

12.17 hrs.

FELICITATIONS TO THE SPEAKER

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: Prime Minister

[*Translation*]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI VISHWANATH PRATAP SINGH): Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is a matter of immense pleasure for all of us that you have been unanimously elected to the esteemed office of Speaker of this august House and we congratulate you on your election.

I would also like to thank all the political parties including the opposition for this unanimous election as I am of the view that this unanimous election is the first step towards our bid and endeavour for achieving consensus on various matter. On this occasion, I would also extend my congratulations and felicitations to all the newly elected hon. Members of the House.

Sir, your long experience of public life and high wisdom will stand you in good stead in conducting the business of the House. Right from your student days, you were inflamed with the spirit of freedom and you identified your self with the freedom struggle. Even the iron bars of prison could not deter you to deviate from your cherished goal of life. Being an ardent believer of socialism and a great socialist thinker, you could not confine yourself to merely driving the British rulers out of the country but you also strived for securing justice for the oppressed and the exploited sections of the society. Therefore, we are led to believe that the faintest voice raised in the House espousing the cause of those hapless people of the society, will be promptly and instantly picked up by your ears and it would gain strength and support on reaching you.

Sir, you languished in jail for participating in the Movement connected with the national flag. Now we are faced with the

challenge of upholding the dignity of our national flag. We believe that your elevation to this august office will help us in facing the challenge.

With these words, I once again congratulate you.

[*English*]

SHRI RAJIV GANDHI (Amethi): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on taking over as Speaker of this Ninth Lok Sabha. You come to the Chair with a distinguished career, as a Parliamentarian, as a freedom fighter. You are well acquainted with the rules and traditions of the House, with the ethos of the House. We pledge our full cooperation to you and we as the largest party in the House will work responsibly with you to strengthen our democratic institution.

We do have a small complaint. We were told that we would be consulted on your election. Unfortunately the consultation took place at 11.54 AM yesterday, only six minutes before the deadline for filing nomination.

While the treasury benches decided to make this a unilateral decision, we made it a unanimous decision.

Sir, in you we have full trust. We believe you will be fairminded, just and impartial. We look to you as the guardian of democracy, as the custodian of the rights of the people.

[*Translation*]

SHRIMATI VIJAYA RAJE SCINDIA (Guna): Mr. Speaker Sir, on this auspicious occasion of your having been elected to this high and esteemed office of the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, I am extremely happy to extend my heartiest congratulations and good wishes to you. All of us in this House are sure to benefit from your long experience of parliamentary and public life. We are sure that while adorning this august office you will conduct the proceedings of the House efficiently through your judicious decisions.

I, once again, heartily congratulate you and pray to God to give you strength to discharge your responsibilities and help you to bring laurels to this office.

[*English*]

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE (Bolpur): On behalf of the CPI(M) Group in Parliament and on my own behalf, I offer you our warmest greetings and felicitations on your unanimous election to the high office of the Speaker of Lok Sabha, which is the highest democratic forum in this country.

Many of us have had the privilege of knowing you while you were a member of this House earlier and a Minister in the Union Cabinet, and we were impressed then by your suavity and your sense of propriety and justice. Now you belong to the whole House and you have become now the custodian of the rights and privileges of this House and its Members. We, as Members, are very keen to safeguard these rights and privileges. And I am sure, under your custodianship these rights and privilege will be amply safeguarded.

The office of the Speaker of this House is not merely ornamental nor is its function mechanical. Not only have you to regulate the deliberations of this House but you will have to see that dignity and decorum is maintained and also that the Members get full opportunity to perform their function to the best of their ability in the service of the people of this country. You will appreciate that the Members of this House have to give expression to the urges and aspirations of the people outside and they have to articulate their problems and to obtain redressal of their grievances. And in that, I am sure, they will get full opportunity because we have noticed that attempt to stifle a discussion only creates frustration if not bellicosity which should be avoided.

