

## RESIGNATION OF MEMBERS

**Mr. Speaker:** I have to inform the House that Shri P. Kakkan has resigned his seat in Lok Sabha with effect from the 26th March, 1957.

Another hon. Member has also resigned. I have also to inform the House that Shri Nand Lal Joshi has resigned his seat in Lok Sabha with effect from the 28th March, 1957.

## VALEDICTORY REFERENCES

**Mr. Speaker:** Leader of the House, Leader of the various Groups, and Members of Parliament ! Today's is the last sitting of the Fifteenth Session of the First Parliament under the Republican Constitution. This Parliament which is drawing to a close was elected on the basis of universal adult franchise and came into being on 13th May, 1952. As many as 173 millions of our population were enfranchised and nearly 88 million people went to the polls last time and there was not a single unhappy incident. This in itself is a proof that democracy has taken deep roots in our soil. The working of the first Parliament has reassured our faith in democracy further.

The working of our First Parliament, has earned unanimous acclaim from experienced Indian and foreign observers who have watched its function. They have held that this Parliament deliberates and legislates on questions of national importance in a manner which should characterise a much more mature body than the one which was just five years old. Every Parliament has its parties and is divided into groups. The Opposition usually functions through criticising and opposing proposals of the majority party and it is normal to all Parliaments. But, it is given only to few Parliaments to rise above party considerations in dealing with great issues of national interest and foreign policy. It is a matter of gratification that the parties in the first Parliament of India have on many occasions

subordinated their party considerations to the interest of the nation at large, particularly while debating questions of Parliamentary procedure, foreign policy and constitutional amendments. It is a good augury for the future of democracy and for preservation of the liberty of individual citizens in this country that in our Parliament, respect for the Constitution has not been confined to any one party, but is shared by all the parties and groups.

Among the Members of the first Parliament were men distinguished in law, in science, in Constitutional procedure, in politics, in economics, in agricultural, in social welfare; in short, all subjects that the Parliament of a country may be called upon to consider, deliberate and legislate upon. There were about twenty women Members of the House who have played a prominent role in the activities of the First Parliament, by taking active part not only when social problems were before the House, but also contributing in no small measure to debates on serious political and economic subjects.

The First Parliament has been particularly fortunate in having had a distinguished pilot in the late Speaker, Shri G. V. Mavalankar, who was an outstanding personality and great Speaker acknowledged not only in this country but by experienced parliamentarians in many other countries. He has laid the foundation of many valuable conventions and traditions which are bound to ensure the working of Parliament in which both majority and opposition parties can function with proper safeguards and impartial treatment for all. The most distinguished feature of the First Parliament in India has been the expression of a singularly tolerant and sporting spirit based on the temperament and tradition of the Indian people. Despite heated debates and even during the bitterest attacks on party lines, excellent friendly relations have always existed between the Members of various parties.

[Mr. Speaker]

Although we were faced with natural calamities like famine in South India, floods in Bengal and earthquake in Assam and near war conditions in Kashmir, the Parliament has successfully overcome all these difficulties and has worked the Constitution in a highly democratic manner.

The activities of the Parliament have been diverse and varied. In fact, there has not been any field which has not been touched upon by the Parliament, be it economic, political or social. When the present Parliament came into being, the First Five Year Plan had already been launched about a year before. The primary objective of the Plan was to overcome certain urgent problems such as shortage of food and raw materials and persistent inflationary pressure. A great number of river valley projects and dams were constructed during this period and nearly completed. Millions of acres of land have been brought under plough and there had been significant increase in agricultural production. The yield per acre had also increased considerably, by the use of artificial manures. To meet the needs of artificial manure in the country, fertilizer factories were set up in different parts of the country. A reserve stock of food was also built up to meet future emergent conditions.

Having achieved substantial success in the agricultural sector, attention was turned to the industrial field. A number of industrial plants, both in the public and private sectors, had been set up. Mention may be made of the Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, Integral Coach Factory, Hindustan Machine Tools, Oil Refineries etc. The production of the Hindustan Shipbuilding Yard and the Hindustan Aircraft was stepped up.

