constitutional amendment about which he had said earlier. When this amendment is going to be introduced as this session is going to end tomorrow. Tomorrow is the last day of this session. I would like to request the hon. Prime Minister to announce it by tomorrow so that a good message goes to be entire country. The Government should accept it.

DR. RAGHUVANSH PRASAD SINGH (Vaishali): Big rallies have been held in the country on this issue. Reservation for scheduled castes and schedule tribes is being withdrawn and they are talking about constitutional amendment..(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Please sit down. Hon'ble Prime Minister is going to reply.

[English]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members are aware that certain operational guidelines issued by the Department of Personnel and Training regarding reservation in Government jobs have created some discontent among the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes. These guidelines were issued by the then Government after certain pronouncements of the Supreme Court.

I would like to inform the hon. Members that, in pursuance of my assurance on the floor of the House in the 12th Lok Sabha, our Government has already taken steps for reviewing these guidelines.

In respect of one of the Office Memoranda, the Cabinet in its meeting held on 21st December, 1999, has approved the proposal to bring about a Constitutional Amendment Bill to incorporate a proviso to Article 335 of the Constitution with a view to enable the State to restore the relaxations of qualifying marks and standards of evaluation in matters of reservation in promotion for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. It may be recalled that these relaxations had been withdrawn as per the instructions issued by the Department of Personnel and Training on 22.7.1997 in pursuance of the Supreme Court judgement dated 1.10.1996 in the case of *S. Vinod Kumar Versus Union of India*. I may also mention that the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was also consulted on this aspect and that the Commission has expressed its appreciation of the proposed amendment. The proposed Constitutional Amendment Bill will be introduced in the Parliament as early as possible.

The proposal to bring about another Constitutional amendment which would make it possible to clear the backlog of jobs through special recruitment in respect of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is also at the final stage of consideration.

The Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, in a recent judgment dated 16.9.1999, has reiterated its earlier judgements regarding the principle of fixation of seniority on promotion of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe employees. The legal and constitutional aspects of this judgment are under examination with a view to bring about a Constitutional Amendment to restore the seniority principle that was prevalent prior to these judgements.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to assure the House that this Government is committed to protecting the interests of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe employees and will take all possible steps for their upliftment.

MR. SPEAKER: The House stands adjourned to meet again at 2.30 p.m.

13.58 hours

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till thirty minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.