Again, on behalf of my Group and myself, I offer you our warmest greetings and felicitations and our fullest cooperation in the discharge of your duties and functions.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA (Midnapore): On behalf of my Party I warmly congratulate you on your elevation to this high office by a unanimous decision of this House. You are not only an old freedom fighter and an experienced political leader but you have been all your life, I believe, committed to certain socialist principles which we would expect you to in your conduct of this House also, which means, you cannot be in any sense a believer in discrimination of any kind. You have to guarantee that everybody has equal opportunity and that the poorer, deprived, exploited and oppressed sections of our people in this great country find ample opportunity through their elected representatives to make their voice heard here. I am sure, you will bear all these things in mind when you discharge your duties and see that the rights and privileges of all the Members are adequately protected. It will not be an easy task. The composition of this House now is such that it will call upon you to show the utmost tact, patience, discretion, all of which qualities, I am sure, you possess in abundance. And I am told that some 337 Members of this House are new Members. So they have never been here before. Such a thing has never occurred in the history of Lok Sabha. So you will have to give them all due consideration and they should feel that they have ample opportunity to speak here, especially the back benchers.

And a word I must say about the lady Members, who, I regret to say, are depleted in numbers very much in this House. They were only 44 Members in the Eighth Lok Sabha which was bad enough. Now their number has come down to 26 or 27, which is not a very praiseworthy commentary on anybody or any party in this House, I should say, including my own party. But anyway, all these sections of our great must feel assured—of course, by our conduct and by your custodianship of this House—that nobody here feels excluded in any sense of the term. So, Sir, I congratulate you warmly once more on behalf of my party. We will give you our utmost cooperation in seeing that the House is conducted with proper decorum which has been a casualty sometimes

[Sh. Indrajit Gupta]

and about which there have been a lot of comments outside in this country. I am sure that if we all cooperate them this House can be restored to its previous standards and norms of decorum and proper atmosphere in which debate has some meaning and discussion can be carried on fruitfully. I assure of our cooperation and once more I congratulate you on behalf of our party.

SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARTHANAN (Tirunelveli): Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of All India Anna DMK and the Tamil Nadu people, we congratulate you and welcome you to this high post. At this juncture, I want to say one Tamil *tirukkural*:

"Idanai Idanai ivanmudikkum en-raaindhu Adanai, avankan vidai"

Following that *tirukkural* this august House selected you, the right person, for this elevated position, Sir, and we hope that the new Members will be able to catch your eyes and ears easily and you will give opportunity for our Tamil Nadu people's voice to be heard here through us and through the Congress (I) party. At this stage, I am very sorry to say, as Mr. Rajiv Ji told, we as AIADMK party were also not consulted yesterday. Anyhow, we welcome you on behalf of the All-India Anna DMK and the Tamil Nadu people. Thank you, Sir.

SHRI NANI BHATTACHARYA (Barrampore): Mr. Speaker, Sir, at the outset, I am congratulating you for being elected unanimously to this high post. As you know, we have also been acquainted with each other for a long time, particularly when you were once a Union Minister and myself also a Minister of the West Bengal State. I know your career well and I hope that you will realise the present day situation in India. We are passing through a very critical phase of our history and I think this Parliament also will reflect the different problems over which there will be debates, discussions, etc. I have full confidence in you that you will do justice to all Members of this House, whether

belonging to big or small parties, those who are representing the people here in this august House. I am not going to take much of the time of the House. I fully assure you of our fullest possible cooperation on behalf of the Revolutionary Socialist Party and other colleagues of the Left Front.

SHRI CHITTA BASU (Barasat): Sir, I deem it a great pleasure and privilege to join the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition and other distinguished colleagues in this House in offering my felicitations to you on the occasion of being unanimously elected to the high office of the Speaker of this great House. Sir, this House, as you know, is the highest representative institution democratically elected in our country. This House, as you know, embodies in itself sovereignty of the ultimate sovereign—the people of India. India with its immense vastness and colourful diversities also embodies the oneness of the Indian nation. You are the custodian of the rights and privileges of this great House. You are also the custodian of the rights and privileges of individual Members of this House. Sir, we know that you have to play a key role in the matter of maintaining privileges and preserving the dignity, decorum and etiquette of the great institution of our country. And it is also our duty to enrich the past and glorious traditions of this House and to restore, preserve and fortify the rich conventions already evolved over the years and also to create a new and healthy ones under your leadership, under your Speakership of this House.