The first Parliament discussed in detail both the Plans and has always been keeping a watch over the successful working of the Plan from year to year. I am sure the Second

Five Year Plan, like the First Five Year Plan, would be successfully executed and India would be placed on the industrial map of the world.

During its term, this Parliament inaugurated the socialistic pattern of society and important pieces of legislation have been directed towards this end. The Imperial Bank of India, the largest banking institution in India, was nationalised. Nationalisation of airlines and nationalisation of life insurance business took place during this period. The enactment of the new Company Law and the introduction of decimal system of coinage and metric system of weights and measures were some of the important legislative measures. All these were steps towards economic reconstruction which were undertaken by Parliament during this period.

The most momentous decision of this Parliament is the States Reorganisation Act. By passing this measure together with the Constitution (Seventh Amendment) Act, Parliament has effected a re-drawing of the political map of India.

On the social plane, by far the most important achievement has been the reform of the Hindu Law effected under this Parliament, which now grants women the rights that had been denied to them for ages and recognises for the first time equality of status between the two sexes. The introduction of monogamy among Hindus, the right to divorce, claim to a share in her father's property, equality of right in the matter of adoption, these are some of the highlights of the reforms for which Parliament can take a pride of place. While realising the significant role which legislation can play in achieving the ends of social and economic justice, Parliament has been wary of the new grounds it was treading, and in adopting measures it has taken care to see that legislation in its zeal does not outrun social urges.

In the international field, our foreign policy has been successful.

We can justly be proud of having contributed to the maintenance of world peace in the face of military pacts and alliances.

Among Private Members' Bills, mention can be made to the Parliamentary Proceedings (Protection of Publication) Bill which was enacted into law. In view of the fact that the advantage of publicity to the community outweighs any private injury resulting from the publication of reports of proceedings of Parliament, the Bill was introduced to define by law the privilege available to such publication made in good faith.

In the field of national consolidation, we have been taking active steps among others, to bring into existence an Indian Parliamentary Association to which all the Legislatures in India will be affiliated. The idea was first mooted some years ago at a Conference of Presiding Officers of Legislative Bodies in India. There is now a proposal, which has reached an advanced stage, that an Indian Parliamentary Group has been sending delegations to the Annual Conferences of the Inter-Parliamentary Union since 1949. We have invited the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association to hold its Conference in Delhi in December this year.

The record of work transacted by the Lok Sabha is indeed impressive. The cyclostyled debates of the Lok Sabha covered more than two lakh foolscap pages, containing as many as 6½ crore words. The typed proceedings of Committees covered about 54,000 foolscap pages, containing as many as 1½ crore words. If these pages were pasted one below the other, they will be 54 miles long. Notices of 87,675 questions were received in the Lok Sabha during the 14 sessions held since the present Parliament came into being in May, 1952, and of them 43,562 were asked and answered in Lok Sabha. In the year that has just ended the number of questions reached the peak figure of 22,651. These figures are im-

pressive enough to indicate the significant place that the Question Hour has come to occupy in our parliamentary proceedings.

In order to keep the Members fully informed of the latest developments in all matters coming before Parliament, the Research and Reference Services have been enlarged. Created as a small cell in 1950, the Research and Reference Branch has grown beyond recognition. The achievements of the Branch have been considerable. The work comprises the preparation of bibliographies on important legislative measures, brochures on certain subjects of topical interest, monthly list of selected articles, abstracting service, Digest of Central Acts and the Juridical Digests.

