

Speaker

I would also like to express my grateful thanks to the Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leaders of various groups for the kind words they have spoken about me.

I am well aware of the heavy responsibilities which I am required to shoulder in the discharge of my duties and this, I must frankly admit, has made me somewhat overwhelmed and, shall I say, a little diffident. But, in view of the generosity you have shown by electing me, I do hope that I shall prove worthy of the great trust that has been reposed in me. The kind sentiments expressed by the hon. Members from both sides of the House embolden me to look to the future with confidence and courage. This brings to my mind the affection and respect with which I was treated when I held the office of Speaker in the Fourth Lok Sabha. All sections of the House then cooperated with me and, I believe, I was able to discharge the functions of my office to their satisfaction. Now, your indulgence, faith and love shall sustain me through thick and thin. As a firm believer in democratic ideals and sure of getting full cooperation from every section of the House, I am confident that my task will not be as difficult as it would otherwise be.

The country has recently witnessed one of the largest elections ever held in the history of the democratic world involving some 320 million people. This goes to prove once again that democracy has taken deep roots in this country, belying the doubts and misgivings entertained at various times in several quarters. It is further significant that this election as well as all the previous ones held since the emergence of our Republic have been so peaceful as to draw the admiration of the world as regards the political maturity of our people. They have also proved that the Indian people have unflinching faith in re-

of Ministers

presentative institutions and can take part in the political process without in any way impairing the national unity or endangering the structure of the State.

I am not unaware of the special obligation of the Speaker to protect the rights of all sections of the House, especially of the Members on the Opposition benches. I, on my part, would like to assure the House that I shall never allow myself to forget that responsibility and shall always endeavour, to the best of my capacity, to regulate the proceedings of the House in a way that would be in keeping with the highest traditions of this noble institution and further enhance the prestige and dignity of the Office of the Speaker. At the same time, I hope that every section of the House as well as individual Members will extend to me their full cooperation in conducting the business of the House in a manner that would do credit to us as representatives of the people entrusted with the great task of taking this nation forward to further prosperity and progress. It is only in such a spirit of service and dedication to the causes of freedom and democracy which we hold dear that we can hope to lay the firm foundations of an effective parliamentary forum.)

I thank you once again for the great honour bestowed on me and assure you all of my complete devotion to the service of the House.

11.44 hrs.

INTRODUCTION OF MINISTERS

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI): May I, Sir, introduce some of the members of the Cabinet who were sworn in? I won't be able to do so for all of them because some of them are not present. So, I am introducing those who are

[Shri Morarji Desai]

present and, for the rest, I shall have the privilege of doing it on Monday.

1. Shri Parkash Singh Badal.
2. Shri Sikander Bakht.
3. Dr. Protap Chandra Chunder.
4. Prof. Madhu Dandavate.
5. Shri Mohan Dharia.
6. Shri P. Ramachandran.
7. Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
8. Shri Ravindra Verma.

11.45 hrs.

OBITUARY REFERENCE

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI MORARJI DESAI): Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is my melancholy duty to move a Resolution to give expression to the Lok Sabha's grief over the demise of President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. The late President was a staunch nationalist from his early years and was one of the finest gentlemen in our political life. Selfless, modest but firm in his loyalty to the ideals which have built up our nation, he won the affection of our people. I was privileged to know him and work with him for many years. He had a remarkable gift for maintaining his equanimity in moments of stress and crisis. Through his culture and unfailing courtesy he added new dignity to the office of the President of India.

The Lok Sabha also remembers him as a conscientious parliamentarian.

His passing away has deprived the nation of a guide and statesman of rare quality.

I request all sections of the House to join me in requesting the Speaker to convey Lok Sabha's condolences to Begum Abida Ahmed and to other members of the family.

I beg to move the following Resolution:

"That the Lok Sabha expresses its profound sorrow at the sudden death of the President of India, Shri Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, and pledges itself to promote the high ideals of patriotism, national unity, secularism and the service of humanity which he upheld."

SHRI YASHVANTRAO CHAVAN (Satara): I rise to pay our humble homage to the great son of India, the late President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. As I said, he was a great son of India who participated in the Indian national Independence struggle. He was one of the few men to whom it was given to serve the country before the Independence and even during the post-Independence period of reconstruction of modern India. He was educated in England. As a lawyer, while he practised in Assam and in Calcutta too, he never lost his contact with Delhi. He had, if I can borrow the word of Prof. Rashudin, the simplicity of Assam, he had the ruggedness of the tribals, he had the sophistication of the Urdu culture of Delhi.

Sir, I had the privilege of knowing him personally for the last more than 15 years. He was associated with my Party from the days of 1931 and as such, when I came in contact with him he was connected with the very leading policy-making organs of our Party. If you look at him as a man, as a sportsman, as a Minister and lastly as President, what stands out is the man behind. He was religious by nature, but he was secular in his convictions and conduct. As a Minister he had held many offices and he had held them with great distinction. He had functioned in this House as a Member of this House. I think many of the old Members know him with what grace he functioned in this House.

He participated in the national struggle and suffered with millions of other