We, the Members representing different shades of political opinion in the country, represent the hopes and aspirations of the people of the country. We are required under the mandate we have received to articulate the grievances of our people, to reflect the urges, emotions and feelings of the people outside whom we represent here. We are also called upon to see that the mandate is carried out properly and effectively.

Sir, I am confident that you would guide

us in the discharge of our supreme duty in the House.

Sir, on behalf of myself and on behalf of my party, the Forward Bloc, I assure our fullest and sincerest cooperation to you and I hope, under your leadership, the House will gain new heights in the democratic practices as the world's largest democracy. Thank you.

PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ (Baramulla): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I welcome you to the Seat of the Speaker of the Ninth Lok Sabha and I assure you our whole-hearted cooperation while conducting the proceedings of this House in the days to come. I share the view that there could not be a better choice than you to be the Speaker of the Ninth Lok Sabha. I have never heard you speak, Sir. But I am told that it will be a loss to have you in the Speaker's seat and not in the House, because you are a very good debator. But while you give your rulings, you will, I hope, compensate us for that through your directions.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the word 'socialist' is very pleasing to my ears. I welcome the men and women who talk of the down-trodden and who speak of them, I love them and respect them. Sir, your election to this high office has been unanimous. There is no doubt about it. But for the future, Sir, this would be my humble request to the Parliamentary Affairs Minister that on such occasions even the smallest parties must be invited, if not for consultations but actually for giving them information as to what is going to happen, because that way they will be more committed and they have greater sense of participation. I wholeheartedly welcome you as the Speaker of the Ninth Lok Sabha.

SHRI IBRAHIM SULAIMAN SAIT (Manjeri): Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is my privilege to congratulate you on your unanimous election to the high office of Speakership. You had been a prominent freedom fighter and had suffered imprisonment. After the freedom, you have served the country in the political field in a high spirit. As far as the Lok

Sabha is concerned, it is the supreme law making body under the Constitution and our country is the biggest democracy. Under the circumstances, you have to see that this democratic institution continues with full dignity and authority in the days to come. You have got a great responsibility to protect the dignity of this House and protect the great democratic institution. You are the custodian of the rights of all parties on your right and your left. At the same time, the small groups also have got a right in this august House because all the smaller parties also have got their identity and have got their points of view on various national issues. They should be given enough time to speak in this House and I seek your consideration for the same. I must say that it would have been better if there had been wide consultations in the matter. This at least is a lapse. But, I hope in future the Government will have wide consultations whenever there are discussions on important national issues. I am happy they have taken us into consultation on the discussion on Punjab issue. I hope that spirit would prevail and the Prime Minister would also remember that we are also a part of the nation and we have a role to play. This must be remembered always. I have nothing more to say and I wish you all success as the Speaker. I hope you will discharge the duties with justice fairplay, dignity and decorum. I am reminded of an Urdu couplet. It says:

"Hayaat le ke chalo kaynaat le ke chalo,
Chalo to sare zaman ko saath le ke chalo."

Here, instead of the word 'zamane', you can substitute it with 'aiwan'. Today, this House is with you and we are here cooperate with you for the successful working of this democratic institution.

SHRI P.C. THOMAS (Muvattupuzha): Sir, I would like to congratulate you for having been elected to this very high office of this paramount body of the people of India. Your experience as a freedom fighter, as a social reformer, as a staunch socialist, as an able parliamentarian and as an efficient adminis-

[Sh. P.C. Thomas]

trator will add to the lustre and glory to your work as the Speaker in presiding over this august Assembly. I would like to say that you have another quality which may be a better quality than all the other qualities which are mentioned here and that is you are a gentleman to the core and a gentleman to the core will be a very good Presiding Officer. As Cardinal Newman had once put it:-

“A gentleman is a person who inflicts no pain on others”.