Before I conclude I express my grateful thanks to our beloved Prime Minister and Leader of the House for his kind co-operation and goodwill towards the late Speaker and me throughout the period of the life of this House. He is not only the greatest son of India, but I am sure, everyone will accept that he is the greatest statesman and politician of the world today. His great regard for parliamentary conventions and procedures had been really a source of strength for me and contributed in no small measure to the successful working of parliamentary democracy in this country. I would also like to express my heart-felt thanks to the leaders of the various groups and to all the Members of this House for their kind co-operation in so ungrudging and generous a manner. But for their co-operation and goodwill, it would not have been possible to conduct and guide the deliberations of this House in a manner befitting the reputation of this country. Some Members may not be coming back to this House, some have gone to the other House, some have gone to the State legislatures and some have not stood for election. There are, however, many fields of work in which they can serve the country, not necessarily in Parliament. I am quite

[Mr. Speaker]

confident that their experience in Parliament and talents will be amply availed of in such fields.

I wish you all good-bye and God-speed. Jai Hind!

The Prime Minister and Leader of the House (Shri Jawaharlal Nehru): Mr. Speaker, Sir, you have been pleased to say many generous things about the Member of this House and, to my great embarrassment, about me. You have spoken in generosity but, anyhow, so far as I am concerned, I should like to offer you my grateful thanks, and I am sure I speak on behalf of the House also, when I offer you their thanks for your kind words.

It is befitting that on this occasion, when this Parliament stands at the edge of its own dissolution, there should be some valedictory references to our past. Since you have been good enough to make a reference to the work of this Parliament, I am taking the liberty of saying also a few words on this occasion, certainly on my own behalf and possibly reflecting the views and ideas of other Members also here.

We have gone through, during these five years, a tremendous amount of work and, as you have said, speeches have covered, I do not know how many millions of pages; questions have also been asked and, altogether a vast quantity of paper has been consumed. Yet, the historian of the future will probably not pay too much attention to the number of speeches or the hours which the speeches have taken or to the number of questions, but rather to the deeper things that go towards the making of a nation.

17 hrs.

Here, we have sat in this Parliament, the sovereign authority of India, responsible for the governance of India. Surely, there can be no higher responsibility or greater privilege than to be a Member of this sovereign body which is responsible for the fate of the vast number of human beings who

live in this country. All of us, if not always, at any rate from time to time, must have felt this high sense of responsibility and destiny to which we had been called. Whether we were worthy of it or not is another matter. We have functioned, therefore, during these five years not only on the edge of history but sometimes plunging into the processes of making history.

We have lived here, as indeed people have lived all over the world, at a moment of great change, transition, and sometimes of vast upsets and revolutionary processes. We have not only been part of that world drama but we have had our own drama also. And it would be interesting for someone to take a rather distant view of this drama of these five years and more so as not to be lost in the innumerable details which confuse, but rather to see this broad current of history in motion in this country, how far has it moved, what changes has it wrought, how far has it laid stable the foundations of this republic of India which we created, which the people of India created, a few years back. That is the important question; not so much how many speeches we have delivered or how many questions we have asked, important, no doubt, though speeches and questions are as bringing out the method of our working—the parliamentary process to which we are addicted.

We choose this system of parliamentary democracy deliberately; we choose it not only because, to some extent, we had always thought on those lines previously, but because we thought it was in keeping with our own old traditions also; naturally, the old traditions, not as they were, but adjusted to the new conditions and new surroundings. We choose it also—let us give credit where credit is due—because we approved of its functioning in other countries, more especially the United Kingdom.

So, this Parliament, the Lok Sabha, became, to some extent—not entirely, but to a large extent—rather like the

British Parliament or the British House of Commons whether it is in regard to our questions or our rules of procedure or methods of work.

Now, parliamentary democracy demands many things, demands, of course, ability. It demands a certain devotion to work as every work does. But it demands also a large measure of co-operation, of self-discipline, of restraint. It is obvious that a House like this cannot perform any functions without the spirit of co-operation, without a large measure of restraint and self-discipline in each Member and in each group. Parliamentary democracy is not something which can be transplanted in a country by some wand or by some quick process. We talk about it but we know very well that there are not many countries in the world where it functions successfully. I think it may be said without any partiality that it has functioned with a very large measure of success in this country. Why? Not so much because we, the Members of this House, are exemplars of wisdom, but, I do not think, because of the background in our country, and because our people have the spirit of democracy in them.