But, I would say, you may not be able to be so generous as not to inflict pain on anybody. We can very well understand it because that will be only in the interest of the House and in the larger interest of the people of India. You being a gentleman, Sir, I would like to make a request to you: please be more gentle to the youngsters and also to the newcomers in the House.

I offer you all cooperation. Of course, on behalf of my Party, the Kerala Congress, I would also say that certain things were spoken here, while congratulating you. I have just one word to add with regard to the consensus regarding the election of the Speaker. Here, of course, you have been elected unanimously and we all support you; the election is unanimous. But the Government should take measures to arrive at a consensus as it has already been pointed out. It may be proper in the interest of all to consult even the smallest Party and probably I may have more say in it because I represent the smallest Party here—mine as well as other Parties who may have just one Member. (*Interruptions*) Of course, my learned friends are saying that the Minister, Mr. K.P. Unnikrishnan is also with me because they have also got one seat.

I once again congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the Speaker of the House.

[*Translation*]

*SHRI VAMANRAO MAHADIK (Bom-

bay South Central): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to felicitate you on your assuming the high office of the Speaker on behalf of my party Shiv Sena and propose to express my heartfelt feelings and offer my best wishes on this occasion. Even though our group is small, I am thankful to you for allowing me to speak on this occasion. Sir, Your distinguished predecessors set noble traditions by giving very good rulings and taking proper decisions I am sure you will uphold those traditions in the future. The citizens of our great country are patriotic. But presently our country is facing serious problems of poverty, unemployment, corruption and rising prices. We are committed to find solution to those problems. Though ours is a small group, we are determined to solve these problems. I hope that though our group is small, we will be given opportunity to speak in the House on those issues. We hope to get your kind guidance which will encourage us to participate in the debates in the House.

Sir, as the Custodian of this August House, I am sure that you will fully protect our interest and guide us in all respects. Sir, I with your tenure as Speaker to be a great success. With these words, I conclude.

SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI (Hyderabad): Mr. Speaker Sir, on my behalf and on behalf of my Party, the Ittehad-ul-Musalimeen, I congratulate you on your unanimous election to the office of the Speaker. I am glad that a socialist has been elevated to this high office. You are well aware of the plight of Muslims in this country and I hope you will give due consideration to our problems. Muslims have been facing problems for the past 40 years and I am sure you will provide us ample opportunities to air our grievances. You are a follower of Dr. Lohia and I recall his days in Parliament. I am grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to speak.

SHRI SHANKAR SINGH VAGHELA (Gandhinagar): Mr. Speaker, Sir, on behalf of all the new Members, occupying the backbenches behind the pillars I congratulate

*Translation of the speech originally delivered in Marathi.

you on your elevation to the august office of the Speaker of the Ninth Lok Sabha.

You participated in the movement launched by Shri Jai Prakash Narain and was a disciple of Dr. Lohia. The then Speaker used to have a hard time controlling Dr. Lohia in the House. It is in this context that we hope you, being a lohiaite, will bear with us whenever issues relating to common men seeking justice will be raised taking inspiration from Dr. Lohia. I had the good fortune of working with you in this House in 1977 during the days of Shri Jai Prakash Narain. In those days, you had raised the slogan of "Singhasan Khaali Karo, Janata aati hai". Today you are seated on the chair above which the national emblem of four lions is adorned. We hope that you will remember that slogan and get the J.P.'s dream realised with the co-operation of the Government and all the hon. Members.

I don't know whether you are colourful or not but I expect that you would pay special attention to the lady Members—though we are feeling the absence of Mamataji in this Lok Sabha, but Malaji is very much with us—by giving them opportunities to speak although their strength had depleted in this House as compared to the Eighth Lok Sabha. Women account for 50% of the our population and this fact should be kept in mind.