We have to remember then what parliamentary democracy means. In this world of change and tremendous ferment, more so than in ordinary times, change is essential; change and adaptation to new order. Even when the old order was good, it has to yield place to new lest one good custom should corrupt the world. It has to change. So, change there must be, change there has to be, in a country like India which was more or less changeless for a long time, changeless not only because of the country being a subject country under the imperialist powers,—I do not mean to say that there was no change then, but basically the dynamic aspect of the country was limited, restricted, cabined and confined by foreign domination—changeless also because we had fallen into the ruts of our own making, in mind, in social framework and the rest. So we had to take our souls out

both from the ruts and from the disabilities and restrictions caused by alien rule. We had to make rapid changes in order to catch up. So, change was necessary even for survival and, of course, for progress.

But, while change is necessary, there is another thing that is also necessary; that is, a measure of continuity. There is always a balancing of change and continuity. Not one day is like another. We grow older each day. Yet, there is continuity in us, unrestrained continuity in the life of a nation. It is in the measure that these processes of change and continuity are balancing that a country grows on solid foundations. If there is no change and only continuity, there is stagnation and decay. If there is change only and no continuity, that means uprooting, and no country and no people can survive for long if they are uprooted from the soil which has nurtured them and given them birth.

Now, this system of parliamentary democracy, therefore, embodies, I think, these principles of change and continuity, both. And it is up to those who function in this system, Parliament, Members of the House and the numerous others who are part of this system, to increase the pace of change, to make it as fast as they like, subject to the principle of continuity, because, the moment that continuity is broken we become rootless and the system of parliamentary democracy breaks down. Parliamentary democracy is a delicate plant and it is a measure of our own success that this plant has become sturdier during these last few years. We have faced grave problems, difficult problems, and solved many of them; but, many remain to be solved. Indeed, there is going to be no end of the problems that will come to us, because problems are inevitable when you grow. It is only those who are stagnant that have few problems, and if there are no problems, that is a sign of death. Only the dead have no problems; the living have problems and they grow with problems, fighting with problems and overcoming them. It is a sign of the growth of this nation

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

that not only we solve problems, but we create new problems to solve.

So, these five years have passed and we are at the end of this chapter of our history; and, the very end suddenly merges into a beginning and we begin afresh, because ends and beginnings are only of our own conception. There is only continuous life of a nation. We may pass out of this House or pass out of our lives, but the nation goes on. Therefore, here when we stand at this end, which is also a beginning, we indulge in retrospect and we indulge in prospect. Again, standing on this edge of the present, we look back on the past, but we look forward even more to the future. We may think of many things that we have to do to carry on the great work that we have undertaken and undertake new labours; but, above all, we have to remember how stable, how deep, are the foundations of this democracy that we have sought to serve and to build up in this country, because ultimately it is on the strength and depths of those roots that we will prosper, not by the number of laws we pass, not by our external activities, but on the strength of character and grit and the capacity of service that we develop in this country.

Parliamentary democracy involves naturally peaceful methods of action, peaceful acceptance of decisions taken

and attempts to change them through peaceful ways again; it is no parliamentary democracy otherwise. It is essential that we, who talk and who believe in the quest of peace so much, should remember that the quest of peace and the quest of democracy can only be made through methods of peace and not through any other. We have a great united country, a country which is dear to us, and of which we are proud. But being proud of it does not mean that we should close our eyes to the grave problems we often have to face in the country and the disruptive tendencies that raise their heads and challenge the democratic process which this Parliament represents. It is in the measure that we put an end even in our thinking to these disruptive tendencies which divide us and which tend to break up the unity of India that we will have strengthened our country and laid sound foundations for the future. So, Sir, I would like to thank you, again.

May I, as Leader of the House, express my respectful thanks to all the Members of this House for the great courtesy and consideration which they have shown me during these past five years.

Mr. Speaker: The House now stands adjourned *sine die*.

17-16 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned *sine die*.