I come from a State, a person from which viz. Shri Vithalbai Patel, the elder brother of Sardar Vallabhai Patel, adorned this high office. The portrait of Shri Vithalbai Patel in front of you will give you inspiration to think in national terms and help you in controlling the House. We hope that you will maintain and uphold the glorious traditions of this House.

We, the back-benchers have to speak a bit loudly to catch your eye. I hope that you will not be myopic but will give as also ample opportunity.

SHRI MAHADEO RAO SHIWANKAR (Chimur): Mr. Speaker Sir, on behalf of all new Members, I extend you warmest greet-

ings and felicitations. We have observed that in Legislative Assemblies, the hon. Speaker pays more attention to the Senior Members than to the new ones. Sir, we firmly believe that such a practice will not be followed in the Lok Sabha.

There are many issues of national importance such as waiving of debts of farmers, the reservation question and the problems relating to Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. I am sure, you will give the new Members an opportunity to express their views on these issues. We shall try to draw your attention whenever necessary although the veteran Members may try to hog the limelight. Yet we request you to give us ample opportunities to speak considering that we are new Members and sit in the back rows. With these words, I pray to God that your term runs smoothly and you set healthy traditions in the country.

On behalf of all new Members I extend our heartiest felicitations to you once again.

DR. KHUSHAL PARAS RAM BOPCHE (Bhandara): Hon. Speaker, sir, we, the new Members heartily congratulate you and welcome you on your election to this high office. We come from such parts of the country, which are very backward and have a sizable population of farmers, labourers and youth. We shall try to raise their voice in this august House. But considering the fact that we are new Members, you will have to be considerate to us. I also hope that you would keep us in sight since we sit in the back rows. In that case, we, the new Members will not have any cause for complaint.

We shall definitely make every effort to solve the unemployment problem by raising this issue in the House. We hope to get your co-operation in this endeavour. The new Members have come here with high expectations. I hope you shall not in any way act against those expectations. With this hope, I once again congratulate you and thank you.

SHRI HARIBHAU SHANKAR MAHALE (Malegaon): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I congratulate

[Sh. Haribhau Shankar Mahale]

you on your election as Speaker. Previously you were like a free bird but now you have to function within the constraints of the office you hold. The Lok Sabha is the temple of democracy and it is your responsibility to preserve its sanctity.

It is your duty to protect the interests of the 15 crore Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population of this country. We also need your help in solving the problems of farmers. I hope that you will definite by pay attention to their interests.

With these words, I thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak and once again congratulate you.

[English]

SHRI INDERJIT (Darjeeling): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have great pleasure in offering you my heartiest congratulations on your election unanimously to this high Office of the Speaker. I associate myself with all the felicitations offered to you by all other friends here, on my behalf and on behalf of the Gorkha National Liberation Front whom I have a duty of representing in this House.

It has been my privilege, Mr. Speaker, to watch this Solemn function from the ringside for the past 35 years. I have much to say on the functioning of this Parliament as also its decline over the years. But I shall reserve my views and my thoughts to the day when I shall exercise my privilege of making my maiden speech. For the present, I offer my heartiest congratulations once again to you and my full cooperation in the greater glory of this highest temple of our democracy.

13.00 hrs.

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. UPENDRA): Sir, I warmly congratulate you on your unanimous election as the Speaker. We have known each other for several years

and perhaps, we share the same ideological background, if not of the same brand.

Sir, as the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and as the Government's Chief Whip, I assure you full cooperation from this side. I am sure you will be able to run the House smoothly with your sober manners coupled with your firmness.

I particularly thank the Leader of the Opposition, hon. Shri Rajiv Gandhiji, for facilitating your unanimous election today. It is a good augury. I am sure this atmosphere of goodwill will continue and the House will run smoothly in the true democratic traditions.

I would not like to introduce any element of controversy now which might mar the solemnity of the occasion and the atmosphere of goodwill here. But I would like to set the record straight. The Leader of the Opposition has chosen to make a small observation about the process of consultation which the Government has done. Sir, I would like to refresh the memory of the Leader of the Opposition: I called on him at his residence on the 12th of this month and when I sought his cooperation, I also mentioned about the election of the Speaker; I did mention two or three names which were under discussion at that time from our side and he chose not to react to those names. Again on the 17th evening when I met him on some other occasion and when he raised the question of Speaker, I specifically asked him if he had any suggestions about that matter. The hon. Leader of the Opposition chose to say that he had not given any thought to that. Therefore, I presumed that the opposition had no particular choice in the matter and they would like to facilitate the unanimous election of a person chosen by this side. Therefore, I observed the propriety of informing him of our choice before filing the nomination. I do not think we have committed any impropriety. But I can assure you that the process of consultation will be much more than was obtaining hitherto. I can assure him that on all important matters, I will take him into confidence and I will seek his cooperation.

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: With the permission of the House. I would like to say a few words first in Hindi and thereafter in English.

I thank you all for the signal honour you have done me by electing me to this high office unanimously. I shall try to discharge the duties of this noble office with humility and absolute impartiality. I assure the members that I shall keep away from all involvement in party politics as long I hold this office. I shall also try to uphold the high standards laid down by my eminent predecessors.

May I take this opportunity to assure you that as the mouthpiece and the servant of this House, I will speak only one language and that is the language of the House. I am sure that I shall have your wholehearted goodwill, co-operation and guidance in conducting the deliberations so that the House is able to fulfil the trust that our supreme masters, the people of India have reposed in us.

[*English*]

We are the world's largest democracy and the whole world is watching us with keen interest. The recent elections have once again proved the inner vitality and strength of our democracy and our people's unflinching faith in democratic values. I am sure we shall prove ourselves worthy of the faith the electorate has reposed in us.

We must all remember that this House is the highest representative panchayat of the 750 million common people of India. As such, it must not only reflect the hopes, urges and aspirations of the common people but also their frustrations and sorrows.

We should never forget that the Lok Sabha is a forum for orderly debate. Through speech we must argue and persuade. The cut and thrust of debate is the very essence of parliamentary proceedings. I have always held the view that the Lok Sabha, as the nation's sentinel, must have the opportuni-

ties to discuss all the issues that exercise the mind of the people.

To quote my illustrious predecessor Shri G.V. Mavalankar:

"The Legislatures are substantially deliberative bodies and representative of the people; they consider, discuss or debate the general lines on which they would like the Government of the country to run, and they have also authority to make laws for the purpose—They are intended in a sense for effecting a peaceful and gradual evolution, or if you so like to call it, a revolution in the society and in the Government—For real democracy, one has, therefore, to look not merely in the provisions of the Constitution, or the rules and regulations made for the conduct of business in the Legislatures, but one has to foster a real democratic spirit in those who form the Legislature".

It shall be my endeavour to give all parties and individual members opportunities to raise issues of vital public importance to the nation in general and to their constituents in particular. My only request to you all is that you should cooperate with me in conducting the deliberations in an orderly manner.

Parliamentary procedure is not an immutable thing. It is a means to a great end. If necessary, we can have a fresh look at some of our rules and regulations. Our Rules Committee can go into this matter with a view to ensuring speedy, smooth and effective transaction of business.

A beginning has been made in the matter of setting up standing Parliamentary Subject Committees to constantly and concurrently scrutinise the work of, and examine the legislative proposals emanating from, the Departments of Environment and Forests, Agriculture and Science and Technology. If the experiment proves to be satisfactory and if you all agree, it can also be extended to

other departments. This innovation will make the principle of continuing accountability of the Executive to the Lok Sabha a reality.

Once again I thank you all for giving me an opportunity to serve the nation through this august office

The House stands adjourned to meet

again tomorrow, the 20th December 1989, half an hour after the President's Address.

13.09 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till half-an-hour after the Address by the President on Wednesday, December 20, 1989/Agrahayana 29, 1911 (Saka)